

WoH 411

Names / Jesus as Prophet

“You are so clever.”

“You’re too fat to wear that dress!”

“I love you my beautiful wife.”

“You’re stupid!”

“Thank you for helping me. You are such a great friend to me.”

Carol: Hello and welcome to *Women of Hope*. It’s great that you can be here with us today, my name’s Carol...and here’s Tammy.

Tammy: Hi there ...you may know which is Carol and which is me even before we tell you...you can tell by our different voices.

Carol: We use our names a lot don’t we? Our names can tell others a lot about us, including what to call us and what family group we belong to. Most of us also have different names in different situations in life.

My *name* is Carol, but I’m also called Mrs Detwiler, Mom, and ‘Honey’!
(*or whatever you husband may call you...add and change*)

Tammy: Me too...I’m Tammy, Mom, Mrs Stores and... (*do the same...*).

Carol: I’ve been thinking a lot about names recently. Friends of mine have just had their first baby. They didn’t know whether it was a boy or a girl, and were trying to decide what to call their child. They said it felt like a very big decision for them. This child would have this name for the rest of his or her life.

Tammy: So what did they have? And what did they name the baby?

Carol: They had a little boy and they named him Samuel – which means ‘asked of God’ or ‘heard of God’. You may have heard the story of Hannah in God’s word. She asked God with tears for a baby, and when God gave her a boy, she named him Samuel. That was a good name for him wasn’t it!

Tammy: I wonder if you know what your name means? Or why your parents gave it to you?...

Carol: My mother told me that my name meant “song of Joy”

Some parents pick a name with an important meaning. The name holds a truth that they want their child to remember. The name Daniel, for example, means “God is my judge” ...a child with this name can be reminded that their lives are under the judgment of God. ...Or the name Aimee – means ‘loved’.

Other parents want their child to *act* in a certain way or have characteristics like kindness or generosity, and so they give the child a name that states what they want their child to be like. The name Sarah, means “princess”, which shows how precious and respected they would like daughter to be.

Perhaps you were named after an important person. Many families have a tradition of using the name of parents, grandparents or friends. This gives a child a sense of being connected to past generations and the story of their family. What an honor to be given the name of a respected grandfather or a faithful family friend.

Tammy: Yes...what an honor! I've even heard of parents naming their child because of something that happened at the child's birth. In one country in Africa many people are named after the day of the week when they were born. There are lots of Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays in that town.

I also once met a man whose name was "Expensive". His name had been given to him because when his mother was pregnant with him she was always hungry and she needed a lot of food. So this man was named Expensive because it had cost a lot of money to pay for his mother's eating habits.

Carol: But we all know that the names that our parents give us are not the only ones we are called in our life-time. I wonder what other names you've been called in your lifetime so far? Did you have any names that friends have given you? ...Those names that make you feel that you belong to the group and are liked, and included by those around you. Maybe your mother, father or husband has a special name for you that they use to show you how much they love you.

Tammy:

Carol: *When my brother was little he and I were very close in age – about one year apart – and he could never say my name. He called me Rarol and it is a name that has stayed with me through all of these years.*

These types of names make us feel good about ourselves don't they? They remind us that we're loved...that we're special and belong to our family.

Tammy: You're listening to *Women of Hope* and we're talking about the importance of names. But sadly, not all of the names we're called make us feel good do they?

Carol: Do you have memories of being called fat, ugly or stupid? Can you think of names that you've been called that left you feeling sad and hopeless? I certainly can. Just like the loving names that a mother might call us can make us feel good, other names can make us feel weak and sad. They hurt us...especially if the person calling us those names is close to us. They wound our hearts and can echo around in our minds for a long time. So what can we do about these names that hurt us?

Imagine a teenage girl, called Bezi, who is told by a boy in her class at school that her skin is too dark and that she's ugly. He says this in front of many people...and of course she's embarrassed! For days afterwards she hears his words in her mind. She hears his words as she sits in class. She also worries each morning that this boy will say something like this again. Can you see the power these words have had on Bezi's life? Bezi is letting these words have power in her life by choosing to remember the names given to her by this boy in her class.

What could Bezi do instead?

- The first way to deal with these names is to *not give these words the power to hurt you!* You can choose how much these words will hurt you. If you choose to remember these names again and again, you're letting those names become part of who you are.

- Bezi could also *choose to remember the good names* she's been called, instead of the bad ones. Maybe her mom calls her "pretty" or "smart" – *they* are certainly names she *should* remember...*not* the

unkind words of a teenage boy in her class. So, in the morning as she looks in the mirror and she starts to remember the words, “ugly” and “dark skin”, she must stop those thoughts and *choose* to think about something else. Like, “Mom, thinks I’m pretty and smart.” Or choose to remember a day when Bezi’s dad once told her she had a beautiful smile or a friend told her she loved her hair.

We all have the right to *choose* to remember the *good* names that are said about us and not the bad ones.

- Bezi could also think about the *reasons why these names were said to her*. She could try to put herself into the shoes of the other person to try and work out why he called her these names. This is not easy to do and we can’t always work out why someone else does or says something mean. But sometimes we can.

Tammy: Maybe Bezi knows that this boy comes from a family where he gets treated badly by his parents – so calling others horrible names is just normal for him.

Or maybe Bezi knows that this boy feels threatened by her because she gets better marks in school than he does. It makes him feel stronger to embarrass her, because he feels embarrassed about his school work.

Carol: Perhaps...But it’s important for me to say, that none of these situations make it *okay* for him to call Bezi mean names. Hurting others with our words is never a good thing to do. But if we try to understand the other person’s situation, it might make it easier for us to forget those unkind words and choose to remember those words that make us feel good.

Tammy: You *did* do a lot of thinking about names didn't you Carol! Thanks for sharing those thoughts with us... Let's listen to this song ...before we come back and talk about the names of God and of his son, Jesus...

Carol: Today on *Women of Hope* we've been talking about names.

Tammy: Jesus had a number of different roles and names during his time here on earth. Just like we do. Some of the people in the crowd called him 'teacher', his family called him 'brother' or 'son', and some others called him 'a prophet'.

Jesus was the Son of God who came to live on earth to show us who God the Father is. But he was also a prophet. In the Bible, prophets were very important people. God chose them to speak *his* words to the people. They were people of authority who had a very special role. They were people who spoke for God, as his representative..

God used prophets all through the Bible to talk to his people. But the messages of the prophets weren't always the same. God gave the prophets *different* messages for the people at *different* times in history.

Sometimes God used the prophets *to correct the people's behaviour*, when they were doing something wrong. Like when King David, the ruler of Israel had committed adultery and murder, God sent a prophet named Nathan to correct David's behavior. It was very important to God that the King of his people obeyed his law. So he used a prophet to tell him that what he was doing was wrong.

Jesus was also a prophet who had to sometimes tell the people that they were doing things wrong. There's a story in the Bible (Mark 11: 15- 18 NIV mostly) that tells us of a situation where Jesus spoke out against the

leaders of the time. This is what the Bible tells us... “On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple area and began sending away those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry their sales items through the temple courts. And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers.” The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.”

We can see in this story that Jesus got really angry with the people who had set up market stalls in the temple. The temple was God’s special place for worship in the city...and here were people making money from those who came to spend time with God. This was not the way God wanted the temple area to be used. So Jesus told them so.

God also used prophets *to tell the people about the events that would happen in the future*. This was one way God warned his people. He told them about the punishments that would happen if they continued to act in wrong ways. Like when the people of Israel continued to ignore God’s laws and worship false gods, the prophets often warned them to stop doing this or they would be punished. As it turned out, the people *did* continue to ignore the prophet’s words and they *were* punished. They were sent away to a foreign land. God used the words of the prophets several times to give them a chance to change their behavior, before he finally punished them.

Jesus often made predictions about the future during his time on earth. He predicted that some of his friends would betray him and that the

temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed. While Jesus lived on this earth he spoke a lot about the way he would die and come back to life. He told them in detail about what would happen. He knew that his death would be from the actions of the Jewish leaders and that he would come alive again on the third day. (Luke 9:22 NIV) Here are the *exact* words Jesus said: “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.”

On another occasion, as Jesus and his friends were heading to Jerusalem for a special festival, he explained to them that during this time he would die and then come back to life again. (Luke 18:31-33 NIV) He told them that he would be mocked...insulted...spat on...flogged and then killed. And on the third day he would rise again. At that time when Jesus told his friends about his death, they didn't really believe him or understand why he would die like this. But after his death, his friends remembered his words and wrote them down for us to know about.

God used prophets *to show people God's love and care for his people*. Often in times of trouble or stress, God needed his people to know that he loved them and was caring for them, even in the hard times. The prophets' words were often reminders of how God had helped his people in the past.

Jesus was also given words of love from God to pass on to the people. He had messages for the people, He said, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” (Matt 11:28 NIV) What a comfort that message is! That God, the Creator of the world, the one who knows all, is saying to me... “I know you are having a difficult time.

Let me help you.” What an important message Jesus, the prophet, had to deliver to the people.

Carol: Let’s take a moment to think about those words that Tammy has just told us from God’s word...“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

Carol: Let’s see if we can remember what Tammy just told us about these people God chose, to be called ‘prophets’. She said they brought different messages to the people at different times in history...

God gave them messages *to correct the people’s behavior when they were doing something wrong*. Jesus, as a prophet corrected the people who were using his temple in the wrong way too didn’t he!

Tammy: He also used prophets to tell the people *what was going to happen in the future*. And Jesus, as a prophet told the people exactly what was going to happen to him – that he would die, and be raised to life again after three days.

Carol: And finally God used prophets to *tell the people that he loved them* and cared for them, even in their hard times. And Jesus, as a prophet passed on God’s words of love and care too. He said to them, “Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.” He still says these words to us.

Aren’t these wonderful, comforting words? I’m sure you sometimes feel weary and burdened – just as I do. Let’s finish today by giving our weariness and our burdens to God – to carry for us. Would you like to pray with me?

Dear father, God, thank you for sending your prophets to tell your people the messages they needed to hear. And thank you for sending Jesus, your son, who is also called a 'prophet' to tell us what we need to hear. We thank you that he died on the cross to pay for the wrong things we do – and that he rose again three days later...just as he said he would. Thank you for his message that we can come to you and give you our weariness, our heartache and our burdens...and that you will carry them for us. We pray these things in the powerful name of Jesus. Amen

Tammy: If you prayed with us today and said 'thank you' to God for his son, Jesus, you now have another name...you can now call yourself a *child of God*. You can call God your father. What a privilege!

Tammy: And always remember the *good* names people have called you. Goodbye 'Friend' and God bless you. We'll be with you again soon.

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