

What is in a name? Would you be the same you if you were called by a different name? Some women change their name when they marry – are they changed by this? What happens when someone gets the new name Mom, Dad, Grandma, Grandpa, Aunt, Uncle? What of nicknames like Shorty, Moose, the Wiz? What's in a name?

When Moses was tending sheep one day suddenly he saw a bush burning but not being consumed. God called to him out of the bush, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." (This God was known by relationships God had established.) After God had told Moses to go free the people of Israel from their slavery in Egypt. "Who should I tell them has sent me?" Moses asked. God said to Moses, "I am Who I am. Thus you shall say to the Israelites, "I am has sent me to you. This is my name forever, and my title to all generations."

Yahweh is the name God spoke, a name that means "I am who I am." For the Jewish people this is the God's name. In Hebrew the word for god is Elohim, just as the Aramaic ALLAH, in Greek Deus, in Latin Deos, and in English god. But from now on for Moses the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, and the Elohim of Jacob declared that God's name was "Yahweh" – I am who I am" or "I will be what I will be."

This is my name forever, and my title to all generations, Yahweh declared.

But this Yahweh who created the bald eagle and the turkey buzzard and beautiful butterflies and mosquitos, and kangaroos and penguins elephants and giraffes and anteaters is not always predictable –a name change was coming.

Jesus started it off with a common word – an every day word – Abba – Father – In his own prayers, in the prayer he taught his disciples Jesus addressed God in this way. Daddy which is the meaning of Abba, Father – because of the relationship between the God known as Yahweh and the man named Jesus of Nazareth this new name was spoken – Father.

At Jesus baptism the Spirit of the one who spoke to Moses descended upon Jesus and the Lord and creator of all spoke these words, “You are my Son, my chosen, with you I am well pleased.” Yahweh would address this man named Jesus as Son. My Son, God’s Son. From this time on Yahweh and Jesus would be known by names that describe relationship, Father, Son, joined by the Holy Spirit.

Today is the Sunday entitled, The Holy Trinity. God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God in three persons. The Trinity. Now this name does not appear in the scriptures yet for more than 1500 years Christians have spoken and sung and prayed this title, this name for God. Trinity.

Someone is sure to ask, “But how can we add to what is in the scriptures?” Today’s gospel reading provides an answer.

Jesus on the night of his betrayal said to the disciples, “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. “

Jesus did not tell the disciples everything. There is more that Jesus and the Father have to say to us than what Jesus said. The Spirit of truth will guide you into all truth.

God is not bound. God is not imprisoned by God’s past. I will be what I will be, this is the name of God – Yahweh, I will be what I will be. And what God has chosen to be is Trinity. Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

This is the name for God – a name of relationship. Because we are made one with Jesus in our baptism we are drawn into this relationship – Jesus’ Father is now your Father – the Holy Spirit coming from the Father and the Son is now dwelling in you.

Jesus said of the Holy Spirit, “He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Revelation – God revealing God’s own self and will to us is not complete. It is not enough to say we have the Bible and that is that. The Holy Spirit is still teaching -leading – guiding for life is constantly changing.

During Jesus' ministry there was no sense talking about how people would vote to tax themselves to help the poor or to wage a war. Yet these are questions we face. The Spirit of truth will guide you into all the truth is Jesus' promise.

All spring the adult Sunday School class discussed and debated whether the ELCA should authorize the blessing of committed same sex unions and should ordain gay or lesbian persons living faithfully in such a union. In the summer of 2005 the ELCA Churchwide Assembly will be deciding on those questions. We have Jesus promise: the Spirit of truth will guide you into all the truth.

But how can you know what is from the Holy Spirit- what from some other Spirit? How does it fit with what you see in Jesus and hear in Jesus and what you see and hear in the Father? For Jesus said, The spirit will take what is mine and declare it to you.

I suspect that Jesus is still saying to us today, I have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. You and I and the whole church on earth are not ready for all the truth, yet. But as we live in relationship with God and in love and commitment toward one another we grow. Little by little the Holy Spirit gives us faith and hope and understanding and love.

And one day The Holy Spirit will guide you right into the everlasting presence of the one who is all the truth, Jesus, the Son of God. And you will be worshipping Father, Son and Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

