

"NAME ABOVE ALL"**Date:** December 23, 2021**Speaker:** Danny Clinton**"Danny Joe!"**

- The use of that name changed what was about to happen next...
- I knew instantly that whoever this was... they were people from long ago in my story.
- 'Danny Joe' is my legal first name. For some reason, as I got older, it just became Danny.
- I'm named after my father "Danny" and my grandfather on my mother's side "Joe".

A few years ago, my grandfather on my dad's side was diagnosed with Cancer and was getting ready to pass away...

- He was a very hard-hearted man so, I didn't know him that well.
- I was purposeful the last few months to spend what time I could with him.
- We talked about his life and story a little, and about his time in prison when he got some of his of his many tattoos...
- One evening, being curious about my father's name, and so my name, I asked him why he chose it... Danny for my Dad and Dave for my Uncle.
- ... He gave me this look... like I was a bit dull and bit too young to understand... and then said "Uhhhh... Daniel Boone and Davey Crocket!" Yes, folks my uncle's legal name is "Davey."

Something else happened in that moment, as he pondered the reason that he chose those names for his sons... I was able to see him in a different light...

- I imagined him as a little boy, watching his favorite television program, (isn't that what they called them back then?) and then deciding one evening, that if he ever had sons, that's what he would name them.

It's quite clear that there's a lot of power in a name...

- A much more current example of this would be the recent announcement of our Creative Arts Director, Alyssa, and her Husband Kevin's pregnancy...
- Just a few days ago, Alyssa sat Erin and I down to share that they had chosen a name for their baby, who they had found out only a few days earlier was girl! (I always said it was a girl by the way!)
- The name of their little girl would be Nora Jean Athey. Nora was the name of Alyssa's Great Grandmother.

- And, just like that, like only a name can, it changed reality.
- For me, she became knowable in some way...

With the power of a name in mind I want to read you a passage...

(Vs) Luke 3:1-7 – “In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.”

The last 9 months had been hazardous at best...

- Joseph had lost his reputation, and perhaps even employment...
- Mary was most likely scorned, excluded and ridiculed...
- Then a decree for a census came out and they had to travel almost a week to Bethlehem, the city of Joseph’s ancestors...
- They faced all of this, just the two of them... Overcoming obstacle after obstacle...Facing each with great resolve!

Question: Why? How did this young couple live with such purpose despite these circumstances?

- I think the answer lies within the revelations... 9 months earlier...

(Vs) Luke 1:26-33 – “In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed^[a] to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

(Vs) Matthew 1:18-24 – “¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

²³ "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel!"

(which means, God with us). ²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵ but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

It's the name - Joseph and Mary both knew something about that name...

- Many people have been named Jesus before and since the biblical Jesus.
- But only this Jesus is referred to as Jesus Christ or Christ Jesus.
- The word Christ further signifies his unique identity and mission. Christ means "Anointed."
- Anointed is the Greek word for the Hebrew "Messiah," which is Jesus' official title.
- In the New Testament, this title is linked with Jesus 514 times.

This is what they kept close to their heart...

- This is what they talked about at night next to campfire and first thing in the morning as they loaded the animals. The name, "He will be called Jesus!"
- It seems, for them, that name changed their reality... That name was enough.
- That name changed everything that was about to happen next...
- It's as if God became more knowable to them somehow.

Do you see? – As we celebrate this Christmas Eve, once again what we have is the name...

- The name that changes reality... The name that is enough.

(Vs) Philippians 2:9 – "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name..."

This name... (Vs) Isaiah 9:6b – "... His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

- But we don't have an image of Jesus we can put up on the screen... What we have are these descriptions of what His name means...

And so, we gather and hold lights together...

(Vs) John 8:12 – Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

- In this way, we remember and bring honor to the name above all names...

Wherever you are on your journey... Christ is there...

- Whatever campfire struggles, or whenever you are scorned, excluded, and ridiculed...
- Christ Is There! He's the name from long ago in all of our stories.
- That name that can change everything that's about to happen next...