

No Other Name

by Michael Durham

This sermon emphasizes the exclusive salvation found in the name of Jesus Christ, highlighting the severity of sin, the necessity of understanding God's holiness, and the complete salvation offered to His people. It delves into the depth of sin beyond mere actions, pointing to the need for a life-changing encounter with God and the transformative power of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.

Scripture: Acts 4:12, Romans 3:23, 1 Timothy 2:5, John 10:27, Matthew 11:28, Philippians 2:9, Hebrews 7:25, John 14:6, Isaiah 53:5

Topics: "Exclusive Salvation", "Transformative Power of the Cross"

Description

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Transcript

It's indeed a privilege to return to Philokalia. I want to thank you for your invitation and your kind hospitality today. Thank you.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Lord, you have given me this opportunity and task.

I confess to you and to these dear friends that I am not sufficient. And unless you help me, Lord, there will be no help for anyone here today. But because of Jesus, you have given me your Holy Spirit.

He who worketh mightily in us work mightily in me and in my hearers. Glorify Him, I pray. In Jesus' name, amen.

You may be seated. The text I pray the Lord be pleased to speak to us from is the Acts of the Apostle, chapter 4, verse 12. I want to speak to you today on the theme, No Other Name.

No Other Name. Acts, chapter 4, verse 12. Nor is there salvation in any other.

For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. Oh, the name of Jesus. Sweeter sounds have never come upon the human ear than the name of our Lord.

Sweeter than the sound of your own name, isn't it? And oh, the renown and the fame of the name of Christ. There are some names that strike fear in the hearts of men. Remember in the Old Testament, the name of Goliath struck fear in the men of Israel.

Even King Saul's heart trembled when he heard the name Goliath. But who is Goliath compared to the name of our God? Who is the King of Glory? The Lord, strong and mighty. The Lord, mighty in battle.

There are names of men who move our hearts with awe. It seems everywhere I go, at least in the Moldova region, I hear Stefan the Great. Or your own Mihai Imenescu.

Our national poet Mihai Imenescu. Or we hear names like Moses, David, or Paul. And when we hear them, it's as if we have respect in our voice.

But all of these names pale in comparison to the one name. That name which has been given to him. That name which is above every name.

That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow. Of things in heaven and things in earth. And things under the earth.

And at the name of Jesus, every tongue shall confess. That he is Lord of Lords. As we ponder this name by which is given only to save.

I want us to examine the severity of sin. And then, secondly, the saviorhood of Jesus. And then lastly, the salvation of his people.

What would cause God, the Father, to send his only begotten Son into the world? What would motivate the heart of the Son of God to come into this world? To become a human fetus in the womb of a woman? What could be so wrong that the God of all joy would become a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief? And what would be so drastic that would demand of him to be nailed to a cross? And why should he cry, hanging on that cross, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why should he die the death of the curse? Why should he receive the red hot wrath of God? What could be so wrong that God would go to such sweeping measures? And the answer is sin. This is the problem of the human race. But modern man doesn't seem to think so anymore.

The popular thinking today in our cultures that man's problem is many other things, but it certainly isn't sin. And we've minimized sin. The reason we have minimized it is because we really don't understand it.

We blame our problems on everything else but sin. We blame it on our finances. If I just had more income, my life would be completely different.

If I had more buying power, I could solve many of my problems. Some of us blame our problems on our spouse. If you had to live with him or her, you'd know why I'm the way I am.

We blame it on our children or the person we have to work for. We blame our issues on everything else other than what it really is. We blame it even on our health.

I am what I am because I'm in this condition. And even if you should recognize that you are your own worst problem, you still refuse to call it sin. You say, my life would have been completely different if I'd had a better education or probably just smarter.

I'm just a bad-tempered person. That's my problem. I've got a short fuse.

Or I'm given to depression. That's why my life hasn't turned out the way I had hoped. And we come up with all these syndromes to try to explain our human condition.

We're even more concerned about these physical bodies than we are our spiritual well-being. We've minimized sin. We don't even know what it is or what to call it.

I asked a young lady just recently, how would you define sin? She said, well, I think sin is when you think negatively, not positively. You see how we've minimized it? Sin is no more or no less than just thinking negative thoughts. The reason we have minimized sin is because we have minimized God.

That's the issue. That's the issue. The problem of this generation and these times is due to one fact and one fact only.

We have no right concept of God. We do not know Him, nor do we care to know Him. How does the Bible define sin? One of the things that the Scriptures do that we don't do in our modern era, one of the problems of modern evangelism, if you please, is that we want to start with man's problem.

But that's not the origin of our problem. Man is not the origin of the problem. The origin of the problem is we don't understand God.

Because it's by God you define sin. You really don't know the severity of your sin until you've been confronted with the holiness of God. And this is the problem not just of our cultures.

This is the problem of our churches. We don't know how holy God is. Because we seldom experience that holiness.

When was the last time that you felt the weight of His glory? You were in the presence of God. And you were brought low. Think about that.

When was the last time? If you're struggling to remember, there's our problem. You see? We ought to walk with an awareness of His glory, of His greatness. That should be the consuming thought and the guiding principle of our life.

It's Him that we have to deal with. It's Him that we have our being. Do you know God? Or do you just know things about God? How do we define sin? The Apostle Paul tells us it's this.

All have sinned. How have they sinned? He defines it. And have come short of the glory of God.

It's like saying a man has committed a crime. What's his crime? He robbed a bank. He murdered someone.

All of us have committed a crime. We sinned. You have.

I have. How have we sinned? We've come short of the glory of God. In order to understand sin, I've got to know what God's glory is.

Why is God so glorious? It's because His character is altogether good. He is righteous in all of His ways. And He is by nature holy.

Another way to say it is this. His glory is His perfection. God's perfection is self-derived.

It comes from Himself. There's not one creature that God has made that can say that. Not even the holy angels.

Their glory is derived from God. Or holiness, I should say. They don't have holiness because of their own nature.

And it generates it. It is a derived holiness. Only God can say this.

And because we do not know just how holy He is we really don't know the severity of our sin. If you could come under the vision of the glory of God as Isaiah you would have the very same reaction. You say, but I'm a Christian.

I'm saved. That has no bearing on the subject. If God's glory filled this building as it did the temple when Isaiah was ministering unto the Lord as we have ministered unto Him through song and prayer some of you would find that door and run immediately.

The rest of us would get on our faces. We would get as low as we possibly could. I remember the day when God saved me.

I was kneeling on a hardwood floor in prayer that morning. See, I was a religious person before I was truly converted. I prayed prayers, I read my Bible.

But on this morning God showed up. And the holiness of God was so thick in the room I tell you the truth, no lie. No embellishment.

I began to claw at the cracks between the hardwood floor and me in order to hide. To hide. If we were aware of His presence more in our lives the fear of God would return to our hearts and we would walk circumspectly carefully because we would be so afraid of sin because we would be so fearful of our God.

But our eyes can't see Him. He's invisible. God is spirit.

And so in order for God to help us understand His glory He's given us commandments. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. What does that commandment tell us about God? God is supreme.

There's nothing greater than God. Nothing is to compete with God in your heart. God is supreme.

Nothing is to compete with God in your heart. God alone is worthy of your worship. Which means He alone is worthy of your service and your obedience.

You know what worship really is? It's not singing these songs that we sang this morning. It's not just singing these songs. We can sing these songs and worship, yes.

But it's much, much more than that. Worship is seeing God so worthy, so valuable that He alone is worth building your life on. And He alone is worthy of your service.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Means that He is altogether sufficient for all you'll ever need. And therefore we don't need anything.

The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. And then there's the command thou shalt not steal.

What does that tell us about God? God is faithful to give us all that we need. And God is so good that He will not let you lack your daily requirements to survive. And then there's the commandment thou shalt not covet.

What would that tell us about God? Something very similar. If you have God, you will have everything you'll ever need. The writer of Hebrews said do not covet.

Why? And then he follows. Because he promised to never leave you. When you covet, when you strongly desire something, because you don't believe you can be happy or satisfied or content without it, then you are either accusing Christ of not keeping His promise and leaving you, or you never saw how worthy and glorious He was in the first place.

God gave us these commandments not to impinge and refrain us from joy, but to show us that He is our joy and our greatest pleasure. But once again, because we don't know the glory of God, we minimize sin. And we make sin only a matter or issue of our behavior.

So here we are in this Lord's day. And several of you have had this experience this morning already. I don't feel like I can pray this morning.

Because I haven't been too good of a Christian this week. I haven't performed as I ought to. I haven't read my Bible like I should.

I haven't been praying like I should. Or I sinned this week. Who am I to lead out in prayer? Or even to sing these songs.

I don't feel worthy. That's because you've minimized sin to be only what you do or don't do. You've minimized sin to be only what you do or don't do.

But dear friends, sin is much more than just what you do or don't do. In fact, our problem is that sin is so simple in our being. The problem is so simple.

You can actually perform good and do righteous things. But not do them for the glory of God. And therefore, all your religious activity becomes filthy rags in His sight.

In the light of God's presence, how much of what you've done this week could survive the piercing light of His glory? Did you do what you did because you loved Him and you wanted to honor Him and magnify Him? Every prayer you prayed that did not have that as its heart was wickedness before God. You say, I don't agree, it's too harsh. Oh friend, you're not dealing with a deity that's just a little better than you and me.

This is God who's altogether different than us. This is the God you will stand before in His righteousness. And this book says to the Christians that you're not but there are some among you who are weak and sickly, even some who have fallen asleep.

Why? Because you've not judged yourselves. You've not judged yourselves in comparison to this glorious holy God. God! You've taken your salvation for granted.

Sin is much deeper than your behavior. And the remedy that we need here this morning I need it every day is to become consciously aware of God. So that I will think rightly about sin.

And that's why we sing with joy about Jesus. Let's look at this. The Saviorhood of Jesus.

Let's look at Jesus as the Savior. I've been dealing with this text even though some of you thought I've moved away from it. I'm sure you can hear some of you thinking why don't I deal with the text? It has nothing to do with that text you read.

No. Yes it does. There is no salvation in any other.

Why is there the need of salvation? Because of the severity of our sin. The foundation of this text we've got a problem and a problem we cannot solve. This statement of Peter's was given to the Sanhedrin.

Answer to the miracle of the healing of the lame at the Gate Beautiful. They arrested Peter and John and said how did you do this? And Peter said in verse 10 of the same chapter let it be known to you all and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom you crucified in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom God raised from the dead by Him this man stands here before you whole. Notice again the name of Jesus Christ.

Remember in the actual miracle taking place in the third chapter Peter looked at the lame man and said these words silver and gold I do not have but what I do have I give you. Then what did he say? In the name of Jesus rise up and walk and immediately the legs he had never used before became strong. Our condition is exactly the same.

We are guilty before God and there is absolutely nothing we can do to resolve that. Being a member of a Christian church does not resolve that. Being immersed in water does not solve that.

Being a preacher does not resolve that. We are as lame spiritually as this man was physically. You don't walk up to a lame man and say rise up and walk.

It's ridiculous. If he could walk he would. Nor do you say to the man let's give you some stretches to do and we'll actuate some therapy.

You smile, you giggle rightly so. Why? It's nonsensical, it's insane. There was nothing this man could do.

My friend, there's nothing you can do to change your state of condemnation before God. But thank God that when the fullness of time had come God sent forth His Son made of a woman made under the law. Why is there only one name given among men whereby we may be saved? Because only this one has the power to raise you up out of your sin and save you.

We need someone to come to our aid. Your sin is just not your behavior, remember? You are a sinner. It's ingrained.

It's in you. It taints everything about you. It has corrupted your intellect and your emotions.

Your will is polluted because of sin. And even these bodies are corrupted. What can I do to change who I am? Can the leopard remove his spots? Of course not.

We need someone outside of ourselves who has a power greater than our own. Today, modern Christianity is accused as being too exclusive. You claim it's only in Christ is there salvation.

That's totally contrary to the political correctness of this time. All religions lead to the same place, we say. But Peter's statement here says no, to the contrary.

Here's why Christianity is exclusive. And it must be. Because we need more than just a man.

Yes, we needed a man to come and save us. Why? Because as men, we have sinned against this God. And for someone to come in between God and man in order to represent us, he must be a man as we are.

He needs to understand to be sympathetic to our condition. But not any man will do. Muhammad will not do.

Buddha will not do. Confucius will not work. Why? Because they are men also in the same condition.

Asking somebody to self-improve through your religious therapy is not sufficient. No more than it would be to tell this man to get up and walk on his own. It's true you need somebody who's just not a man.

You need somebody who is also divine. Divine. Why? Because only someone divine could have borne the wrath of God against us.

A perfect man. A simple man. Although perfect.

Would still not suffice. Why? Because not a single human being could endure what Christ endured at the cross. It took someone divine.

It took someone divine in order to endure divine wrath. It took someone of infinite value in order to sustain infinite wrath. That's why there is no other salvation in any other name.

Only Christ could have borne our grief. Only He could carry our sorrow. Only He could be smitten of God and survive.

And dearly beloved, He has. He's been bruised for your iniquities. He's been wounded for your transgressions.

We like sheep have gone astray. We've turned everyone to his own way. And the Lord has laid the iniquity of us all upon Him.

Him only could bear the weight and load of all that sin. Because He's more than just a man. He's the God-man.

For there is one God. And one mediator between God and man. The man Christ Jesus.

Who gave Himself a ransom for all. Lastly, let's look at the salvation that He's given to His people. It's a complete salvation.

Complete. As that man was healed as an illustration of God's saving grace. He did not walk away from that miracle.

What does the Bible say? He jumped on His feet. He danced and rejoiced. And making praise unto God.

Complete. One hundred percent. The power of His name was able to do all that that man needed.

And dear sir, I say to you today. It's all. He's all you need.

To be able to stand in the holy presence of God without condemnation. You need no other name. No other power.

No other blood. But He is. Remember what the angel said to Joseph when he contemplated putting away Mary? And she shall bring forth her firstborn son.

And you shall call His name Jesus. And He will save His people from their sin. Not just forgiveness.

But deliverance from sin. No, I'm not here to tell you that when you get saved you're perfected. But I am telling you this.

That if you are His and He's forgiven you of your sins He is not finished in saving you. There's still sin remaining in us. And He is a Savior that is complete in what He does.

Start to finish everything in between. He shall save His people from their sin. How do you know you're one of His? You can't.

God has begun a good work in you. And He will complete it. The question is has He begun that good work? Or did you begin a religious venture? Did you get baptized and changed your lifestyle? And now you believe that's why you're a Christian.

You're not sufficient. Sin is more than what you do or don't do. It's also about who you are.

How do you know? You need to know. You need to be sure you know. Jesus said in John 10 I lay down my life for my sheep.

And then within a few minutes He spoke to the religious people that were attacking Him. But you do not believe. Why? Because you are not my sheep.

I said my sheep hear my voice. And I know them. And they follow me.

How can you be sure? Because you've had a life-changing encounter with God. The ear the auditory sense of this body does not have to be activated to hear His voice. But the heart can hear it.

And when the heart hears the voice of God calling he or her he or she it's like a tracking beam. It's like a magnet. How sweet a sound the voice of our Lord calling it.

The sound of the voice makes you to know the severity of your sin. The sound of the voice makes you aware for the very first time the burden of sin that weighs your back down. Have you experienced the weightiness of your sin? Have you come to know that your sin is too grievous and too great for self-reformation? Has something, is something drawing you to yonder's wooden cross? Perhaps even now His voice is being heard.

Come unto me all you who are laden and heavy burdened. Anybody burdened here with your sin? God's talking to you. Because it's nature to minimize our sin and not feel its weight.

If you're feeling the weight of your sin this is a divine moment. God's talking to you. Come and I will give you rest.

I'll take your burden. I've poured it on the cross you don't have to carry it any longer nor do you have to pay the penalty of this weightiness. How do you know? Because you're here and you know.

But as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God. Will you come? There's no other name. No other power will do.

Not all your tears on all your sides not what your hands can bear this awful load. Only the Son of Man and the work that He has done for you. Silver and gold have I none such as I have in the name of Jesus.

Rise up and walk. Amen. Let's pray.

Our Father, we come again in the name of the Lord. We recognize that even this prayer if it's done in my own power is filthy rags. We claim the name of Jesus.

He's the only reason we have access to you. And we can stand in your presence unafraid. Please, I ask Father, for the glory of Jesus save sinners here.

Glorify yourself. May you see it wise to do this, I pray. Open deaf ears of the heart.

Hear your voice. Speak, Lord. And Lazarus will come to life.

We ask this in the name of the Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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