

# The New Name

## First Series – Sermon Five

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At the heart of each of us is a need to be seen and heard, received and accepted! Here, in *The New Name*, we see the spirit of the antichrist in us, the spirit that divides! We separate people into groups,



"them", so that we can lump them all together as the same. This sameness is at the heart of all "ist's" and "ism's." However, there are only individual children in God's economy; no herds of cattle or flocks of birds. Each one of us is uniquely created and special in the eyes of our Maker.

God sees the oak in the acorn and the butterfly in the caterpillar. He is excited and patient with our becoming. There is faithfulness at the heart of the new name, both His and ours!

Oh God, let us see each individual's beauty and appreciate their unique gifts and relationships to all of us!

## Outline

**Mysticism** – A mystical mind sees the highest expressions that a truth reveals.

**A Name Expressed** – It expresses the essence of our uniqueness in our maturity.

**Individuality Blessed** – Each of us has our own history, story and relationship unlike any other of God's children!

**Aspiration** – As our Father's child there is no room for competition, only aspiration to become our best possible self.

**Face-to-Face** – Face-to-Face we will receive our "well done" for being faithful with who I Am!

## Revelation 2:17 NASB

*"... To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it."*

## Mysticism

In using a passage from *Revelation*, I wanted to open with some thoughts on mysticism. I use this word as representing a particular approach to illustrating truth. This approach is common to some degree to all New Testament writers. Mysticism is a vast topic, so I will offer only one thought about it. A mystical mind sees the highest expressions that truth reveals. Sees things in nature and human customs as well as images that develop from our human needs. The mystical mind is summoning thoughts about truths in contact with the images themselves in visible forms. Mysticism is the highest approach to relating to the most profound realities, and Jesus often used it Himself. For instance, in Matthew 6:22-24, the summary, "*...And if the light you think you have is actually darkness, how deep is the darkness.*" NLT

The Gospel of John's mysticism is of the simplest and, therefore, of the most impressive nature. John, as a mystic, remembered and wrote with great accuracy the words of our Lord. He wrote with a recognizably different view from the other New Testament writers. Primarily in the simplicity of his personal and poetic insights. However, the wisdom of Revelation is more complicated, less poetic, and sometimes more subjective. I would suggest the difference in tone between the book of John and Revelation is just what we would suspect. John, from a historian's view, wrote his Gospel about His mystical teacher. As a historian recording His sayings through his own thoughts, feelings, and inspirations. Revelation flows no longer from the lips of Jesus but through John's own heart, soul, and mind.

**Truth is the truth, whether from the lips of Jesus or Balaam. Truth is, in its most profound sense, a condition of heart, soul, and strength towards God and our brothers. It is not an opinion, not even the right articulation of words. Therefore, truth spoken is, in a sense, the inner person who speaks.** Many of the truths expressed by John in Revelation are not just spiritual imagery but insights that carry the convictions of what John came to see and reveal, what he came to know.

In this passage about the gift of the white stone, we find the heart of faithfulness.

What the white stone means in itself is of little importance for this discussion. I take the stone to belong more to the subjective and fanciful than to the actual mystical imagery. It is for the bringing out of the obscure thought, and for that, it is important. I doubt if the writer associated any essential meaning to it either. Perhaps John sees the color white to signify purity and the stone in substance to be indestructible. **My thoughts regarding the stone are that it is merely the vehicle. It is how God gives the name to the person.** It is then the communication revealed that I want to discuss. If you disagree with me about the stone, I hope you will see what the name represents, and that as helpful.

## **A Name Expressed**

**Briefly, the giving of the stone with the new name is the expression of what God thinks about a person, to the person themselves. It is God's divine conclusion. His magnificent end for the righteous person, the "Come, you that are blessed," spoken to the individual.**

We must consider the idea of a name and its reason to understand the importance of God's decision. We must realize that this name is our essence, not expressing any of our accidents or imitations. Therefore, recognizing the implication that it is God who writes and gives it.

A familiar name like we all have has nothing significant in it. It is but what we are identified by and has a little bit of history connected to it. This name distinguishes us from someone else and their history. The only names of significance in our culture are those who are somewhat famous. Famous or popular, that is for something good or bad that makes them stand out from the rest of us. Each of these is based on an external characteristic of the person. This external lies on something horrible or excellent that they have done that singles them out in people's eyes and distinguishes them from others. As far as this distinction goes, they are real names that express individuality, but of little importance in any way.

**The real name expresses the character, nature, being, and significance of the person who has it. It is the person's symbol, his soul's image in a word, the sign that belongs to him and no one else. Who can give a person their own name? God alone! For no one else but God knows who a person is, or in knowing it could express it in a word, a name, that sums up and harmonizes what He sees.**

So, to whom is this name given? To the person who overcomes. When is it given? When the person has overcome! **Doesn't God know who a person is going to become? Yes, as undoubtedly as He sees the oak tree in the acorn.** Why then does He wait? He does not wait. He knows the name from the first. Waiting is to be understood in the same way as repentance comes, in that God forgives first, then we repent. Yet, we only become aware of forgiveness in our repentance. So, it is only in becoming the new name that God gives us the stone; only then can we understand what it means.

**It is the blossom at the end, the perfection and completion that expresses the name that God saw from the beginning because He created it so.** But, we cannot see the tree of our soul before its blossom comes. We cannot understand in advance what flower we are to bear or what our name means. It is in its completeness that it names itself. This kind of name cannot be given until we become its expression.

**God's name for a person is a mystical word in a language that the overcomer understands. An expression of the understanding of God's idea of that person. God's thoughts when He conceived the child. The dreams He kept through the long process of their creation are the final realization of His child's idea.** To speak the name is to seal its victory, to say, "In you also, *'I am well-pleased!'*"

However, we are still only in the place of symbols. **The symbol that has at its center of importance, a personal, individual relationship of every person with their Father! Everyone has encounters with their Father! These encounters reflect our meaning, feelings, and relationship with Him as Maker and Father.** If were we only children of earthly days and we were to know that's all we were? Then our nature would be according to our mortal fate, and we would just worship and die. But this worship would only be the praise of the dead, not the thanksgiving of the living. For death would be the truth of our being, the deepest, lasting, and final overcoming truth. We would have been created from nothing, not from God! He could then be only our maker, not our Father, not our origin! Now we know that God is not the God of the dead but the living. To be the god of the dead would freeze our heart of worship, and we could not say, "Our Father," or feel Him worthy of our worship.

The white stone comes to the one who worships the God of the living. The one sacrificing himself as his God has done because he knows he is God's child. He is of his Father and overcomes, realizing his true self through the Father's and Son's love, devotion, and sacrifice. **This one has climbed the stairs using all his God-born efforts and God-given victories to the height of his being, seeing his true self reflected in the heart of his Father, face-to-face! To him, the Father gives the new name written!**

## Individuality Blessed

Understanding better what a name is, we must now build on it. **We must develop the truth of individuality and its importance in our relationship with God. For this name is one, "...which no one knows but he who receives it." So, not only does everyone have their individual relationship with the Father, but a unique and distinct one! For the Father has created each of us differently. No one else is like us. When our true selves are mature, perfected, we will receive an intimate name that no one else knows or understands but us!**

Therefore, this distinct son or daughter can worship their Father as no one else can! This child also relates to their Father as no one else does! Some may have more excellent knowledge, but none a more significant relationship. To the Father, each of His children is special and uniquely beautiful! May none of us in pride think we can drag a misrepresentation of our brethren before their Father as if he were an unjust judge. May we humble ourselves and receive the Father's grace before each of our brothers and sisters, seeing the revelation we have received of our Father as one to share with them!

As the fir tree is different from the palm, so each of us lifts our unique humanity to our common Father! And our Father responds individually to each and every one of us! With each of us, He has an intimate secret to express in His special name. In everyone, there is a private inner place into which our Father enters to commune with us personally!

**This truth also leads us to a place in our Father's heart, a place of individual relationship unique to each of us. It is from this intimacy that we bring revelation and strength to others. This revelation is why we are the way we are, designed to share our lives with our heavenly Father and with everyone!**

**We then, by our creation, are distinct from all others with God. Each of us, by our individual making, can say, "my God!" We can come to our Father as to a friend, come individually and speak to Him face-to-face. Our peculiar identity with God is not lost in the crowd of humanity. When God speaks of humanity, He is referring to a spiritual body, not a single consciousness. However, in the body, the smallest cell is unique and capable of forming a valuable part of the whole.**

**See the significance of the symbolism that our text assumes. Each of us is a distinct flower or tree in the garden of God. Each of us precious for our own sake, in the eyes of our Maker!** Each of us is given water, sunshine, and life for our maturity bringing forth the blossom of our being, displaying the pleasure and glory of our great Gardener. Within each of us is a part of the Divine! We are growing into the revelation of that part, growing into its full maturity according to our divine gift. Every moment we yield to our true selves, a new light shines, opening a channel that gives life to the coming flower. This self is a conscious offering of our being to our Maker. Each of us, then, is valuable to God!

Life and action, thought and purpose, are sacred. What a climax lies before us! **To have an awareness of our true selves revealed to us from the thoughts of God! Undoubtedly, this beautiful vision of our significance will help us let go of our petty self-consciousnesses, selfish pride, and self-worship! Indeed, to know what our Father thinks about us will free us from our selfish-selves!** The self we may be already holding lightly and are ready to let go of forever! Let us be like Paul in drawing near, having begun his journey with a cry for deliverance from this body of death. Let us finish saying as he did, that he judged, divided, himself no longer!

But is there not a danger here of spiritual pride? If there were, the only deliverance would be by the Spirit. Pride comes from a presumed sense of self-achievement. But in God's Life, there is only grace and humility!

## **Aspiration**

And in this Life, there is no room for ambition. Ambition is the desire to be better than others. But in this overcoming Life, there is no chance for comparison, for no one else knows your new name but you. **However, here, there is endless room for aspiration in our relationship with our Father, none for boasting. Ambition would only seem to be higher than others; aspiration would be limitlessly high! Here relative worth is not only unknown but unknowable. In the kingdom, each values the other as better than himself!**

"God made me for Himself," says the overcomer with the white stone. I am best when I am me! What difference would there be in being grass, an eagle, a building stone, or the "Son of Thunder" if I am myself? I am His, His idea and creation. Therefore, I am perfect in my kind and perfect in His sight. I am full of Him, revealing Him, intimate with Him! Let my loving Father call me what He wants. It will be precious to me, and I will seek nothing else!

In this aspiration, there will be no concern about what others think of me. It will be enough that my Father thinks of me that I am something to Him. Being worthy and cared for by God will be Life enough!

**Neither will this individuality isolate us from others, for this will be the truth of all! It is in our unity that we will rejoice among our brothers and sisters. We will sense the sacredness and beauty of our neighbor's relationship with God. Regarding others as prophets, priests, and evangelists of Gospel truths. Each with revelation as a present son and daughter of the Most-High. One that comes from His presence to reveal something fresh. In this, we will come together in unity!**

Is there a danger? Sure there is a danger, but the Father will give more grace! If someone who has climbed the stairs should fall back down, there is still the fire of God, the consuming fire that burns and does not destroy!

## **Face-to-Face**

All of this appears foolish to those outside of a relationship with God. Or who do not aspire to connect with their source of Life. So be it!

**Lord, help us all and encourage our lives. Help your image in us to grow so that we may mature into Your likeness!** If necessary, let us, through ages of strife and growth, come to see your face. See you face-to-face and receive the white stone from your hand. That through our journey, we will grow to receive day by day your bread of Life. Fill us with your word and help us to lay up treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust will corrupt.

## **CLIFFNOTES WITH ORIGINAL MACDONALD QUOTES**

## **Mysticism**

Truth is truth, whether from the lips of Jesus or Balaam. But, in its deepest sense, the truth is a condition of heart, soul, mind, and strength towards God and towards our fellow—not an utterance, not even a right form of words; and therefore such truth coming forth in words is, in a sense, the person that speaks.

But I care chiefly to regard the stone as the vehicle of the name,—as the form whereby the name is represented as passing from God to the man,

## **A Name Expressed**

I say, in brief, the giving of the white stone with the new name is the communication of what God thinks about the man to the man. It is the divine judgment, the solemn holy doom of the righteous man, the "Come, thou blessed," spoken to the individual.

The true name is one which expresses the character, the nature, the being, the meaning of the person who bears it. It is the man's own symbol,—his soul's picture, in a word,—the sign which belongs to him and to no one else. Who can give a man this, his own name? God alone. For no one but God sees what the man is, or even, seeing what he is, could express in a name-word the sum and harmony of what he sees.

Does God then not know what a man is going to become? As surely as he sees the oak which he put there lying in the heart of the acorn.

It is the blossom, the perfection, the completion, that determines the name; and God foresees that from the first, because he made it so;

God's name for a man must then be the expression in a mystical word—a word of that language which all who have overcome understand—of his own idea of the man, that being whom he had in his thought when he began to make the child, and whom he kept in his thought through the long process of creation that went to realize the idea.

We shall not look long before we find that the mystic symbol has for its centre of significance the fact of the personal individual relation of every man to his God. That every man has affairs, and those his first affairs, with God, stands to the reason of every man who associates any meaning or feeling with the words, Maker, Father, God.

Who knows that he is one of God's children, this one of the Father's making, he giveth the white stone. To him who climbs on the stair of all his God-born efforts and God-given victories up to the height of his being—that of looking face to face upon his ideal self in the bosom of the Father—God's him, realized in him through the Father's love in the Elder Brother's devotion—to him God gives the new name written.

## **Individuality Blessed**

Because that which follows embraces and intensifies this individuality of relation in a fuller development of the truth. For the name is one "which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." Not only then has each man his individual relation to God, but each man has his peculiar relation to God. He is to God a peculiar being, made after his own fashion, and that of no one else; for when he is perfected he shall receive the new name which no one else can understand.

From this it follows that there is a chamber also—(O God, humble and accept my speech)—a chamber in God himself, into which none can enter but the one, the individual, the peculiar man,—out of which chamber that man has to bring revelation and strength for his brethren. This is that for which he was made—to reveal the secret things of the Father.

By his creation, then, each man is isolated with God; each, in respect of his peculiar making, can say, "my God;" each can come to him alone, and speak with him face to face, as a man speaketh with his friend. There is no massing of men with God. When he speaks of gathered men, it is as a spiritual body, not a mass. For in a body every smallest portion is individual, and therefore capable of forming a part of the body.

See, now, what a significance the symbolism of our text assumes. Each of us is a distinct flower or tree in the spiritual garden of God,— precious, each for his own sake, in the eyes of him who is even now making us

To have a consciousness of our own ideal being flashed into us from the thought of God! Surely for this may well give way all our paltry self-consciousnesses, our self-admirations and self-worships! Surely to know what he thinks about us will pale out of our souls all our thoughts about ourselves!

### **Aspiration**

Here is room for endless aspiration towards the unseen ideal; none for ambition. Ambition would only be higher than others; aspiration would be high. Relative worth is not only unknown—to the children of the kingdom it is unknowable. Each esteems the other better than himself.

Neither will he thus be isolated from his fellows. For that we say of one, we say of all. It is as one that the man has claims amongst his fellows. Each will feel the sacredness and awe of his neighbour's dark and silent speech with his God. Each will regard the other as a prophet, and look to him for what the Lord hath spoken. Each, as a high priest returning from his Holy of Holies, will bring from his communion some glad tidings, some gospel of truth, which, when spoken, his neighbours shall receive and understand. Each will behold in the other a marvel of revelation, a present son or daughter of the Most High, come forth from him to reveal him afresh. In God each will draw nigh to each.

### **Face-to-Face**

Lord, help them and us, and make our being grow into thy likeness.