

These Are the Names God Calls You Now

In the Bible, names aren't just names. The name reveals the essence of the person.

Let's start with a statement made by the apostle Paul in Galatians 2:19–20: "For through the law I am dead to the law, that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

According to Paul, the good news is that you're already dead. Paul isn't giving us a command. He's giving us a fact.

When you die, you not only experience resurrection, you get a new name. That changes everything about our hidden agendas and our masks. When you're crucified with Christ:

Your Name Is Forgiven

There isn't a kicker. It doesn't matter where you've been, who you're sleeping with, what you're drinking or smoking, what you think, who you've hurt, the games you're playing, the masks you're wearing, the agendas you're hiding or whether or not you get better. When you bring it all to Jesus, you're forgiven.

Without forgiveness at the heart of our relationships, we would continue to play at religion, and never love or be loved.

You can't forgive until you have been unconditionally forgiven (no kicker) and then you can only love to the degree to which you have been unconditionally forgiven. I will never remove my mask and set aside my agendas as long as I think Christianity

is about fixing me and others, building empires, changing the world, making my life count, correcting doctrinal truth, promoting programs, raising money and being nice. It's not. It's about the forgiveness of sins. Paul wrote, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the worst" (1 Tim. 1:15).

Your Name Is Redeemed

The word "redeemed" is a very strong word. It means to gain or regain something at a price. The Scripture says that in Christ we have been redeemed "through His blood and the forgiveness of sin according to the riches of His grace, which he lavished on us in all wisdom and insight" (Eph. 1:7-8).

We have been adopted by a father who is rich, generous, and kind. The Scripture says that God has sent the Spirit of Jesus into our hearts, causing us to cry out, "Abba Father." "So you are no longer a servant, but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ" (Gal. 4:6-7).

Your Name Is Acceptable

What if I told you that God was already pleased, that He already thinks of you as faithful, and in His eyes you are already obedient? It's true. The theological word is "imputation."

The Bible says, "... and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ ..." (Phil. 3:9). "But to him who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness" (Rom. 4:5). "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall be joyful in my God, for He has covered me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness ..." (Is. 61:10).

When Christ died on the cross, there was a trade. God traded

my sin for Christ's righteousness.

Your Name Is Loved

The principle is this: You can't experience love until it's given when you don't deserve it. Everything else is reward.

That's what God has done. Listen to what Paul writes: "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities nor powers, neither things present nor things to come, neither height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38–39). I would suggest that those words pretty much cover it. They cover all of our masks and all of our hidden agendas.

So laugh, sing and dance.

*Adapted from **Steve Brown's** book, Hidden Agendas: Dropping the Masks that Keep Us Apart (New Growth Press). **Steve** is the founder of Key Life Network, which exists to communicate that the deepest message of the ministry of Jesus is the radical grace of God. Having spent 25 years as a pastor, Brown now devotes much of his time to the radio broadcasts *Key Life* and *Steve Brown, Etc.* His latest book is *Hidden Agendas: Dropping the Masks that Keep Us Apart* (New Growth Press).*

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