

Naming



John 1:40-42

Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon, son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter).

Today I want to start with a poem: **The Flower**, by Kim Chun-soo (1922-2004)

Before I called her name,
she was nothing
more than a gesture.

When I called her name,
she came to me
and became a flower.

Like I called her name,
will someone please call my name
that suits my light and fragrance?
I, too, long to come to her
and become her flower.

We all long to be something.
You, to me, and I, to you,
long to become a gaze that won't be forgotten.

Who can call your name most fitting to your color and fragrance? It will change your destiny.

In the scripture, we read the scene where Jesus meets Peter and gives him a new name, most fitting and most potent to his life and eternal life. Imagine what Peter might have looked like. How might you have seen Peter if you had met him for the first time? Do you think that Peter looked like a professor in a university holding books with delicate hands? Of course not. Instead, he might be a person who is on the opposite side *of the spectrum*. He might have looked more like a dangerous person. He was a fisherman who had to fight with the winds, waves, and the Galilean sea's big and small dangers. His face, expressions, and words must not have been *as refined as* an intellectual. And oh, the time he lived! He and his fishermen friends had to fend off the hard life of the colonial suffering *under* the Roman empire. *Imagine a depressed face with very dark sun-scorched skin.*

Jesus saw in Peter something like a Cephas, which is derived from the Aramaic word “kephas,” (in Hebrew it is known to mean “rock” or “stone”; while Peter comes from the Greek word for rock, “petros”). Jesus sees through his outward toughness and calls out the most beautiful possibility and potential of the person. Jesus said, “You are Simon, son of John. You will be called Cephas”. He meant, “You should become Cephas.” The name given to Peter makes him into a Cephas.

Jesus did the same to Nathanael, a cynical and skeptical person who said, “Can anything good come from Nazareth?” He saw the most beautiful possibility of his life. Jesus said, “Now, here is a genuine son of Israel—a man of complete integrity.” Once God *spoke to* me, too. *It came at* a time when *I was* full of fear and insecurity. Yet, God saw the possibility of the future; “You will be wise, powerful, strong, and beautiful!” How many years have passed since that naming ceremony?

Jesus sees in you the beautiful you, the powerful you, the wise you, and the strong you! And Jesus calls you with the name that you desire. And this lets you be the one. What is the name that you call yourself? And what is the name that Jesus calls you? Ask him right now and listen to him in your quiet heart. The name will beckon you from the future! And the name will be your destiny.