May 2/3, 2026
Fifth Sunday of Easter/Confirmation Sunday
St. Matthew's Lutheran Church
Acts 4:8-12
A Name Worth Remembering

Dear brothers and sisters in the name of Jesus,

I've been a pastor here at St. Matthew's for 13 months now, and I have a confession to make…..I still don't have all your names down perfectly. It's not that your name isn't worth remembering. God has given me a decent gift to be able to remember names, but it's still difficult for every name to stick. Even when it came to my catechism students this past year, it took several classes before those names were confidently stored in my memory.

Once you've solidified a name to memory, that name generally sticks with you for some time. But, without any interaction with someone, their name begins to fade. For instance, as I recall my confirmation 21 years ago, I know my class size was 14, but I couldn't tell you the names of all 14 because I haven't seen several of them or talked to them since May 1, 2005. This next thought is perhaps for a separate sermon, but it's a reminder to me and all of us to keep fellow believers by name in our prayer life and in our encouragement to be in worship so they don't stray. Had I been better at that in my past, I'm sure I'd still remember their names because I was praying for them often rather than letting them become a distant memory.

As we focus on our lesson from the book of Acts today, there's one name I pray you never forget. More than that, there's one name I pray you never fail to make use of. Because his name isn't just one to remember as an answer to a test question. His name is one to keep close to your heart because forgetting what his name means and does for you has eternal consequences. Peter preached, **"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."** That name, of course, is Jesus.

Our confirmands did an excellent job answering questions this past week, so I won't put them on the spot again with a catechism question. Rather, I'll ask you all right now, and you can answer in your minds to the best of your knowledge. The catechism question is, "What is God's name?" It sounds like a loaded question full of so many answers. And, to an extent, that's an accurate assessment. But, we can summarize God's name this way: God's name is everything he tells us about himself in his Word.

God gives us so many different descriptions of himself and so many varied names for himself in the Bible. But, there's one that keeps popping up again and again in the New Testament: "Jesus." It's also all over the Old Testament. The name "Joshua" is the Hebrew form of the Greek name "Jesus." And, perhaps you remember what that name means. "He will save." Or, as the angel described this name to Joseph who would be Jesus' earthly father, **"You are to give him the name 'Jesus' because he will save his people *from their sins."*** (Matthew 1:21) No wonder this name is a name worth remembering. His name saves us for eternity.

His name is the answer to a popular question we can all use when witnessing to others. The scenario goes like this. Say you were called from this world today, and you're standing before God's judgment seat. And, God asks you, "Why should I let *you* into heaven?" What is your answer? There are so many answers out there. Many will say, "I lived a pretty good life. I know I messed up at times, but I did my best, and I wasn't as bad as many others out there." But, that response is relying on one's own name and actions.

The only acceptable answer is the name Jesus. **"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."** If the answer to salvation is a one-word answer, why do we spend so much time studying so many other things in the Bible? Well, all of Scripture's teachings hang on and point back to the name that saves.

The 10 Commandments reveal our sinfulness but also reveal Jesus' perfection for us. Then, they show us how to live lives of thanksgiving to Jesus for being our Savior. The Apostles' Creed clearly states Jesus' redemptive work for us and how God the Father sent him to be our Savior and how God the Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts to trust Jesus alone for salvation. Baptism brings us into the family of God so we might call Jesus our brother and know we are baptized into his death and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins. The Lord's Supper gives us forgiveness of sins in Jesus' own body and blood which we receive in, with, and under the bread and wine. As we study Keys and Confession, we confidently confess our sins knowing we will be forgiven for Jesus' sake, and we are given the authority from Jesus to announce forgiveness to any repentant believer. And, we love to study the wonderful prayer that Jesus himself taught us to pray. Remembering the name "Jesus" is not just a one-word answer to the question of one's salvation. It's a whole-hearted detailed confession of faith in everything Jesus has done and continues to do for us now for the purpose of living with him eternally.

Everything that we study will always come back to this name worth remembering. At the end of the day, it's all about the name: Jesus. Salvation is found in his name alone. His name is the way, the truth, and the life. That name and all that's associated with him for salvation is your simple, powerful confession.

Our confirmands are going to make some serious promises as they confess their faith *(during the 10:30 service on Sunday).* Perhaps the most serious will follow this question, **"Do you intend to continue steadfast in this teaching and to endure all things, *even death,* rather than fall away from it?"** They will answer, **"I do, and I ask God to help me."** Ultimately, they are promising to remember the name of Jesus for their salvation no matter what comes their way.

That's a bold promise made in the presence of God, of this congregation, and also in the presence of spiritual evil. The devil and the evil spirits working alongside him will hear that promise and laugh. They'll say to themselves, "We'll see about that." Remembering the name of Jesus won't be as easy a task as you might think, fellow believers. Our ongoing fight is not against flesh and blood but against the spiritual forces of evil that desire to drag us all to hell. And, they will put up a serious fight.

In my role as school pastor here at St. Matthew's, I have the privilege to mingle with the students and to have Q and A sessions. I was in the kindergarten room on Friday, and one student asked the question, "Why didn't Jesus' enemies believe in him as the Savior?" It sounds so obvious to us that everyone would call on the name of Jesus for their salvation. But, as Peter reminds us, **"Jesus is the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone."** Jesus' enemies didn't believe in him because they relied on their own wisdom to decide who Jesus was. As such, they succumbed to the devil's temptation to disown Jesus as their Savior.

If our answer to the promise to remain faithful in remembering Jesus is only "I do," we will fail in that promise. We will allow the world's pleasures to distract us from what's truly valuable: eternal salvation in Jesus. We will allow the world's heartaches to make God out as a scapegoat, blaming him for our difficulties. "If he can't take protect me from earthly trouble, how can he be my great Savior?" If we only answer "*I* will remember the name of Jesus," we're in trouble.

We understand from many warnings in Scripture that remembering what Jesus has done for us can be a difficult task because of all the evil spiritual forces at work against us. So, is it a foolish promise you've made in the past, and a foolish promise our confirmands will make to be faithful in remembering Jesus? By no means. How can it be a foolish promise when we're asking for God's help to fulfill such a promise? That's why our confirmands will answer as many Lutheran confirmands have answered in the past, "I do, *and I ask God to help me."*

As I slowed down to study this familiar section of God's Word, a certain phrase struck me: **"Peter, *filled with the Holy Spirit."*** He was no longer speaking on his own strength. He was speaking with the Lord's strength. Two months earlier, he was the one who denied knowing Jesus because of the accusations of a servant in a

courtyard. Now, he boldly confesses knowing Jesus and his name for salvation, and he does so with the threat of imprisonment and additional pressure from the Jewish ruling body.

Peter had God's strength because he was in the Word and because he prayed often for the Spirit to give him strength. That's a prayer God will always answer in the affirmative. Yes, remembering Jesus will be made difficult because of the temptations of the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh. But as difficult as they can make it for us to remember Jesus, the answer to such temptations is actually quite simple: rely on the Lord's strength to remember Jesus.

You will find such strength by remaining in the Word: in church and in personal study. You will find such strength by regularly receiving Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper and by recalling your baptism which still washes away your sins to this day. Attached to the Word and the Sacraments is the name of Jesus. His name is worth remembering because it saves us for eternity and it gives us the strength to keep journeying to heaven on the only right path.

God has given us such simple, yet powerful tools to keep on remembering this name. Carve out time to hear about that name and God will crush for you the temptation to forget what the name of Jesus does for you. Don't complicate your life by allowing other so-called names to take precedence as idols in your life. Salvation is not found in the name of sports, not in the name of an overworked schedule, not in the name of social outings, nor in an obsession with the things of this world. Rather, **"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."** Simplify your life by being in the Word. God promises to help you keep on remembering the name worth remembering.

The name worth remembering releases you from guilt. It motivates you to be a light in a world of darkness. It gives you true purpose in a world where people are left wondering what they're supposed to be doing. Remember the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins and for your salvation. Fellow believers and especially our confirmands, I'll keep doing the work to remember your names particularly by keeping you in my prayers that God would keep leading you back to worship and back into your Bible so that you might keep on remembering the name of Jesus so that we will enjoy eternity together. Amen.

Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!