



“WHAT’S IN A NAME?”
EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE
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John 20:1-18

“When Someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know your name is safe in their mouth.” Billy, age four, said so profoundly what most full grown believers cannot describe. Hear that again: “When Someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know your name is safe in their mouth.” Jesus has always taught us to have the hearts of children. To look to them as the examples for our hearts. Examples of the honest, wide-eyed faith WE are to have.

Just look into a child’s eyes today and you see that Easter sparkle...that enthusiasm and excitement. And check out every corresponding parents’ eyes, groggy from staying up late to make sure everything is in order for the big day.

Mary Magdalene, in this passage of Luke, reminds me of a child. She comes to the tomb openly distraught. It brings to mind the image of my little brother a few years ago. He was big on catching bugs, as most little boys are and was fortunate enough to stumble across a preying mantis in our backyard which he immediately named Manny and adopted as his new best friend. As we all know, bug are not known for their longevity and a few days later he gloomily announced Manny’s death. My mom and I struggled not to laugh as he soberly buried his friend and kept talking about what a good bug Manny was. Mary comes, after 3 days, just beginning to comprehend that her best friend... that her Jesus... that our Jesus... is gone.

She knew EXACTLY what little Billy spoke so eloquently of. While she tenderly weeps for her missing companion, Jesus needs only to SPEAK HER NAME for her to know it is her beloved. Like a child she looks for no catches or disclaimers... she doesn’t stop to check for fine print or brush it off as too good to be true. She simply runs into Jesus’s arms.

I think all too often we see Easter through the wearied and weathered hearts of adults rather than the hearts of children. We worry so much as the details, the fine print like getting the cards out on time or what to make for the family dinner, that we forget the child-like excitement that Easter’s all about. Like Mary we’re standing FACE TO FACE with our resurrected Savior and BEST FRIEND. Not to mention all the eternal life and freedom from death stuff! Yet, unlike Mary, we’re looking for the catch... the disclaimer. Our scientifically trained eyes are searching for why this must not... could not... be true.

What we really need to be doing this Easter day is running into Jesus’s arms. Falling on the love that is SO PERSONAL... that it calls you BY NAME. And when He does, you know your name is safe in His mouth. The love that is SO DEEP that it was able to do what no other esteemed hero of the Bible could. In all his glory, David wasn’t capable of this feat. Elijah in all his wisdom was not... Moses was almost mistaken for the Messiah, after all, He could part the sea... but he could not do this. Mary in all her submission... Mary was only human. She couldn’t do this either. ONLY Jesus was able to pull off this miracle celebrated almost 2000 years later.

So now here we are, as Mary. We’ve stood witness from the parading of Jesus and shouts of Hosanna last week knowing of that coming of the dark crucifixion on Friday. And now we’ve come this morning to re-experience that happily ever after ending that requires

children's hearts of us. We came this morning having lost our King and our friend... only to find ourselves FACE TO FACE with the REAL, LIVING, BREATHING, ETERNAL LOVE of God. Somebody who loves YOU... and is calling you BY NAME...

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit... Amen.