

# Thought For The Week

Articles: [Names ~400 words](#), [~900 words](#)

## Exploring the Depth of Names:

### A Comprehensive Reflection on a Sermon About Biblical and Personal Identity

In a heartfelt church service, the congregation gathered for scripture readings and a sermon that delved into the often-overlooked power of names. With John reading from Matthew 1:21-23 and Roger from Acts 4:12, Mike took the pulpit to deliver a lesson titled "Names." His rotation turn to speak was embraced with enthusiasm, as he wove together everyday analogies, cultural references, and biblical truths to argue against the dismissal of names as meaningless. Drawing from songs sung that morning, Mike set the stage for a discussion on one pivotal name that recurs in faith dialogues: Jesus.

Mike opened by addressing skeptics who claim "there's nothing in a name," a phrase echoed in Shakespeare's "a rose by any other name would smell just as sweet." Yet, he countered, we don't rename roses arbitrarily, nor should we with sacred identities. To illustrate, he shared practical examples. Imagine writing a check without a signature—banks refuse it because the name authenticates value. On one occasion, Mike noted, a check was rejected for lacking a signature, proving names confer authority and trust.

Shifting to modern culture, Mike explored the "Karen" stereotype, popularized on YouTube. Stemming from a real woman named Karen who displayed arrogance, the term now labels any entitled behavior, even in fictional stories where women commit exaggerated or criminal acts. These narratives, often satirical, highlight how one name can encapsulate traits, influencing perceptions. Mike researched "Karen": from Greek "katharos," meaning "pure," and Hebrew "keren," signifying "power," "strength," or "radiance" (as in Psalm 18:2, where it denotes divine fortification). Ironically, the stereotype embodies the opposite—impurity and darkness—showing how names evolve but retain impact. "People like to hear their names instead of 'hey you,'" he added, emphasizing personal dignity in addressing others properly.

This led seamlessly into biblical etymology, where names reveal character and destiny. In Genesis, Adam means "of the ground," reflecting his creation from earth. Eve signifies "life" or "life-giver," as the mother of all living. Cain, "acquired," marks Eve's joy at gaining a son from the Lord. Abel's name, per Young's Analytical Concordance, implies "transitory" or "fleeting," foreshadowing his short life ended by Cain's jealousy over sacrifices. Mike urged listeners to research their own names, noting, "Names have meanings, and we found that out early in the Bible."

The sermon's heart centered on Jesus, whose name Yeshua translates to "deliverance," "salvation," or "saving." Matthew 1:21 declares, "You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." This fulfills prophecy, as the virgin bears a son called Emmanuel, "God with us." Mike stressed the exclusivity in Acts 4:12: "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven... by which we must be saved." No alternatives exist; salvation hinges on this name.

To deepen this, Mike read Philippians 2:5-11, portraying Christ's mindset. Though equal with God, Jesus didn't cling to divinity but emptied himself, taking a servant's form, appearing as a man. He humbled himself to death on the cross—obeying perfectly despite sinlessness. For this, "God has highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name." At Jesus' name, every knee bows—in heaven, earth, and under the earth—and every tongue confesses him as Lord, glorifying the Father. Mike highlighted Jesus' pre-existence in heaven, incarnation as flesh, and servant-like humility. Though innocent, he died violently "as if he was a sinful man," the ultimate sacrifice. Those denying names' importance overlook this exaltation; one day, all will acknowledge it, but for deniers, it may be too late.

Mike tied this to Christian nomenclature. The name "Christian" isn't hyphenated or modified—simply "Christian." Acts 11:26 records disciples first called Christians in Antioch, not the origin of Christianity but its labeling. Mike believed this divine, despite ridicule. In Acts 26:28, Agrippa tells Paul, "Almost you persuade me to become a Christian," prompting Mike to urge full commitment, not "almost." Quoting 1 Peter 4:14-16, he said, "If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you... But let none of you suffer as a murderer... Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter." Christians embody Christ's followers, proud of the name because he redeemed us from sin, as discussed in prior Bible classes.

The sermon addressed persecution: In Peter's and Paul's eras, believers suffered for the name. Even today, in foreign lands, Christians face threats. Mike challenged: "Will you not be willing to wear that name even if you have to suffer for it?" He affirmed pride in "Christian," honoring Christ's life-giving sacrifice.

Concluding, Mike extended an invitation during the closing song: "Are you wearing his name proudly? If not, will you not come to wear Christ's name?" He reiterated, "There is something in the name. Christ's name means something. Everyone's name has got a meaning." This call echoes the sermon's thesis: Names aren't trivial; they define identity, purpose, and salvation. Mike's message, blending humor, culture, and scripture, inspires reflection on personal and spiritual nomenclature, urging allegiance to the name above all.

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# The Significance of Names

## Insights from a Sermon on Biblical Identity

Mike delivered a compelling sermon titled "Names," drawing from scripture readings by John and Roger. The message explored the profound importance of names, challenging the notion that "there's nothing in a name." Rooted in Matthew 1:21-23 and Acts 4:12, Mike emphasized how names carry meaning, authority, and identity, particularly in the context of faith.

Mike began by illustrating everyday scenarios where names matter. He likened unsigned checks to worthless paper, noting that a signature—a name—validates worth. He referenced the cultural phenomenon of "Karen," where one woman's arrogance led to the name becoming synonymous with entitlement, even applied to fictional characters. This shows how names shape perceptions and reputations. "People like to hear their names," Mike said, underscoring personal value.

Turning to the Bible, Mike highlighted early examples: Adam, derived from "ground"; Eve, meaning "life"; Cain, "acquired"; and Abel, "transitory." These demonstrate that names reflect essence and purpose. He delved into the name "Karen," tracing its Greek roots to "pure" and Hebrew associations with "power" and "light"—ironically contrasting the stereotype's negative connotations.

The sermon's core focused on Jesus. His Hebrew name, Yeshua, means "salvation," fulfilling Matthew's prophecy: "He will save his people from their sins." Emmanuel signifies "God with us." Quoting Acts 4:12, Mike stressed, "There is no other name under heaven... by which we must be saved." He recited Philippians 2:5-11, portraying Jesus' humility—from divine form to crucifixion—leading to exaltation. "God has highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name," he proclaimed, urging recognition before it's too late.

Mike connected this to Christian identity. In Acts 11:26, disciples were first called Christians in Antioch—a divinely inspired name, he argued. Referencing 1 Peter 4:16, he encouraged pride: "If anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed." Christians should wear this name unhyphenated, honoring Christ's sacrifice.

The sermon ended with an invitation: "Are you wearing his name proudly? Will you not come to wear Christ's name?" Mike affirmed, "There is something in the name. Christ's name means something." This message reminds believers that names are not arbitrary but divinely significant, calling for faithful allegiance.

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