

As many of you will know I am doing a six-part sermon series on the Lord's Prayer during the season of Lent. This past Sunday we explored how Jesus names God and how Jesus, through that name, reminds his followers, then and now, that God is not separate from us, but rather is in an intimate relationship with us. Jesus refers to God as a father, and there are historical reasons for that, but realistically the intention behind that name would be the same if he said mother or loving parent; because its not the name that is important, but rather how the name used describes the relationship we have with the one we are naming. Think of it in this way. If I were describing to you how proud I was of something one of my sons did and I said to you, "I am so proud of my son," you would know that the pride I felt was deep and intimate because of the use of the name son, but what if I said, "I am so proud of that kid," sure it still might mean my son, but it loses that intimate nature. Jesus does this same thing by naming God as a parent; the relationship becomes much more familiar and intimate, rather than just viewing God as one who looks down upon us.

Now all of that is simply a review of what I said on Sunday, but the naming of God got my mind working this past couple of days as I pondered to myself how we name God, and how much we can glean about our lived theology by what names we use. For example, if I name God as a judge, as God is often named in the Hebrew Scriptures and with many still today, then my understanding of God and my lived theology will be based on the idea that God is one who casts judgement upon me and others. You can imagine then how that could equate to not only a theology of a community, but how you then would relate to the world around you. If though I referred to God as creator, then my lived theology could be centered around the idea that God has created and is always creating anew. Once again that could then equate to the theology of a community and specifically about how I view the world around me.

So, all of this is a long way of me wondering how you name God? Do you name God with names like, parent, friend, comforter or do you name God with names like Lord, almighty one, and creator? I would encourage you to think about that this week, think about how you name God when you pray; how you name God when you talk to people about faith. The reason I want you to do that is that not only is it interesting, but you can also begin to understand more fully how you live out your theology and faith simply by what name you use for God. How you view God and understand God, how you name God, can change how you live your faith in the world; thus, how you respond to the people around you.

So, what names for God do you use? And what difference do those names make to how you live your theology everyday?

Blessing to each and every one of you.

Sincerely,
Rev. Adam Hall