**Sermon Luke 3:15-17, 21-22 – 9/1/22**

Videolink: <https://youtu.be/0G7VzXK6aTk>

When I was born my parents gave me three names. The story they told me years later is that they wanted to name me after one of my grandfathers. The problem was that there was pressure from the extended family as to which grandfather I should be named after. The choice was to either to be named Horst after my father’s father or Kurt, after my mother’s father? Finally, my parents decided to settle the debate by naming me Rolf, using Horst and Kurt, as my second and third names.

Names are important and for most of us, it is important that the key people in our lives know our name. When we meet someone, one of the first questions most of us ask is, “What is your name.” That is how most of our important relationships begin, by getting to know each other’s name. If someone can’t be bothered to get to know your name it makes you feel like they don’t care about you. At the same time when we can’t remember someone’s name that we think we should know, we can feel very embarrassed.

God knows your name. That’s right! God who created the universe, knows your name. God has redeemed you and summoned you by name. God did this on the day you were baptised. On that day as the water was placed on you, God summoned you by your name, washed you clean, redeemed you and God claimed you as His own dear child.

If you ever wonder if God thinks about you. If you ever wonder if God cares about you. If you ever wonder if God knows you and is aware of what is happening in your life. Look back to your baptism and be reminded that God knows you, knows your name and thinks of you as his own.

In our culture, one name that is usually always passed onto a child is the family name. The family name connects the child not only to the parents but to the wider family back through the generations and across the whole family tree. The family name is an indication that you are part of a wider history that is far bigger than your immediate family.

God also gave you a family name. God gave you his own name as you were baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. At your Baptism God summoned you by your name and God gave you his own name as he redeemed you and adopted you as one of his dearly beloved children. You became a part God’s family with brothers and sisters across the world. A family that goes back for generations all the way to Jesus and even further back all the way to Abraham. When God called your name in Holy Baptism you became a part of something far bigger than yourself.

Have you ever asked a parent how they felt when their child was first born? If it is the first child then most parents probably feel a little overwhelmed with fear and uncertainty about their ability to be a good parent. More importantly, though most parents are also overwhelmed with unconditional love. Most parents are very pleased with their new baby. Pleased not because the child has done anything great. Rather pleased because of the pure pleasure of being in the presence of this human being for whom they feel such overwhelming love.

Parents place such a high importance on naming their children, because of the overwhelming love they have for their children. Once you have named your child, your heart is forever attached to that name, because your heart is forever committed to the person you have given that name to. Speaking that person’s name brings with it joy and pleasure. When God calls you by name, God is attaching his heart to you forever, God is committed to you forever and God is pleased to be with you forever.

When Jesus was Baptised God was so committed, so pleased, so full of joy that every person in the Holy Trinity was present. Jesus was present, the Holy Spirit was present, coming down in the form of a dove, and God the Father was present breaking through the divide between heaven and earth and saying, “‘You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.’

The baptism of Jesus was the beginning of something new that God was doing and has been doing ever since. From that moment of time, the Holy Trinity has chosen to be present whenever a person is baptised into the name of the Holy Trinity. When you were baptised God the Father was present, God the Son was present and God the Holy Spirit was present.

When you were baptised God did not only give you his name. God was expressing his love for you and the pleasure of having you as a part of his family. In your baptism God confirmed that you are his child, whom he loves and with whom he is well pleased.

In Holy Baptism you were named and claimed by God, and the Holy Spirit was given to you. If you have ever purchased a house, you will know that the contract is not valid until the purchaser has given the owner a deposit. The deposit is a guarantee that the contract will be honoured by both the buyer and the seller. It secures the house for the purchaser until such time as the full payment is made and the purchaser takes possession of the property.

In a similar way the Holy Spirit is given to everyone who is baptised in the name of the Triune God as a guarantee of the inheritance waiting for them. That eternal home that Jesus has promised to prepare for each of his bothers and sisters.

There is a difference though in the guarantee we have through the Holy Spirit. When you put a deposit on a house you need to come up with the balance of the purchase price before you take possession. In the case of our heavenly inheritance, Jesus has already made full payment on our behalf, leaving no doubt about our future inheritance.

Unlike the thousands that were Baptised in the Jordan by John the Baptist repenting and receiving forgiveness of sins. Jesus arrived sinless at the Jordan and there began his ministry of taking upon himself the sins of the people and the whole world. The Baptism of Jesus is the place where the sweet swap began. Our sins, for Jesus’ sinlessness, our acceptance into God’s family for Jesus’ abandonment on the cross, our eternal life for Jesus’ death. This sweet swap was confirmed for you when God summoned you by your name at your baptism, adopted you as one of his beloved children, placed the Holy Spirit in you and wrote your name on the palm of his hands where it remains forever.

**Amen**

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