

Introduction: Pg. _____

One of the most exhilarating and challenging aspects of parenthood is the responsibility of naming a child. In 2008, Marsha & I had this privilege for the first time. We were blessed to endure (I mean enjoy) countless conversations about the name of our firstborn child. It really was fun, 80% of the time.

There are many questions that swirl about when it comes to naming your child:

- Is there a family name we want to honor and pass on? Tanner Gordon Turley.
- Is there a name we just really like? Names we do not like?
- What names are associated with people we love and respect? What names carry negative associations to avoid like the plague? (You know, notorious criminals, ex-girlfriends or boyfriends, you know stuff like that).
- Do we want a classic, common name or something more unique and outside the box?
- Will we choose the name early in the pregnancy or will we wait until we see them face to face? After all, once I see my child who I was going to name Harry, he really may look like Sam or Bill and Rodrigo, and not Harry, so maybe we should wait until we see them to name them.
- Once we've chosen a name, when will we reveal that name?
- And when we do: will our friends and family like the name? Most importantly...
- Will my child like this name? Will they receive ill-fated nicknames because of this name?

To help us in this process, we went to Barnes & Noble, located just outside of Triangle Town Center Mall in Raleigh, NC and went up the escalator, over to the children and family section where we found books like this...

The Baby Name Bible.

- I almost felt a little blasphemous.. There's only one bible, but this is the Baby Name Bible... :)
- I guess Marsha was nice enough not to make me get ***Baby Names for Dummies*** (yes that book exists - don't raise your hand if you own it - just saying) https://www.amazon.com/dp/B004ZGKFH8/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1
- Not only does *the Bible Name Bible* give you more than 50,000 names, it also gives you variations of popular names, star-babies for each letter of the alphabet, whether names are trending up or down in popularity, the ethnic origin and meaning of the names, and much, much more.

Then based on your findings in the Baby Name Bible and your own creative thinking: you start your list, talk about your list, modify your list, rank your list, talk about your list some more, compare your list to your spouse's list, and then, you talk about the list again. At some point you might find yourself throwing away the list. It's a *lot* of fun, really.

At the end of the day, I believe every parent ultimately wants to find a name that carries significance, even if it's just - we love that name, because that name is going to identify and distinguish them from other people throughout their life.

T: This final Psalm in our True & Greater Series is all about, not our name, but God's identifiable and distinguished name.

**“True & Greater Name”
Psalm 148**

As we read this unmistakable summons to praise, I want to focus more on the why of our praise and the result of our praise which has everything to do with God's name. Listen carefully, as I read it for us.

Read Psalm 148

The theme is obvious, no? PRAISE. Pervasive and perpetual PRAISE. We are called to...

I. Elevate God's name through your praise.

The Call to Pervasive Praise

- The first line, last line, and every line in between is focused on praising God.
- Praise is an expression of adoration.
- This Psalm presents praise in “a grand cosmic vision.” - Alter
- Verse 1-4 address the heavenly realm.

- Angels & Hosts
- Sun, Moon, & Shining Stars
- The Highest Heavens: Galaxies beyond what the most powerful telescope can see.
- Verse 7-12 go on to say all of earth should echo all of heaven in this chorus of praise to God.
 - All sea creatures.
 - All meteorological elements (fire, hail, snow, mist, wind)
 - Mountains, hills, and trees.
 - Every creature in the animal kingdom
 - And every person on the planet, kings and all peoples, young and old.
 - That includes you (you are being invited to join in)
- Take some time to take in the Art of God. Just open your eyes and pause long enough to see the beauty around you. (Trees, ocean, sunset, moon (Thursday night, incredible), people.)
- Everything our eye can see, every inch of existence, was made to praise God.
- I can remember sitting in one of my classes in seminary when a fellow student took a shot at a certain group of theologians by saying something, “You know *they* are so concerned with the glory of God that they believe *every blade of grass* praises him.”
 - Whoa... Hold up! I wanted to this dude out in the hallway, so I could hit him upside the head with a little Psalm 148.
 - What was that? Did you just take a breath? For God. If your heart keeps beating another minute, all 85 beats are for him! Just like every proton, electron and neutron that exists (every quark for the scientists). Just like every blade of grass.
 - C'mon bro! Psalm 1.4.8.
- *God is continuously receiving praise! (Fan on my A/C won't turn off.)*

Why we Praise God

- Does the idea of god receiving pervasive, perpetual praise startle you? You may even find it repulsive. God demanding praise could seem very egotistical. If he needs nothing, why does he tell us to praise him?
- C.S. Lewis held this objection until God gave him a profound insight. He writes in his *Reflections on the Psalms*:
 - *“But the most obvious fact about praise — whether of God or anything — strangely escaped me. I thought of it in terms of compliment, approval, or the giving of honour. I had never noticed that all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise unless . . . shyness or the fear of boring others is deliberately brought in to check it.*
 - *The world rings with praise — lovers praising their mistresses [Romeo praising Juliet and vice versa], readers their favourite poet, walkers praising the countryside, players praising their favourite game — praise of weather, wines, dishes, actors, motors, horses, colleges, countries, historical personages, children, flowers, mountains, rare stamps, rare beetles, even sometimes politicians or scholars. . . . Except where intolerably adverse circumstances interfere, praise almost seems to be inner health made audible. . . . I had not noticed either that just as men spontaneously praise whatever they value, so they spontaneously urge us to join them in praising it: “Isn't she lovely? Wasn't it glorious? Don't you think that magnificent?” The Psalmists in telling everyone to praise God are doing what all men do when they speak of what they care about.*
 - ***My whole, more general, difficulty about the praise of God depended on my absurdly denying to us, as regards the supremely Valuable, what we delight to do, what indeed we can't help doing, about everything else we value.***
 - ***I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation.”***
- The most loving thing God can do is invite us to praise him, because it's in praising the supremely valuable that we experience supreme joy.

This Psalm provides other reasons why we should praise God?

- God alone is Creator and Sustainer. (5-6).
 - We would not exist if not for him. Case closed?
 - We would not continue to exist if not for him.

- God alone is exalted and worthy of our praise. (13)
 - He alone is supreme.
 - That's why we praise God, not simply in song, but in all of life. AND...
- God cares for us. (14)
 - God invites us into a special relationship with himself through faith, and...
 - He strengthens us for each day of life's journey, which is what the imagery of a "horn" referred to in v.14.

T: That's why we praise him, but the Psalm specifically says we are to praise his name.

- Look back at verse 5. "Let them praise the NAME of the Lord!" Verse 13: "Let them praise the NAME of the Lord." Why?
- God's name represents his character and reputation. When God revealed his names, he revealed who he is.
- When God revealed himself to a man name Moses, he said his Name, is YHWH, which means "I am" or "I am who I am" or "I will be who I will be."
- God alone is absolute, eternal, and independent. He is utterly unique.
 - "For ancient Jews, [the name] YAHWEH was...so sacred that they would not speak it nor would they write it in full."
- We praise his NAME because there is no higher name; there is no greater name.

So one very simple encouragement, as you seek to praise the name of God, not just with your singing but with your lives, is this: Pray like Jesus taught us to pray: "**Our Father in heaven, HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME...**" 1/5 or 3/3 structure. *It's both, but it all hinges on the first request.*

T: To pray this sincerely will lead us to elevate God's name and . . . #2

II. Cease the futile effort of elevating your name.

Our names, billions and billions of names, live under the absolute and exclusively exalted name of God as contingent beings in his world. I'll be generous and give us a ball point pen with .38mm tip. Who wants your microscopic name up here? Raise your hand. Name. Name. Name. Name. You can't see it. In comparison, we are smaller than that! :) {P} That doesn't devalue us, but it puts it in perspective. They wonder of it all is that we're on the page.

- This picture would all be well and very, very good, if we were content with that.

BUT everyone of us live with the tendency to elevate our name.

- We want to stand out. We want to be recognized.
- *We want to achieve (which is fine - God made us to work and serve and create), but we want to achieve in such a way that our gifts are praised as being inherent to our person, rather than gifts God has graciously given.*
- *We all want to build a tower and make a name for ourselves. (That is not an intentional shot at our President, but he did build a tower he named after himself. And it's not a shot at him, because we all carry this tendency to chase after the elevation our name.)*

We want to be elevated in the sight of others *and* over others, but there is something worse. Not just being elevated in the sight of others, but desiring for our name to be elevated above God's name.

This was the problem with our earliest ancestors.

The Story of Babel – Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. **2** And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. **3** And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. **4** Then they said, "**Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.**" (Genesis 11:1-4)

Do you see that? These microscopic names were trying to ascend about the exclusively elevated named.

What would you do if you were God? I'd throw (name. Name. Name.) off the page. I'd push them down so low that they could never try to ascend again.

But would did God do? He didn't push us down. God came down.

- While we we trying to ascend to elevate our name above his name, Jesus descended so that we could not simply be forgiven but be given a new name, his name.
- **“For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’” (Romans 10:13)**
- **“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)**
- **“Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:9-11)**

T: Have you bowed before and called upon the True and Greater Name of Jesus? Let me tell you, when you live for his name, you will...

III. Experience the results of praising God's Name.

Let me give you six results of elevating God's name.

1. **Closeness.**
 - When we live for what we were made for, we will find the greatest fulfillment and flourishing.
 - And our relationship with God will grow deeper and deeper and deeper.
2. **Character.**
 - Though we live in a society where virtue is out of style, God made us to not only praise him, but actually to become like him.
 - And one follows the other. Praise leads us down the path of character development or “holiness.”
 - How? We become what we behold. The more you look at him, the more you will like what you see, and the more you like what you see, the more you will like to be like him.
3. **Security.**
 - Security comes, not from being beyond the the range of nuclear weapons (can we pray for our world? We better.), but...
 - Security comes from *our identity being in the true and greater name of Jesus.*
 - Beyond Marsha, I know there are two people in this world who have my back like nobody else. Curtis and Brenda Turley. (celebrated 44 years Friday, they're not even that old! How bou dat?!) If I ever needed anything, they've got me. Why? I belong to them. I'm their kid. We share the same name.
 - If you are in Christ, you are IN CHRIST and he is IN YOU. Everything that belongs to him, belongs to you.
 - This is revolutionary for our...
4. **Friendship.**
 - You will be the greatest friend when you are most secure in Christ.
 - When we love his name and are not so concerned about our name, it frees us up to love other names, to be genuinely happy for our friends when good things happen to them. We can rejoice when they succeed. We can serve them and promote them.
 - Those white supremacists in Charlottesville are among the most insecure people on the planet. They live in search of a false power, and while we should unequivocally condemn their asinine acts of hatred, we should also pray that they would discover the true and greater name of Jesus.
5. **Perspective.**
 - When we see God for who he is, we begin to understand who we are.
 - *“Man never achieves a clear knowledge of himself unless he has first looked upon God's face, and then descends from contemplating him to scrutinizing himself.” - John Calvin*

- Then we will live with humility, not trying to build towers but actually building others up, and elevating God's name all the more.
- T: and perspective leads to a better...

6. Place.

- Here's the paradox. Upside-down kingdom of Christ...
- *When we exalt ourselves, we will be humbled by God.*
- *When we humble ourselves, we will be exalted by God.*

Today, would you... The Point: **Decide to live for the praise of God's name.**

Conclusion: When you do, you'll discover increased...

- Closeness and
- Character and
- Security and
- Friendship and
- Perspective and
- Place and
- A joy you were created for...

Because of what he has done for us.

Lead into time of Silent Prayer: to a) reflect on the supremacy of the name of Jesus & b) ask God to help you live for the greatness of his name.