

Shaddai, El Shaddai, Er-kahm-ka-na Adonai; we will praise and lift you high, El Shaddai.

There's Something About That Name

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Jesus, Jesus, Jesus! There's just something about that name! Master, Savior, Jesus! Like the fragrance after the rain. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus! Let all heaven and earth proclaim: Kings and kingdoms will all pass away, but there's something about that name!

His Name is Wonderful

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His name is wonderful, His name is wonderful, His name is wonderful, Jesus, my Lord. He is the mighty King, Master of everything; his name is wonderful, Jesus my Lord.

He's the great Shepherd, the Rock of all Ages, almighty God is He.

Bow down before him, love and adore him, his name is wonderful, Jesus my Lord.

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Psalm

116:1-4, 12-19

¹I love the Lord, because he has heard my voice and my supplications. ²Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live. ³The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish. ⁴Then I called on the name of the Lord: "O Lord, I pray, save my life!"

¹²What shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me? ¹³I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord,

¹⁴I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people. ¹⁵Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful ones. ¹⁶O Lord, I am your servant; I am your servant, the child of your serving girl. You have loosed my bonds. ¹⁷I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice and call on the name of the Lord. ¹⁸I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people, ¹⁹in the courts of the house of the Lord, in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord!

The Word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

A Quaker and a Football Player¹ Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19
Saint Marks UMC, Charleston, WV – Third Sunday of Easter (May 8) 2011

Perhaps you've heard the story of the Quaker innkeeper who was asked the old evangelical question, **“Are you saved?”**

He replied, “Am I saved? Why do you ask me such a thing? I'll give you the names of my doctor and my banker and my grocer and my neighbor. Go ask *them* if I'm saved.”

The point is: if we have accepted Jesus as Lord of our Life, shouldn't it show? Shouldn't others be able to tell the difference in my life?

In verse 12, the psalmist says “What do I owe God for saving my life?”

First, he would **“lift the cup of salvation”** and **“make a thanksgiving offering.”** In other words, he would **worship God**.

The **second thing** the psalmist says he would do in gratitude to God for saving his life is to **“call on the name of the Lord.”** In other words, he **committed himself to a life of prayer**. Later in our communion liturgy, we acknowledge that ***“It is right and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth.”***

¹ Borrowed heavily from “How Do You Know I'm a Christian” by Paul Harmon, Trinity UMC< Spartansburg, SC, in *Lectionary Homiletics*, vol. XVI, No. 3, April / May 2005, pp. 20-22.

The third thing the psalmist says he would do is to “pay his vows.”
Do we hold to our membership vows? Remember what they are? (page 48 in your Hymnal, except, the new Vows add: “AND WITNESS”)

The *thing that distinguishes this psalm* from other songs of thanksgiving, though, is the emphasis on how the psalmist will do all this “**before the people**.” He says it twice, and at the end of the psalm he expands the promise to include the “courts of the house of the Lord” – that is those areas where even Gentiles would gather – in the marketplace.

Like that Quaker innkeeper, the psalmist has come to understand that his salvation and his thanksgiving is something that must be proclaimed in public, and his faith in God is something that must be practiced in public, so that others can see, and can attest to his salvation.

I came across a story that a preacher told, in a YouTube broadcast of worship. Fred White turned me on to this pastor. His name is R. A. Vernon. He’s out there.

He told the story about taking his son to a Pop Warner football game. They were going to be playing a team against whom they had scrimmaged the weekend before – had a practice game against. This week, it was for real.

They got there early, and ran into the coach of the other team. He came up to Pastor Vernon’s son, who jersey number was 49. And this other coach said to him. “49 Did you play last week. Cause I didn’t see you.”

Vernon told his congregation, that as Ray’s father, that made him pretty upset. He said to his son, “Did you hear what he said about you,

Player. He said he didn't even notice you. What are you going to do about it?" Ray didn't say anything.

First play of the game. Ray is playing middle linebacker. Ray gets an interception and takes it 50 yards to the house – Touchdown!

I'm so excited I'm running down along the sideline.

Sometimes the first play sets the stage. Ray's team is 0-4. Second play of the game, he sacks the quarterback. Next series, he is playing offense, as a Fullback, and he throws a block that allows the tailback to score a touchdown. That's 14 points that Ray has brought to his team.

Ray's team won by a final score of 21-7. They were now 1-4. Ray, my little 49, was the hero of the game. As we walked to the car, I said to him:

"Son, I'm so proud of you." I was looking for some kind of classy, humble response. But, he said, **"I bet he remembers me now."**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IT3BH67yo9g>

And then the preacher tells his congregation why he told that story. In terms of our situation today, he asks, and I ask, and Psalm 116 asks: **what it would be like ... can we even begin to imagine what it would take, for the people in THIS community, in downtown and east end of Charleston to be saying, "We remember Saint Marks. Oh, yes."**

Faith is not just a me-and-Jesus thing. There are times indeed where we need to "go to the garden alone" but Psalm 116 teaches us that it's got to be more than that.

If we're saved, then OTHER people have got to know it. Yes, they do.
In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN.

OFFERING

Offertory

HOLY COMMUNION

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* HYMN OF DEDICATION

We Meet You, O Christ

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1. We meet You, O Christ, in many a guise:**Your image we see in simple and wise. You live in a palace, exist in a shack. We see You, the gardener, a tree** on Your back.
2. In millions alive, away and abroad;**Involved in our life** You live down the road.**Imprisoned in systems, You long to be free. We see You, Lord Jesus, still bearing Your tree.**
3. We hear You, O Christ, in agony cry.**For freedom You march, in riots You die. Your face in the papers we read and we see. The tree must be planted by human decree.**
4. You choose to be made at one with the earth;**The dark of the grave prepares for Your birth. Your death is Your rising, creative Your word: The tree springs to life and our hope is restored.**

* BENEDICTION & SENDING FORTH

Rev'd Brown,

Rev'd Harman

POSTLUDE