

What's in a Name?

by Ray Comfort

Ray Comfort's sermon emphasizes the transformative power of Jesus' resurrection and the personal relationship He offers to each believer.

Scripture: Psalm 139:1, John 20:11, Romans 6:23, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Revelation 3:20

Topics: "Personal Evangelism", "Salvation Experience"

Description

Ray Comfort preaches about the powerful encounter between Mary Magdalene and Jesus at the tomb, where her despair turned into joy as she realized that Jesus had conquered death for her and all of humanity. He emphasizes how the personalization of our names can make us feel special and cared for, just like how Jesus calls each of us by name and offers us salvation. Through a real-life encounter with a trucker named Robert, Ray illustrates the importance of personalizing evangelism by using people's names and engaging in heartfelt conversations about sin, repentance, and the transformative power of being born again.

Transcript

Do you remember what happened when Mary Magdalene had gone to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus (John chapter 20)? The preceding days had been a nightmare of unspeakable terror. The One she loved and called Lord had been viciously beaten by hardened soldiers, His body lacerated by the merciless Roman whip. Then He had been nailed to a cross and left to die in agony. Mary's very heart and soul had been sickened by the horror of the Roman cross.

Now, as she stood at the tomb she found that His body had been stolen by thieves. The sun had risen and cast its brilliant morning light, but in her mourning the darkest of days had become darker still. Her faith in God had been tested to the limit. All hope was gone.

Suddenly, a voice inquired about why she was weeping. This stranger's question was a strange question to ask anyone who stood outside of a tomb. As she spoke, suddenly she heard this stranger say her name: "Mary." Her name, spoken by that voice, carried with it the most incredible and the most wonderful of implications. It instantly flooded her darkened soul with a beam of golden light. This one name meant that Jesus of Nazareth--her Lord and Savior--had conquered death for her . . . and for the whole of humanity! The One who had died such a terrible death stood before her holding its very keys in His hands. He was alive forevermore. It was not possible that death could hold Him. The door of immortality had been cracked open, and the light of Heaven could now shine upon those who sat in the dark shadow of death.

If you are born again, you too once stood in darkness--without God, without hope, mystified by the agony of the cross. It was once foolishness to you who were perishing. It meant nothing but blackness and sorrow, pain and suffering. However, the risen Jesus whispered your name. In an instant your darkness turned into light. In that precious moment of time, the once distant Savior became the intimate lover of your soul, and your conqueror of death. He wrote your name in His book of life.

Good Work, Robert

I have noticed that when a stranger uses my name, it makes me feel special. I usually begin open-air preaching by introducing myself to the crowd. One day, a heckler was offended by what I was saying, but he used my name when he made an angry point. Despite what he said, his personalizing the comment made me feel special. That's why I ask for people's names when I witness to them, and then try to log it into my memory banks so that when I talk about their sin, I can refer to them by name. They can't see my motive for witnessing to them, but the personalizing of their name lets them know that I care about them as a human being.

Sometime ago, a huge truck arrived with 20,000 copies of our "Way of the Master" Foundation Course study guide. I went outside to direct the truck and saw a woman walking toward me. Her name was Pat, and it was her husband who was sitting in the driver's seat of the truck.

A few minutes later while the truck was being unloaded, I took a copy of What Hollywood Believes and a CD of the same title and knocked on the cab door of the massive 70-foot 18-wheeler. When Pat opened it, I asked if she wanted a book, autographed it for her and "Robert," and handed it to her. Then I went around to the back of the vehicle and began to help with the unloading. As the man lifted boxes, I called out, "Good work, Robert." He looked at me and carried on working, probably wondering how I knew his name.

After the shipment was unloaded, he came to the warehouse door to have the delivery sheet signed. I thanked him, using his name once again. Robert looked like a trucker. He was a man who had been worn down by a life of physical work, and although he smelled of cigarettes he had a softness about him.

As we slowly walked toward his vehicle I said, "I gave Pat a book and a CD. It's a Christian book. Have you had a Christian background?"

"Baptist."

"Do you think you are a good person...will you go to Heaven when you die?"

"I think so."

"Let me ask you some questions. These really helped me. Have you ever told a lie?"

"Yes."

"What does that make you?"

"A liar."

"Have you ever stolen something?"

"Yes."

"What does that make you?"

"A thief."

"Have you ever used God's name in vain?"

"Yes."

"That's called blasphemy--using God's name as a cuss word.

"Now listen to this. This one will nail you; it did me. Jesus said, 'Whoever looks upon a woman to lust after her has committed adultery already with her in his heart.' Have you ever done that?"

"Many times."

I looked him in the eye and said, "Robert, this is how God sees you--as a lying, thieving, blasphemous adulterer-at-heart. If He judges you by the Ten Commandments on the Day of Judgment, will you be innocent or guilty?"

"Guilty."

"Will you go to Heaven or Hell?"

"Hell."

"Does that concern you?"

"It really concerns me."

He was obviously humbled by the Law, so I said, "Do you know what God did for you so that you wouldn't have to go to Hell?"

"He died for our sins."

"That's right. Jesus suffered on the cross for you. He took your punishment upon Himself, and what you must do is repent and trust Him. Repentance is more than confessing your sins to God. It means to stop sinning. No more lying or stealing. No more lusting. You might think, 'How could I stop lusting? It's such a part of me.' Robert, when you are born again, it's a radical change. Remember how you didn't exist, and suddenly God gave you life? You were born into this world. That was radical. When you are born again, it's just as radical. God gives you a new heart with new desires--desires that want to please Him. When do you think you will get right with God?"

He looked at me and said, "Real soon." I asked, "How about here and now? Do you want to pray?" He replied that he did, so I said, "Give me your hand. You pray first. Ask God to forgive you." He immediately took my hand and prayed, "God, please forgive my sins." Then I said, "Say that you will trust in Jesus." He added, "Jesus, I trust you with my life." I then prayed for him right there on the sidewalk. It must have looked a little strange--me and a hardened trucker holding hands and praying, as people walked past us.

We went back to the warehouse and I gave him a copy of The Evidence Bible, a CD of "Hell's Best Kept Secret," and a copy of a booklet called Save Yourself Some Pain, which gives principles of growth for new Christians. I said, "It's been an important day for you, Robert." He said, "I know it. Thank you," and went on his way.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ray-comfort/whats-in-a-name/>

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