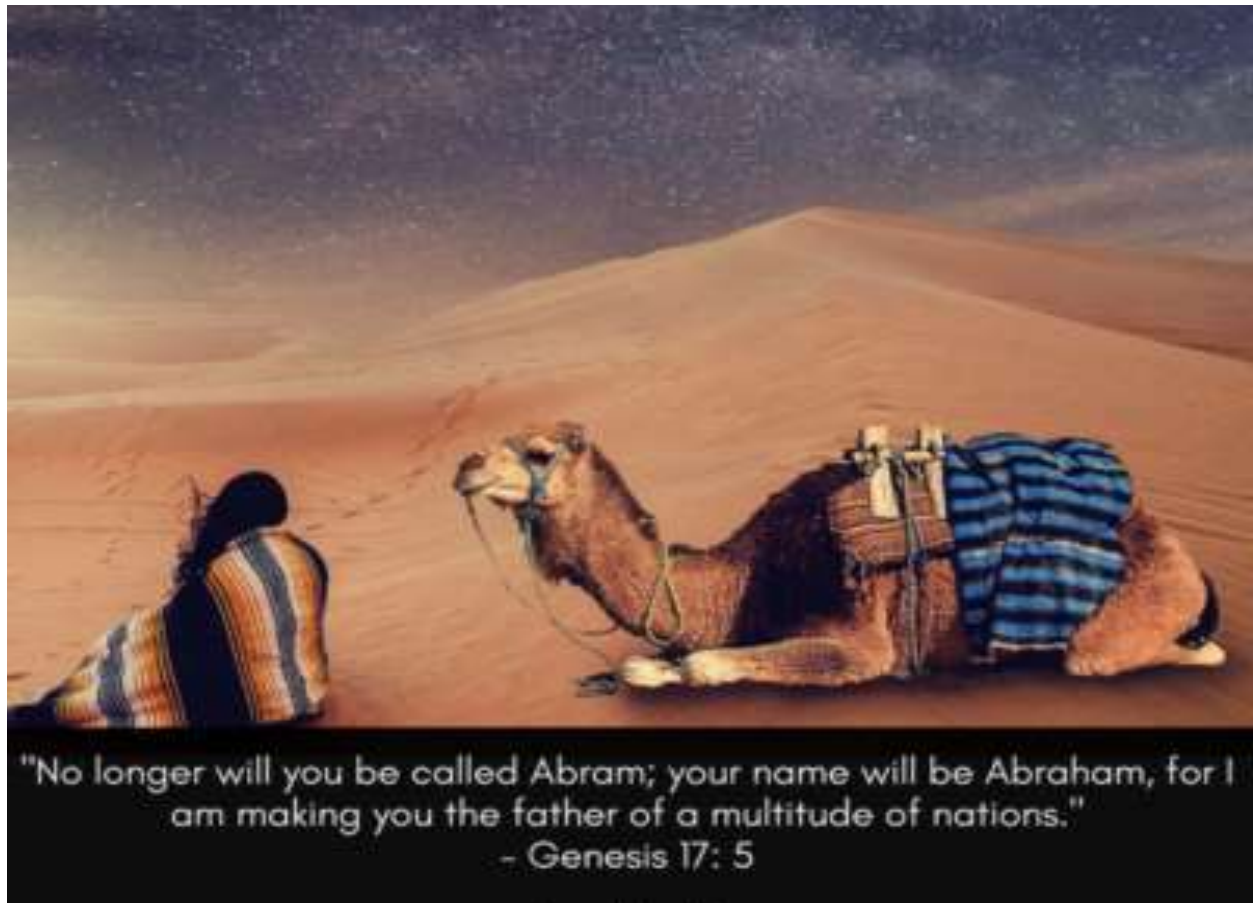


Minster Bethel Congregational Church (MBCC)

20/09/2020 - Genesis 17

What's in a Name?



Good morning, we are trying a new style which should be easier for reading on-line.

All lockdown services can be found at:

www.mbccs.co.uk

“For what you have done I will always praise you in the presence of your faithful people. And I will hope in your name, for your name is good.”

Psalm 52 v 9

Good morning and welcome to this weeks thoughts.

Today's hymn is “Before the throne of God I stand”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BRMub3ThIVo>



Before the throne of God above
I have a strong, a perfect plea:
a great High Priest, whose name is Love,
whoever lives and pleads for me.



My name is graven on his hands,
my name is written on his heart;
I know that while in heaven he stands
no tongue can bid me thence depart.
no tongue can bid me thence depart



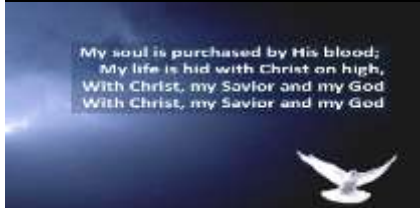
When Satan tempts me to despair,
and tells me of the guilt within,
upward I look, and see Him there
who made an end of all my sin.



Because the sinless Saviour died,
my sinful soul is counted free;
for God, the just, is satisfied
to look on him and pardon me.
to look on him and pardon me.



Behold him there! the risen Lamb!
My perfect, spotless righteousness,
the great unchangeable I AM,
the King of glory and of grace!



One with himself, I cannot die;
my soul is purchased by his blood;
my life is hid with Christ on high,
with Christ, my Saviour and my God.
with Christ, my Saviour and my God.

Our reading today is Genesis 17

<https://www.biblegateway.com/audio/mclean/niv/Gen.17>

One day, a woman pregnant with twins was in a car accident and fell into a deep coma for 6 months. When she awoke from the coma and saw that she was no longer pregnant and she frantically asked the doctor about her babies. The doctor replied, "Ma'am your twins are fine, you have a boy and a girl. Since you were unconscious, your brother named the children for you." "Oh no!" the woman thought to herself, "My brother is so irresponsible and unpredictable!" The woman asked the doctor, "So, what did he name my daughter?" The doctor answered, "Denise." The woman said, "He did okay, I like the name Denise. What did he name my son?" The doctor answered, "Denephew."



Names are an interesting thing – each of us has our own tastes in names.

Names represent people and companies – some we like and have confidence in and others not so much.

When it comes to shops, some of us prefer Morrisons others Tesco.

With computers, some have confidence in Apple, while others prefer Toshiba or HP.

When it comes to cars, some won't buy a car unless it has the name BMW or Ford, while for others it has to say Toyota or Jaguar.

Sometimes companies make mistakes with the names they choose. General Motors had a very hard time marketing in Central and South America a certain car that had sold very well in the U.S. The car was called the Nova - In Spanish "Nova" means "It Doesn't Go." No Go!

In today's segment from the story of Abraham, we see some names being changed.

The Lord announced, "I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers." (Gen. 17:2). This was not a new covenant, rather it is just a confirmation and renewal of the covenant that God had previously made with Abram back in Genesis 15.

To memorialize this moment, God gave Abram and Sarai new names. In Scripture, when a man or woman undergoes a profound spiritual transformation, God often highlights that change by giving that person a new name. Simon became Peter, Saul became Paul, and Abram and Sarai became Abraham and Sarah.

Abram means "exalted father," whereas Abraham means "father of nations."

Sarah's name change is not as clear. It appears that Sarai meant "my princess," and Sarah could mean just "Princess," but other translations include "mother of nations" as we see God declares she will be the mother of nations. Another translation is joy and delight.

In addition to the name changes, God revealed more details concerning His plan to redeem the world through the nation of Israel. God's plan took the form of several unconditional promises – five times the Lord declared, "I will..."

"I will make you exceedingly fruitful."

"I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you."

"I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring."

"I will give to you and your offspring all the land of Canaan."

"I will be their God."

In this way, God was saying, "These are the things you can count on – I will do them. They are my responsibility. And remember, Abraham, I am God Almighty, I have a name you can trust."

In verse 9, this changes, "As for you." This is stating what Abraham is to do. How did Abraham respond to what God had said?

The Bible says: "Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself." Obviously, God has a sense of humor, because look at the name that God wants Abraham and Sarah to give to the baby boy...the Bible says: Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac."

Guess what the name Isaac means? Isaac means "he laughs."

When Isaac would show up a year later and they named the boy "he laughs" everyone will get a good chuckle at the unbelievable miracle of God and the unrestrained joy and laughter that must have come to Abraham's tent when the long-awaited son finally came.

We learn the importance of trusting in the name of the Lord.

Proverbs 18:10 contains such a simple but powerful truth: *The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.*

What kind of comfort and strength and safety does the name of the Lord – God Almighty – bring you today?

While God might not always take us out of the difficult situation we are in, or give us everything we ask for when we want it, we can trust in the name of the Lord and know that we are in good and loving hands.

There is only one name we can trust above all others and it is the name of the Lord God Almighty.

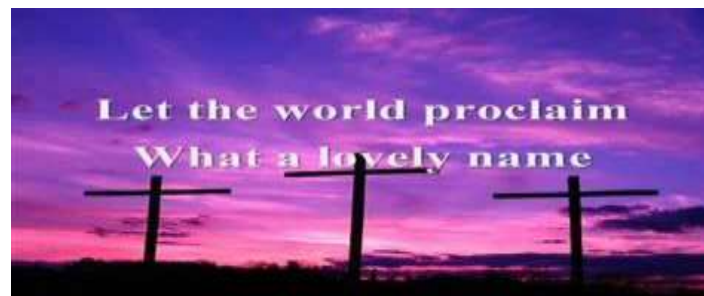
We learn the importance of striving to live up to the name we have been given. Abraham and Sarah were given those names to replace their old names.

When we became members of the church, God's household, we also been given new names or titles. We are now called children of God, disciples (students of Christ), and Christians (followers of Christ).

Are we striving to live up to those names? Are those names a good fit for the lives we are living?

Evidently, on one of Alexander the Great campaigns, he received a message that one of his soldiers had not been conducting himself appropriately and was having a bad influence on the rest of the troops. What made it worse was that the soldier's name was also Alexander. When Alexander the Great learned this, he called for the errant soldier. When the young man came before the commander, Alexander the Great asked him, "Soldier, what is your name?" The soldier replied, "Alexander, Sir!" The commander looked at him straight in the eye and said, forcefully, "Soldier, either change your behaviour or change your name!"

Let's strive to live up to the names God has given us.



Let's pray.

Lord, we thank you for the new names you have given us, children of God, disciples (students of Christ), and Christians (followers of Christ). We ask that you give us the strength to live up to those names. Amen.

Abram and Sarai Get New Names

Abram was 99 years old.
God appeared to him.

Circle 6 differences in the 2nd picture.



May God's blessing surround you each day.

As we trust in and walk in His way;

May His presence within,

Guard and keep us from sin;

Go in peace, go in joy, go in love.