

HELLO

• my name is •

Word of Life Church

"A good name is better than precious ointment..." Ecclesiastes 7:1 A

"The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory. You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD will name." Isaiah 62:2

"holding fast the Word of life ..." Philippians 2:16

"having been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the Word of God which lives and abides forever," 1 Peter 1:23

Morning Sermon 6/5/2022 – "A Good Name"

⁷ A good name is better than precious ointment, ... Ecclesiastes 7:1 A (NKJV)

Today we are officially "Word of Life Church"

A good name is better than precious ointment, how? Precious ointment attracts people! So does a truly good name or reputation!

1. A biblical overview of names and name changes –

1. Biblical names were often an accurate description of a person -

⁵ Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; so the woman survived her two sons and her husband. Ruth 1:5 (NKJV) Mahlon – sickly Chilion – pining, or about to die

³⁶ And Esau said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright, and now look, he has taken away my blessing!" And he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?" Genesis 27:36 (NKJV)

Jacob – supplanter, manipulator

2. Yet, God Himself changed Jacob's name –

²⁸ And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed." Genesis 32:28 (NKJV)

Israel – Prince with God! What a glorious name change that was ...

3. Yet, it definitely was not the only name change in Scripture, not only the only name change in Jacob's family history, his grandparents, had their names changed by God:

A. Abram becomes Abraham -

⁵ No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. Genesis 17:5 (NKJV)

Abram – father Abraham – father of the womb

B. Sarai becomes Sarah –

¹⁵ Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. Genesis 17:15 (NKJV)

Sarai – Princess Sarah – Princess So what is the difference? Sarai had to do with personal quality, she had long been and through God's grace and sanctification a princess. Yet, now with a son, and grandchildren, and great, and great-great grandchildren she would be a princess with INFLUENCE!

4. Simon was renamed Peter by Jesus Christ-

¹⁶ Simon, to whom He gave the name Peter; Mark 3:16 (NKJV) Simon meant Wishy-washy – Peter meant Stone. Jesus gave Peter His new name before Peter was (in character) a stone, He knew what He would do with Peter. He knew how Peter would be humbled and how He would change and improve, his new name was not just a prophecy, but an encouragement to what Simon would change / grow into! A new name can be that!

5. A new name, God promised Israel a new name during a time when they were down – I believe this is speaking about Spiritual Israel, the true bride of Jesus Christ -

² The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, And all kings your glory. You shall be called by a **new name**, Which the mouth of the LORD will name. ³ You shall also be a crown of glory In the hand of the LORD, And a royal diadem In the hand of your God. ⁴ You shall no longer be termed Forsaken, Nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate; But you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; For the LORD delights in you, And your land shall be married. Isaiah 62:2–4 (NKJV)

A. Note, the old names, or reputations "forsaken" "desolate"

B. Note, the new names – "Hephzibah" – God's delight! "Beulah" – married ... married to Christ –

⁹ Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Revelation 21:9–10 (NKJV)

II. We have had a biblical name, but one that has to do with a secondary, and not a primary description of who we are or who we hope to be –

¹⁷ From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the **elders** of the church. Acts 20:17 (NKJV)

1. Presbyterian – from the Greek Word – πρεσβύτερος meaning elder(s)

- A. *The word refers to a position of authority under Christ in the church, technically we as a denomination are distinguished from others by “rule by elders” plural ...*
 - B. *The word also means what “elder” or “elderly” means in English and can easily be used to describe us ‘a bunch of old people’ which describes us here in North Port as well!*
2. *Through the years, Presbyterians in general as well as other older denomination in America have picked up certain reputations, things we are know for, deserved or undeserved / accurate or inaccurate –*
 - A. *Presbyterians nick-name – “the frozen chosen!”*
 - B. *Old denominations, or any “denomination” in contrast to “non-denominational Churches” - “organized religion.”*

I would argue there is nothing wrong with “organization” but if people avoid it like the plague, you never get the chance to argue for it!

III. A Biblical Name that truly describes the essence of both who we are, and what we want to be –

1. *Our top three choices: Word of Life Church (the winner) Amazing Grace Church, and Word of Truth Church ...*
 - A. *Two of these top three communicate our commitment to Scripture, we are a Bible believing, Bible-preaching, Bible- teaching and following church! Many churches claim this, and perhaps are, but we are even to extremes! Or we desire to be!*
 - B. *The other name, “Amazing Grace Church” communicates the grace of God:*
 - *Which has changed us*
 - *Which we endeavor to show to others*
 - *I believe this name also would have communicated who we are and want to be!*

IV. Our top choice “Word of Life Church” why I love this as our new name –

1. *It expresses our commitment to God’s living Word – (and our conviction about it, it is living and powerful)*

¹² **For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV)**

2. *God’s Word is not only “living” but life giving, it is the seed of the new birth and eternal life –*

²³ **having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, ²⁴ because “All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, ²⁵ But the word of the LORD endures forever.”** Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you. 1 Peter 1:23-25

3. *It expresses our commitment to the Words of Christ, which we also find in the Bible -*

⁶³ **It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. John 6:63 (NKJV)**

⁶⁶ From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. ⁶⁷ Then Jesus said to the twelve, **“Do you also want to go away?”** ⁶⁸ But Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” John 6:66–69 (NKJV)

4. *It also expresses our commitment to Christ, Himself, Who is the Word and Word of Life –*
1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
John 1:1 (NKJV)

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14 (NKJV)

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—
1 John 1:1 (NKJV)

5. *This commitment to God’s Word is something we have had and have been communicating for a long time –*
- *The large Bible in front of our pulpit (it is a symbol, because we rarely read it)*
 - *The detailed Sermon Outlines Elders Ralph Gross and Henry DeJonge encouraged me to include in our bulletins*
 - *The encouragement I received as pastor from the first I came to this church, ‘make preaching God’s Word your priority!’*

6. *Word of Life, also expresses another priority we have had as a church, pro-life ministry*
¹⁵ **“See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, Deuteronomy 30:15 (NKJV)**

Our long-term involvement with Pregnancy Solutions is an example of this, you all were involved with this ministry before I was pastor, so more than 18 years!

- V. *Yet, “Word of Life Church” also expresses what we want to be and what we want to be known as –*

When I first came to this church, I was told we were called, “a dead church” ...

In Scripture, even in the Book of Revelation, we are told of a church ... -

3 “And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, ‘These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: “I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Revelation 3:1 (NKJV)

1. *Now they had a reputation of being “alive” but in reality, were dead ...*
2. *The important part is REALITY! Are we in reality a living church? Do we deserve or fit with the Name Word of Life Church?*
3. *Do we live up to the BIG BIBLE in front of the pulpit? By making God’s Word BIG in our lives:*
 - A. *Reading it daily,*
 - B. *Really listening to sermons*
 - C. *Attending worship services and Bible studies as able,*
 - D. *memorizing and meditating on God’s Word,*
 - E. *Keeping, meaning being obedient to God’s Word in each of our personal lives –*

B. *If we claim this is who we are, if we have this BIG Bible as a symbol but not a reality, then who are we?*

⁸ ***‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. Matthew 15:8 (NKJV)***

C. *I believe this is a big part, if not the ESSENCE of taking the Lord’s Name in vain -*

⁷ ***“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain. Exodus 20:7 (NKJV)***

- *If we call ourselves “Christian” but live like devils, we are taking Christ’s name in vain*
– ⁶ ***Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did. 1 John 2:6 (NIV)***

Hypocrisy won’t pass the Ecclesiastes 7:1 A Smell Test ... Make a new name (Word of Life Church) the occasion for a new COMMITMENT! Let’s pray we live up to our GOOD NAMES!

VI. *Yet, if we take and live up to the Name, Word of Life Church, we are communicating not only our vision, but Christ’s benefit, to a dying world*

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¹⁰ ***The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. ¹¹ “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. John 10:10–11 (NIV)***

Preaching the Word of Life to a world full of Zombies –

⁴ ***But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), Ephesians 2:4–5 (NKJV)***

Coke adds life, is a commercial slogan, but not true! Christ adds LIFE, abundant LIFE is TRUE!

Arnold A. Brevick