"Listen to Jesus Say Your Name'"
John 20:11-16

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Emmett, Idaho
Pastor Michael L. McCoy
15 April Anno Domini 2001
The Festival of the Resurrection of Our Lord

"Yea, to Him shall all the proud
of the earth bow down;
before Him shall bow all
who go down to the dust,
and he who cannot keep himself alive"
Psalm 22:29

Dear Baptized,

Christ is Risen! He is risen, indeed. Alleluia!

Someone in this world knows your name. So, does that fact give you reason for concern or comfort? Someone in this world calls out your name to interrupt what you are doing and get your attention. So, is it good news or bad news that someone has your name and has called you? At this point you probably can't answer those two questions until you have a couple of your own answered. Who knows my name and why is my name being called out?

Most certainly we are not able to tell until we find out just what in the world the reason is for that person to call out your name. For example, the doctor had said that you will be called only if there is a problem with the test results. The doctor knows your name, the phone rings and a voice at the other end say, "Mr. Serratos, I am calling about the test that you had." Or it might be a teacher who said that the four successful recipients of the full-ride scholarship would be contacted. The phone rings, you answer it and you hear your name, "LuWanda, this is Mrs. Kim from the scholarship committee." At two in the morning, your sleep is interrupted by a policeman at the door who says, "Mrs. Catchmont, I need to speak to you about your son." Or at a school assembly, the principal stands up to read off the names of the "Proud Crowd" and says one word, your name, "Harvey!"

There are a lot of people who know your name and you are called by many of them. But it is the reason why your name is called that is important, that determines whether or not the news is good or bad. What about God? Certainly the Lord knows your name, for He knows everything about everything and knows absolutely everything about you. If God said your name, what would it mean? What is in store for you? When you hear Him say your name will it be bad news for you or Good News? Please dear soul, hear the Word of God written by St. John, the 20th chapter, verses 11-16, and ...

... "Listen to Jesus Say Your Name"

"But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the Body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. They said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, ‘Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.' Saying this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing, but she did not now that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?' Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, ‘Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.' Jesus said to her, ‘Mary.' She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, ‘Rabboni!' (which means Teacher)."

Thus far the Word of the LORD our God.

A new day had dawned, though certainly not one that was without guilt and fear, for there had been a separation. Death does bring forth a stinging schism. The sorrow is overwhelming as the consequences of death are realized, not by theory, but by experience. The coldness of death, along with being afraid for what had happened and fearing the future, produces a legion of shivers in body and soul. On that cool day, it was into the garden that God walked. Into the sorry atmosphere of that garden the Lord called out to that one particular person and said one name, "Adam."

How that one word must have struck fear in the soul and sent terror into the heart of Adam. "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9). He had disobeyed God and further sinned by hiding himself from the Presence of the LORD God. God had not left him; he had separated himself from the LORD. Adam! "Thou art Adam and unto Adam thou shalt return. Thou art dust and unto dust thou shalt return" (Genesis 3:19). Thus the sorry and futile state of man ... self-separated from God, staying away from the Presence of the LORD, covered by a pall of guilt, hiding in the sinful state where one is both dead and dying. The inheritance of death is passed on from generation to generation and the bitter tears of grief and sorrow bear witness to the sad plight that is due each of Adam's descendants, and truly, each one passes on. Some have a short time in this fallen world; others live longer; all, sooner or later, pass away in the end.

Almighty God, Maker of heaven and earth, would not let this be and even before, "In the beginning" the plan of salvation was determined. The Son of God would come into this land of death and be the Life of the world. "When the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the Law, to redeem those who were under the Law, so that we might receive adoption as sons" (Galatians 4:4) "for God sent His Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him" (John 3:17). Thus was the Christ of God incarnate by the Holy Spirit in the maiden's womb and born in the little town of Bethlehem. On the eighth day, when His first holy Blood was shed for the world, the infant Redeemer was named when Joseph, His foster father, called out His name, ... Jesus, which means Savior.

Thus did Jesus set about His Father's business, namely, atoning for the sins of all people of all times and places, and being the Door to Paradise. Thirty some years later, Jesus Himself declared this when He said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except by Me" (John 14:6). Jesus sets His face to the task and journeys to Good Friday. He is betrayed, denied and deserted by one, another, and all of His disciples. The Son of God is mocked, scourged and crucified by those of this world. Jesus goes to the cross to be the Sacrifice for the sins of the world. He pays the price for all as He is assaulted by Satan and forsaken by the Father. Then, at the ninth hour - at three in the afternoon - with all things finished, with the devil defeated, with the wrath of God against all sins satisfied, "the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world," (John 1:29)

commends His Spirit into the hands of His Father.

What is left is His Body still pinned to the cross and this is awful looking to those who had been His disciples. They "had hoped that He was the One to redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21). What they had left was the lifeless Body of Jesus that had been taken down from the cross and placed in a tomb. What they had left was their own personal, individual thoughts as they grieved the death of Jesus of Nazareth. Some of them were filled with guilt and fear because they, like old Adam in the Garden of Eden, had departed from the Presence of the Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane and gone somewhere to hide. One committed suicide. One wept bitterly. Some, in sorrow and contrition and loving service, set about to provide a decent burial. Two men place His Body in a tomb before the Sabbath begins. Women mark the place in order to return to care for His Body after the Sabbath ends. The grief and sorrow heightens when, on Sunday morning, this final service is denied them. The mourning women discover that the Body of Christ is no longer in the tomb.

A new day had dawned, though certainly not one that was without guilt and fear, for there had been a separation. Death does bring forth a stinging schism. The sorrow is overwhelming as the consequences of death are realized, not by theory, but by experience. The coldness of death, along with being afraid for what had happened and fearing the future, produces a legion of shivers in body and soul. On that cool day, it was into the garden that God walked. Into the sorry atmosphere of that garden the Lord called out to that one particular person and said one name, "Mary."

For you see, Mary "stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the Body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. They said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, ‘Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.' Saying this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing, but she did not now that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?' Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, ‘Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.' Jesus said to her, ‘Mary.'"

That did it! Jesus called her by her name and that makes all the difference. Mary knew the Voice of the Shepherd when He called her by her name. Good Friday grief is replaced by Easter Sunday joy. "Jesus said to her, ‘Mary' and Death's sadness gives way to Life's gladness. Why do you weep? For behold, the stillness of the tomb is broken by the Word Who says your name. Whom do you seek? For lo, the Lord Jesus will have His say, "Fear not, I am the First and the Last, and the Living One; I died, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades" (Revelation 1:17-18). "Jesus said to her, ‘Mary.'" The weeping words of sniffling uncertainty are replaced by a faithful confession of the truth when "She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, ‘Rabboni!' (which means Teacher)."

Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of His Father from eternity and true man born of the Virgin Mary, is risen. Jesus had commended Himself into His Father's hands when flesh and soul separated in death. Now on the third day Body and Spirit are reunited and the Rabboni is risen. He has done all this that you might have the forgiveness of all your sins, eternal Life with Him in Paradise and salvation forever. The Father has given His Word on this - the Word has given His Life for you - the Holy Spirit works faith within you by this Gospel in Word and Sacrament.

So Jesus calls His own by name and in calling them by name makes them His own. When you were

baptized, the Lord has called you His own and you were crucified with Christ. You have been united with Him in a Death like His and you shall certainly be united with Him in a Resurrection like His (Romans 6:5-6). The LORD declares to His own people, "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are Mine" (Isaiah 43:1). Indeed, the sheep hear the Voice of God and He knows them, and they follow Him (John 10:27).

Dear Baptized, "Listen to Jesus Say Your Name." Do you hear it? For what reason does He call you? Does this make you uneasy, or is it a great comfort to you? Well, as we said at the beginning of the sermon, that depends and since it depends, please ponder a situation. Think about yourself one week from today. It is Sunday morning and the Lord Jesus is going to say your name. Will He say to you, "Adam, where are you?" Or will you hear Him say your name with His absolving Word? Next Sunday, in sorrow and contrition at the confession of sins in His Presence, we celebrate the Resurrection once again and will you hear Him graciously ask, Why are you weeping? Whom do you seek? Indeed, you are forgiven in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

You are invited to be here next Sunday in the Divine Service. I beg you to enter this holy house to hear Him speak graciously to you. I plead with you to be here in the Presence of the LORD God. May it be granted for Jesus' sake. Amen.