

January 4, 2021

The Feast of The Holy Name of Jesus

Hello Gobin Community!

Today we celebrate the Feast Day of the Holy Name of Jesus.

Different Christian denominations celebrate this feast day on various days. In fact, some Christians even celebrate this feast for the entire month of January!

There is a rich Scriptural foundation for the name of Jesus. In Matthew and Luke's Gospel, by revelation of the Angel, the name Jesus is chosen. It's not randomly selected by Joseph and Mary, it's divinely appointed. And in Matthew's Gospel, it's explained that the name Jesus is the one who will rescue or deliver us. Literally the name means Ya-Shua, "God Delivers."

There are many ways to consider what this deliverance or liberation might look like, but I invite you to consider that at a primal level, Jesus comes to deliver our awareness. This freed awareness fully embraces our ontological design as image bearers of God and to show us that God has always been on our side.

Plainly spoken, Jesus did not come to change God's mind about us, but to change our mind about God and thus our mind about ourselves!

Jesus, delivers us to see who God has really been ALL ALONG! As Colossians tells us, Jesus is "the image of the invisible God." In doing so, Jesus shows us it is GOOD to be human and a GIFT to be alive!

Friends, this celebration reminds us God chose to become human and that God even took on a human name! In most of Christian history we have emphasized the divinity, omnipotence, omniscience, and "almightiness" of Jesus, which makes following him—or loving him—largely unattainable or unrealistic. We are on two utterly different planes that are rather hard to connect. A God who is "totally other" alienates humanity and creation.

So, for practical application I would encourage you to read the account of Jesus' naming in Luke. As you do, ponder the Word of God made speechless. The God who spoke the Universe into existence is so given to humility and humanity that the Word of God became incapable of sounding words.

St. Ignatius Loyola, in the Spiritual Exercises, emphasized that we sync our prayer to our breathing. We often think of this as only a Buddhist practice. However, nothing could be more traditionally Christian than saying the name of Jesus over and over again and syncing it with our breath. Saying as we take in, "Je" and breathing out "sus." Taking in "Je" out "sus."

I challenge you throughout the remainder of January that this be part of your prayer practice. Remember, it is not so much the words we pray that matter, but it's letting ourselves be loved so that we can become the face of love. As you do this, take in God's love and feel love flow out through you.

Grace and Peace,
Joel Everson