

Jesus, Name Above All Names

SPEAKER	Lisette Espinosa
DATE	Sunday, December 17, 2023
PASSAGES	Philippians 2:9-11; Matthew 1:18-21; John 1:1-14; Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 45:18-19; Isaiah 9:6; Haggai 2:5-9; Isaiah 42:1; Revelation 1:5-8; Acts 4:12
MESSAGE	Begins at 0:55:22 in the service

THE BIG IDEA

God does nothing by accident, and that includes the name he handed to Joseph in a dream. *Jesus* means Savior — not was, not will be, but is, permanently. Lisette spent the message stacking up what Scripture says about the character and nature of the one we sing about at Christmas, and then asked the room to let that knowledge drop from the head into the heart, where it can actually hold a person steady.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ◆ There are over a hundred names and titles of Christ in Scripture. That is not decoration. It is the Bible teaching us, from a hundred angles, who he is.
- ◆ *Jesus* is the Greek form of the Hebrew *Joshua*, and it means Savior. It was a common name in that time and place — and God chose it anyway, because the meaning was the point.
- ◆ He is Savior in the present tense. Lisette pressed this hard: “Not was, is, always Savior” — past, present, future, eternity. “He didn’t just save. He continues to save.”
- ◆ The name cannot be transferred. Plenty of men have carried it; none of them carry what she called the substance of godship, which is why Jesus is the one who defines right and wrong.
- ◆ John opens his gospel with Genesis’ own first words on purpose. Jesus did not begin in Mary’s womb; he has always existed.
- ◆ Advent is a waiting season in both directions — remembering the one who came, and expecting the one who is coming again.

- ◆ Judgment is not the frightening word we assume. In Isaiah's promise it is the Lord's justice arriving, which is the same thing as his salvation arriving.
- ◆ Knowing all of this is not a project for clever people. "He is for everyone."

► 1:03:22

Lisette opened by saying how special it felt to be asked to speak during the Christmas season, thanked Matt for the invitation, and then announced her subject with a shrug of self-awareness: a message about Jesus. Surprise, surprise. What followed was less an argument than an inventory — she had gone looking through Scripture and through sites she trusts, and found more than a hundred references to the names of Christ. She warned the room up front that a lot of this would be familiar, and that familiarity was not a defect. "Even the apostles often had the same message." If it feels like repetition, she said, then it is. Open your hearts and receive it anyway.

She also asked people to actually use the Bibles in the pews, or the app on their phones, because she wanted it clear that none of this was her opinion — and she told anyone who did not know their way around the book not to be embarrassed. "We all start somewhere."

The name above every name

► 1:07:41

"Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

PHILIPPIANS 2:9-11 ↗

Before going further she settled something, leaning on the message Matt had preached the week before: Jesus is not half God and half man. He is fully man and fully God. Which means, she said, that when we talk about God we are talking about Jesus — and she would be saying the two words in one breath all morning, deliberately.

Why that name, and what Joseph was told

► 1:09:08

Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua, and it means Savior. It was also an ordinary name — Lisette’s comparison was that it sat in that culture roughly where Carlos sits among Latinos. God could have picked anything. He picked a common name that meant the right thing, “because God doesn’t do anything on accident. Everything God does is with purpose.”

“Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’”

MATTHEW 1:18–21 ↗

She could not read that passage without stopping on Joseph, who found out his betrothed was pregnant and whose first instinct was to protect her from public shame. “In a world that likes to degrade men — wow, there are some good men who follow the Lord.” But the man in the story is not the point of the story. What was growing in Mary’s womb was not a mighty good man. And the meaning of the name is a claim about him that does not expire: “Not was, is, always Savior. From the past, to the present, to the future, for all eternity.”

A name you cannot put on like a sticker

► 1:11:56

Living in Texas, she said, you meet men named Jesus regularly. She told on her own son, who at three had been taught all about the Lord and was then introduced to a family friend by that name — and whose eyes went wide, because he thought he was meeting the one he had been hearing about. No, honey. He just carries the name.

“It’s not like a sticker,” she said. You cannot slap the name on a person and have anything change. The men she has known by that name have had good character; what they did not have was what she called the substance of godship. And that substance is exactly what makes Jesus the one who gives us morality — “he is the one who defines what is right and what is wrong, because he is God.”

In the beginning

► 1:13:02

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

JOHN 1:1-14 ↗

Then she sent everyone to the other end of the book, to the first sentence of the first chapter:

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” John’s opening words are not a coincidence, she argued. He is reaching back and putting Jesus inside the creation account on purpose. “He didn’t just appear in his mother’s womb. He always has existed.”

She read on into Isaiah, where the God who made the earth says

“I am the Lord, and there is no other... I the Lord speak the truth; I declare what is right” — and pointed out that this is the same voice, making the same claim about morality, centuries before the manger.

The sequel we are living in

► 1:16:15

Here the message turned, and it is the turn that gives the notes their shape. The baby in swaddling clothes moves her to tears, she said, and it is not the end of the account. He grew, he loved, he healed, he shed his blood, he rose on the third day, and before he ascended he told his followers it was good that he was going, because he would send the Holy Spirit.

Being, by her own admission, a science-fiction and Lord of the Rings geek, she reached for the language of sequels — the ones people wait years for and did not know were coming. “The story of God, this huge, amazing, big story, is not over. I would say we’re kind of living in this sequel.” That is what Advent is: he has come, and he is coming again, and we are in the middle.

The names the prophets already gave him

► 1:18:55

The prophetic names, she said, are not souvenirs from the era in which they were spoken. They describe someone still active. “I believe these prophetic names to be more than just for that time that he was here on earth. It’s for us now.”

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

ISAIAH 9:6 ↗

She stopped on *Everlasting* and turned it over — enduring through all time, eternal, continuing indefinitely. And she noted, with real pleasure, that though Jesus came as a Jewish man, what he came for was never confined to the Jew. It is for the Gentile. It is for all of humanity.

► 1:19:38

“‘This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear.’ This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. I will shake all nations, and what is desired by all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,’ says the Lord Almighty. ‘The silver is mine and the gold is mine,’ declares the Lord Almighty. ‘The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,’ says the Lord Almighty. ‘And in this place I will grant peace,’ declares the Lord Almighty.”

HAGGAI 2:5–9 ↗ (NIV)

The congregation had sung about the desire of the nations that morning, and she wanted the phrase unpacked. Not nations as borders on a map — people groups, everywhere on earth, and the thing they all want is salvation. This is where she said she had cried while preparing. “Even those who don’t believe are searching for a salvation.” Made in the image of God, people go looking for the thing that is only in one place. And then the line that carries the whole message forward: “This desire of the nations has come, and is coming again.”

Judgment is the justice of the Lord

► 1:21:46

She read [Isaiah 42:1](#) — “Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations” — and then read it again in the King James, for the poetry: *he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles*. This, she said, is talking about Jesus.

“I think sometimes we think of judgment as scary,” she said, and allowed that if you are doing things behind the scenes, a little apprehension is reasonable. But that is not what the promise is about. “Judgment is the justice of our Lord. It is the salvation of God. And it’s a beautiful thing.” Then she spoke directly to anyone in the room who had only come because a friend or family member was there: “I want to tell you, Jesus is your salvation. He is the only way. Nothing else, no one else, no other religion will free you — but Christ.” The thing every ethnicity on earth is longing for, she said, is found in this one man who is fully God and fully human. “It’s beautiful.”

He has a plan, even when it makes no sense to us

► 1:23:15

From there she brought it back to the season. Advent is this waiting: we remember who came, and we remember that we are awaiting his second coming, because that is what Scripture tells us. And the ground under the waiting is the thing she had spent the whole message establishing — his character and his nature are true. “Remember what I said earlier. He is not a God who acts just on a whim. Everything he does is on purpose. He has a plan.” Then the hard clause, the one that makes it a real claim rather than a comfortable one: “Even if it doesn’t make sense to us, he has a plan.”

Surrender is the part she is still learning

► 1:24:15

She was candid about the part she still finds hard. If everything has been done, then the only thing left to her is surrender — and, she admitted, “that seems kind of hard sometimes.” His purposes can be glorified through her as she yields to him, which is not a transaction she has mastered so much as one she is still learning. “This is the crazy thing that I’m still trying to accept in my own life.” The relief in it, she said, is also the difficulty in it: there is nothing left for her to do, because he has done it all. But the Lord can teach you, and teach me, how to surrender to his godship.

► 1:25:02

“And from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen. ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, ‘who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.’”

REVELATION 1:5-8 ↗

Three more names in a single passage — faithful witness, firstborn of the dead, ruler of kings on earth — and then the one that answers the whole message: who is, and who was, and who is to come.

► 1:27:19

Then a pop quiz, with the children’s handmade name cards on the walls as an open cheat sheet: who is Jesus? The room called them out — Light of the World, Lion of Judah, Immanuel, Good Shepherd, King of Kings, El Shaddai, Yahweh. She was reading off the walls too, and said so. There are over a hundred, she reminded them; keep going. She left four more references for people to write down — [Acts 4:12](#), [Ephesians 1:21](#), [Philippians 2:7](#), [Matthew 12:18](#) — and said the quiet part about why any of it matters: “It’s important for us to study, to remember, to carry in our hearts, not just in our heads. Let what’s in our head pierce our hearts and transform us.” What the Old Testament said about who he is, fulfilled in the New — that, she said, is what carries us through.

She called it a really short message, which it was, and then gave it its point in two sentences. “Jesus is the name above all names. We gather in this building, gather at home in small groups, because of who he is.” Her encouragement for the Christmas season was to cling to the character and nature of a good God who saves — and she would not let the tense slip even here: “He didn’t just save. He continues to save.”

An anchor, and the greatest gift

► 1:28:04

The closing charge was shorter still. Whatever calamity, whatever decision, whatever heartache or joy or change is in front of you — “remember first who he is, and let it steady you, let it guide you, let it be your anchor.” And no matter how old we get in Christ, no matter how many years we have walked with him: “let’s always go back to the foundation of what the word of God says.”

Lindsay, she said — waving her up in front of everyone — had found ornaments printed with the names of Christ while the team was putting the decorations together. They were waiting on the white tree in

the foyer, one per person, adults taking them for the children too, and not because a piece of card has any power but as something to look at and remember by. The one in her hand said *Bridegroom*. There were gifts as well, and Lindsay had made a point of them being for everyone, not only visitors. “The greatest gift, as we know, is Christ the Lord — who came, and who is coming again.”

She closed in prayer, and the prayer was the message compressed: thanking God that he is good, that he is kind, that he is holy, and naming what puts everything else in proportion — “You didn’t have to do it, but you did it.” She thanked him that when he left the earth he sent the Holy Spirit to sustain and keep and help us, that he is coming again, and that one day “we will see you face to face, we will be able to behold you with our very eyes.” Let that be our joy and our hope; let that be what sustains us. Then she invited anyone who needed prayer to come forward and have the prayer team pray with them.

FOR FURTHER STUDY**SCRIPTURE IN THIS MESSAGE**

- [Philippians 2:9–11](#)
- [Matthew 1:18–21](#)
- [John 1:1–14](#)
- [Genesis 1:1](#)
- [Isaiah 45:18–19](#)
- [Isaiah 9:6](#)
- [Haggai 2:5–9](#) (NIV)
- [Isaiah 42:1](#)
- [Revelation 1:5–8](#)
- [Acts 4:12](#)
- [Ephesians 1:21](#)
- [Philippians 2:7](#)
- [Matthew 12:18](#)

FOR YOUR HOPE GROUP

1. Lisette said the name Jesus means Savior in the present tense — “not was, is.” Where in your life have you been treating his saving as something that already happened rather than something still happening?
2. She insisted that knowing God’s character is not reserved for the smart people in the room. What has made you feel unqualified to study him, and what would it take to set that down?
3. If we are living in the sequel — after the resurrection, before the return — what does waiting well actually look like between now and Christmas?
4. Judgment, in [Isaiah 42:1](#), is the same event as salvation. How does that reframe what you expect when you think about Christ coming back?
5. She admitted that surrender is the part she is still learning, and that God has a plan “even if it doesn’t make sense to us.” Name one thing this week where your part is to stop working and yield — and say what you will do differently because of it.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Lisette Espinosa was invited by Matt to preach on the Sunday before Christmas, and called it a privilege to speak in that season. She describes herself as a Latina from the east side of Austin, married, and the mother of a young son; she is an unembarrassed science-fiction and Lord of the Rings fan. She preaches from the ESV, studies with tools like Blue Letter Bible, and told the congregation plainly that the knowledge of God is “for everyone, not just the smarty pants.”

Watch the full message:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VkVaJGiex24&t=3322s>

These notes summarise a message preached at Hope Chapel in Austin, Texas. They are a reader's aid, not a transcript — scripture references link to the full passage so you can read it in context.