

✠ JOHN 17:20-26 ✠

In Nomine Iesu

It is interesting that any program on television that discusses God will use a whole slew of titles or names for God. But what is the name of God? Jehovah? Yahweh? Elohim? Bright and Morning Star? Or even Allah, which is merely the Aramaic word for the title *God*, meaning all-powerful? But what is God's name? How is He to be called? How is He to be known?

To those who do not know Him, He is known only by those titles just mentioned. He is known as Jehovah or Allah, Elohim or the Tao. To those who do not know God He is known only by peripheral titles that only encompass a small part of what He does. For He is Creator, He is the Provider, He is all-powerful, and He is the Bright and Morning Star.

Yet these titles, while not all bad, are merely that: titles. They are adjectives no different than the titles we are known by: friend, lover, tax payer, police officer, maid, working man, and all the other titles that take the things we do and label us according to them.

But that is not who we are. George Bush may be the President, but he is not the presidency. God is love, but love is not God. When someone asks you concerning someone else, "Who is this person?" You respond to the question in the capacity that you know the person. Thus you might say, "my plumber," or "my grocer," or "my friend," or "my father," or "my daughter." You would not say of someone else, "He is me" because you do not know that person as yourself.

Therefore, when Martin Luther of blessed memory wrote in the Small Catechism concerning what sins we should confess before the pastor, he started with this: consider your place in life according to the Ten Commandments. Are you a father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, or worker? Luther understood that it is in the capacity of how we know one another that we sin against one another. In other words, friend sins against friend, and son against father; not friend against father, and son against friend.

So the proper question is not just, "What is God's name," but how has God revealed Himself to us? How does God want us to know Him? If we know God, as He wants us to, then we will know our God and He will know us.

And so when you pray, pray in this way, "Our Father who art in heaven." How has God revealed Himself to us? Through Jesus Christ, the Son of God. If Jesus is the Son of God then God is His Father. And if God is Jesus' Father and we are Jesus' brothers and sisters by dying to sin in baptism and being raised to life in Christ, then God is our Father as well. That is how we know God, as Father, because that is How Jesus revealed Him to us.

"O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you." Jesus did not pray in this way: "O most holy, all-powerful, just, merciful, gracious, vindictive, jealous, omniscient, mighty God." Not that these adjectives are wrong, they are very right, and Scripture often gives these pictures of God, but these do not reveal God as He wants to be known to us, His Church. Rather, He sent His Son so that we would know Him as our Father.

Jesus has indeed revealed to us the name by which God wants to be known to us, and it is *Father*. Those who are in Christ Jesus, baptized into His name, have God as their Father. He is not Father to the pagan or to the heathen. He is not Father to those who reject His Son, because by rejecting the Son they reject the Father.

But to those who believe that for our sakes the Son of God, Jesus, took on our sin and shame and died that death may die, and rose to life that we may live, we are called the children of God. O what manner of love the Father has given unto us that we should be called the sons of God (1 John 3:1).

For God loved us in this way: that He sent His only-begotten Son, that whosoever should believe in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16). For these, for those who believe, the Lord Jesus prays: “that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you.”

So our Lord Jesus prays for peace among us, those who would be called Christian: “That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you.” The blessed apostle confirms this when he writes: “Until we all come in unity of the faith to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13). This unity is not by nature, for our nature is not the nature of God. Rather, this unity, this inclusion in God, is by grace.

For it is not according to your will that you are called sons and daughters of God, but according to the will of God. As it is written: “[we] were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13). Therefore, since you have been born of God, do not hide your face from God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, but prostrate yourself before Him giving Him all glory and honor that is due His name.

In this way the world will know that the Father sent His Son. Such is the commandment: “Love one another, by this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35). In the unity of the children of God is displayed the peace of God, for God is a God of peace (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

And the peace of God only comes through the death of the Son of God. For though He died He rose from the dead and death no longer has dominion over Him. Those who would be called sons and daughters of God share in this death so that we will share in His life. Therefore the glory given the Son by the Father, the glory of immortality and life, the Son has given to us that even as the Father and the Son are one, we too may be one as there is one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Therefore, O sons of Adam and daughters of Eve, confess that you are not of God and He will adopt you as His child. Confess that you have rebelled against God and He will pardon your transgressions and wipe away your guilt. There is no righteousness outside of the Son of God, therefore repent and be baptized. That is, confess your sins and be created anew in the image of the Son of God, holy and righteous in the sight of God.

Then will your robes be washed in the blood of the Lamb and you will be granted access to the Tree of Life in the Garden of God; the Tree that bears its fruit in season and out of season, all the year long. For behold, the Judge is coming soon, and will bring His recompense with Him, repaying everyone for what he has done.

To those who call upon God as their Father, those who know the Son, Jesus Christ, those

who have His name upon their forehead, they will be invited to walk through the twelve gates of pearl and drink from the River of Life flowing from the side of Christ. But to those who reject the Son and so reject the Father, they will be outside the Holy City. They will be among the dogs and sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers and idolaters, and everyone who practices lies and deceit.

The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." Those who have ears to hear say, "Come." Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness say, "Come Lord Jesus, come!"

In the name of the FATHER and of the ✠ SON and of the HOLY SPIRIT.

✠ AMEN ✠