

Peter drove that point home in a powerful way by quoting an Old Testament prophecy. Jesus is *“the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.”* Do you know what a capstone is? Think of a stone arch. The capstone is the center stone at the top of an arch. If you take out the capstone, what happens? Everything falls. That’s Jesus. The capstone. The center on which everything depends. Without Jesus, everything else just falls apart. Jesus is either the capstone of your life, or the one who will cause your life to crumble. You can build the most beautiful arch, but without Jesus at the center it will come crashing down. But if Jesus is at the center, your arch—your life—can get bumped and pushed on every side, but it won’t be shaken!

Just like Peter and John. *“When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.”* These men had been with Jesus! What was the result? Courage. Even their enemies—these high and mighty priests and elders and teachers of the law—couldn’t help but be amazed. These two fishermen, unschooled, ordinary men couldn’t be swayed by the most powerful men of their day. Why? Because Peter and John had been with Jesus! When Jesus captures your heart, the result is the courage to stand before kings and princes and tell them where real joy and hope and power come from—the name of Jesus! There’s no other name!

So how come our kids are going to sing about all the names of Jesus? Can you describe your mom in one word? No! Impossible! She has so many different roles. And Jesus has done even more. Can you describe Jesus in one word? No way. John tells us that even the whole world wouldn’t have room for all that Jesus said and did. The Lamb. The Vine. The Way. Our Hope. The Messiah. The King. There is no other name like Jesus, our Savior. *“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”*

Acts 4:5-13
Pastor Nathan Nass

Mother’s Day and Children’s Concert
May 13, 2018

⁵ The next day the rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. ⁶ Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and the other men of the high priest’s family. ⁷ They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: “By what power or what name did you do this?” ⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: “Rulers and elders of the people! ⁹ If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, ¹⁰ then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. ¹¹ He is “ ‘the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.’ ¹² Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” ¹³ When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

No Other Name!

We’re thinking about names today. Names are special. My wife and I have gotten to pick out a few. It’s not an easy thing! How do you decide what to name someone else? There are lots of options. Family names. Bible names. Cool names. A trend lately seems to be to choose a unique name—a name that hardly anybody else has. I got one for you—for all future moms and dads. Do you know what the prophet Isaiah named his son? Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. It was right on the tip of your tongue, wasn’t it? It’s unique and biblical at the same time. It works for boys or girls—no one will know the difference. Lots of potential nicknames. Maher-Shalal-Hash Baz.

As unique as that sounds, I know a name that’s even more unique. Know what it is? Mom. If you have the name “Mom,” it’s about as special as it gets. Now, it’s true that being a mom isn’t that unique. There are billions of mothers in the world. But’s there aren’t many names more unique than the name “mom.” Why? Because you only have one mom. It’s an exclusive relationship. From pregnancy to birth to nursing and love and care, moms are unique. For each of us, there’s just one. That’s why the name “mom” is such a dear name to us. There are no other moms!

But even the name “Mom” isn’t the most unique name of all. There’s a great story in God’s Word that teaches us what the greatest name is. One day, Peter and John were walking to the temple. Before they went inside, they saw a crippled man begging for money. This is a pretty familiar story. Remember what Peter said to him? *“Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk”* (Acts 3:6). And what did the man do? He went walking and leaping and praising God! There’s a song

about that. What a miracle! How did Peter do it? *“In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.”* We said that names are special!

The Jewish leaders didn't like all the commotion, so they arrested Peter and John and asked, *“By what power or what name did you do this?”* What did Peter say? Jesus had promised his disciples: *“When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say”* (Luke 12:11-12). Jesus kept his promise! Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to those powerful men: *“It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.”*

Wow! Isn't that great? Could you have said that? Peter wasn't done. He added, *“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”* Names are special, and Gabriel told Joseph exactly what to name Mary's child: *“You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins”* (Matthew 1:21). Do you know what Jesus means? *“The LORD saves!”* Right on, right? *“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”*

That means that there is one name that is most unique of all: Jesus. As dear as the name “mom” is to your heart, may the name “Jesus” be even dearer still. Just like there's only one woman who gave birth to you and nursed you and cared for you. So there's only one God who was born for you and died for you and rose for you: Jesus. In a world with lots of mothers, there's only one “Mom.” In a world with lots of gods, there's only one Jesus. One Savior. *“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”*

I need to hear that again and again, because it's not cool to talk that way anymore. Can I throw out some big words at you today? Here's one: Pluralism. Have you heard of that? It's all the rage in our society today. Pluralism is the idea that there are lots of different gods and lots of different religions, but they're really all about the same. I heard pluralism at Gustavus just a couple weeks ago. A prayer before a presentation started, “Holy One, known by many names...” Jesus. Allah. Buddha. It's all the same! I bet you'll see “pluralism” this week. Ramadan starts on Tuesday. I'm assuming the “Blessed Ramadan” signs will be popping up soon around town. It's a “Christian” movement that believes Islam is just as good a way to God as Jesus is. Is it? Pluralism is one reason we discourage our members from being part of Boy Scouts. The Boy Scouts are a religious organization. A scout is reverent. Ingrained in Boy Scouts is the idea that every scout must believe in a god, but each scout can decide for himself who god is for him. Really?

Pluralism. We're so surrounded by it that it starts to sound good. Jesus doesn't really want us to be exclusive, does he? To insist that people have to believe in him? Yes. Yes he does! *“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to*

men by which we must be saved.” Think about it like this: How would your mom feel about pluralism? “You're just one of many moms. All moms are the same to me.” What would your mom say? “You're crazy. I'm the only mom you've got. Go to your room!” Inside, she would be fighting back tears, “After all I've done. Really?” If everyone is your mom, than no one is your mom. If everyone is god, then no one is god. Allah didn't die for you. Buddha didn't die for you. Jesus did. No other name!

Let's try another big word: universalism. Have you heard that before? It's the idea that all people are going to be saved, regardless of what their religion is. There's a video of the Pope that's gone viral. It shows a boy with tears in his eyes talking to the Pope. After talking with the boy, the Pope addresses the crowd. He explains that the boy was said because his dad died as an atheist without any faith in God. But then the Pope said to the crowd, “This father was a good man. Even though he didn't believe in God, he was a good man. Do you think our Father in heaven will accept him? Of course he will.” And everybody cheered. Except Jesus. Did Jesus die on the cross so we good people can reject him and save ourselves? No way! There's no other name!

All these lies spread further, right into my heart. When we see Jesus' name neglected like this, why don't we speak up? Why are we so timid? I know why. When I don't speak up, whose name am I most concerned about? Mine. Whose name do you defend more vigorously than anyone else's? Your name! “I've been good. I've worked hard. I deserve the best.” I don't want speaking up about Jesus to tarnish what I've built for myself. The devil's greatest temptation isn't to get us to sin. It's to get us to stop trusting in Jesus. Then we're lost. Because there's no other name!

So there stood Peter and John before Annas and Caiaphas, on trial for the name of Jesus. You've heard those names before—Annas and Caiaphas. Remember where? Think harder! Months earlier, on Maundy Thursday, Jesus was put on trial. Before whom? Annas and Caiaphas—the high priest. These are the very same guys who condemned Jesus to die! When Jesus was trial before them, just two disciples were around. Remember which ones? Peter and John. How did it go? John escaped notice. But Peter? The servant girl asked, “Weren't you with Jesus...?” What did he say? “I don't even know the man.” Denial. Now we're back. Months later. Same people.

But notice the change: Peter went from denying, “I don't even know the man,” to confessing, *“Salvation is found in no one else.”* What changed? Peter had watched Jesus die and rise for him. Can you imagine what that was like for Peter? “Jesus died for me! After what I did, he still died for me! But he didn't stay dead. He rose from the dead! Who does that? And he came to see me. He died and rose and came to me to forgive me and restore me and send me out.” It was almost unbelievable, except Peter believed it! Now he was absolutely convinced. There is no other name! I hope you can say that with Peter. No other name! Jesus my one and only Savior died and rose to save me, and there is no other god. No other Savior. No other name. Just Jesus.