

## SERMON NOTES

SERIES: Christmas 2016  
TITLE: "You Shall Call His Name Jesus"

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 1:21

DATE: December 18, 2016

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There's a reason we talk about "the reason for the season" during Christmas, and that's because we somehow manage every year to get distracted by things that are not ultimate things. Traditions are great. Christmas parties are great. Gifts are great. Families are great. Traveling is great. But none of these things have innate holiday goodness. The goodness of these things comes from Jesus himself, and every December we need a fresh reminder of why we celebrate, and why and how he is good and makes these things good.

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Matthew is straight-forward in his version of the Christmas story. The angel speaks very plainly to Joseph, and says, "You shall call him Jesus for he will save his people from their sins." This is so simple on the surface, that we often overlook the depth of it's meaning. So, what does this line from Matthew actually *mean*? To help us answer this question, we will examine more closely four ideas in this verse: NAME, JESUS, SAVE, and SINS.

### NAME

Someone's name in Scripture is about their purpose, essence, or identity. It wasn't basically about how they were addressed by others. This idea should cause us to reflect on our "name," our purpose and identity.

### JESUS

On one level, the name "Jesus" isn't special at all (it's the same name as "Josh"). It's a very normal name like Bill, Bob, or John. But the name means "God is salvation." There was an Old Testament Joshua that led God's people into the promised land and saved them from their enemies. But Jesus is a new Joshua; he's the divine Messiah who is leading his people to the True Promised Land, and finally and forever saving them from their enemies. Jesus perfectly lives out his name; in Jesus, "God saves."

### SAVE

Salvation is about divine deliverance from an unwanted or dangerous situation, like God saving Israel from the Egyptians. The point of the New Testament is that we're not holding our breath to experience 'the saved life' one day when we die. Rather, because of Christmas – because of Jesus coming to earth – God has brought his future salvation to bear on our present situation.

## SIN

The basic definition of sin is to miss the mark, to come up short of God's perfect standard. It doesn't say how close you are to the mark, just that you missed it. It isn't about your motives in missing the mark, just that you missed it. And Scripture says we've all missed the bulls-eye. But the deceitful part of sin is that it tries to trick us into believing that these other people or other things are our biggest problems. The sneakiness of sin is that tries to convince you that your real issues are out there, and not in here, in your own soul.

But while we don't add up, there's one who does. While we fall short, there's one who never did. We don't hit the bulls-eye, but there's one who is dead-center every time. We can't save ourselves, but when Jesus was on the cross, they yelled at him, "Save yourself," and he could have. But he chose to endure it in order to bring us in, to rescue us from death to life.

Without Christmas, Easter is impossible. And without Easter, Christmas is a story without a happy ending. In other words, you can't define the cradle of Bethlehem without the cross of Calvary.

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### **For Discussion:**

1. In what way(s) do you presume on Jesus during the holiday season?
2. Based on these definitions, what do you think experiencing God's salvation should look like on a day-to-day basis for Christians.
3. What sin(s) are a constant struggle for you as you seek to love God and love other people? How does God want to, through Jesus, continue to deliver you from those?