

Immanuel (Augsburg) Lutheran Church  
Shobonier, Illinois  
Circumcision of Our Lord  
January 1, 2023  
Luke 2:21

## The Eighth Day of Christmas

And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. (Luke 2:21 ESV)

Dearly Beloved, in the Name of Jesus,

“On the eighth day of Christmas my true love gave to me . . .” What? Your true love didn’t give you anything? That can’t be. It’s not possible. Unless, of course, you forget who your true love really is. And that’s often the case, isn’t it? We forget who our true love is. We forget the One who made us, saved us, and claimed us as His own. We forget the One who shed His blood and died for us. We forget the One who gives us the blessing of a name, His name. So on this eighth day of Christmas, let us be richly blessed by hearing what our true love gives to us.

In today’s Gospel, the shortest one in the Church Year, we hear what our true love received from His true love on the eighth day - circumcision, pain and bleeding, the burden of the Law, and His name.

Now that doesn’t sound like much of a gift does it? And yet it is the gift that brings great blessing. For God had established circumcision as the sign of the covenant He made with Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 17:11). Those circumcised were set apart and made children of God’s family and placed under His covenant blessings and obligations. Those blessings included God’s presence, promises, and protection. The obligations included keeping God’s Law. Thus, circumcision was initiation into the covenant of God’s grace and a perpetual reminder of all that includes.

That’s why Mary and Joseph had their Son circumcised on the eighth day as the Law required (Gen. 17:12; Lev. 12:3). Now certainly Jesus didn’t need it for Himself. He was already the eternal Son of God. No, Jesus didn’t need it, but we do. For with that act, with the shedding of His blood, Jesus was placed under the covenant obligation to observe the whole Law. He would be our Representative who would do what we are unable to do. He would keep and fulfill the entirety of God’s Law perfectly in every respect.

Furthermore, when He was circumcised, He received His name, also in accordance with God’s Word. And what a name it is! Both Mary and Joseph had separately been told by an angel that the child to be born should be named Jesus (Matt.1:21; Luke 1:31). And the reason He would be given *that* name was that it identified what He had come to do - save His people from their sins. Thus, His name tells *who He is* and *what He does*.

In Scripture a person's name usually said something about who they were and/or what God had done for them. For example, the name Jacob means "to grasp the heel, to beguile or supplant." When he was born he was hanging on to Esau's heel. Later, he tricked his father and received Esau's blessing and supplanted Esau as the eldest son. He lived up to his name. Abraham and Sarah laughed when they heard that she would have a son (Gen. 17:17-19) so they named him Isaac, which means "he laughs."

So Jesus' name is important too. Not only because that's what God told Mary and Joseph to name Him, but because it also indicates why He was born. The name "Jesus" means "the Lord (or Yahweh) saves." His name was much more than just a tag or label by which to identify Him. It actually tells us that He is true God and that He came to save us from our sins. That's why the angels told the shepherds, "There is born to you a Savior, Christ the Lord." The Son of God became flesh to save you by keeping the Law perfectly and by suffering the punishment that you deserve because of your sin. The shedding of His infant blood pointed to His shedding His blood on the cross. Through the shedding of that precious blood, you have forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

That's why St. Paul, tells us:

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2:9-11)

Jesus' name is special because of what He has done for us, for you. He truly lived up to His name and continues to live up to it. He still saves you. And lest we think there may be some other way of salvation, Luke tells us in the book of Acts, "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). By believing in the name of Jesus, we believe in Jesus Himself and what He has done for us.

Now as important as it was that Jesus received His name at His circumcision, it's also important that you also have been given a name - His name. In your Baptism, you were brought into God's family and received His name as your own, and with it all the blessings pertaining thereto. Your sins were forgiven; you were made a child of God; you received Jesus' name; and your name was written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Because you were baptized in the singular NAME of the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you now bear God's name and have all His promises as your own.

So when God put His Name on you in your Baptism, He put you right there by Jesus when He is circumcised. By faith we believe that His circumcision is our circumcision. Paul explains it this way: For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you

are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Gal. 3:27-29).

When the Lord puts His name on you, everything attached to that name belongs to you. The priestly blessing of Numbers 6, which you receive at the end of the Divine Service, bestows the Lord's name and blessing on you. You don't want to miss it. For the Lord indeed blesses you and keeps you from all sin, from death, and from the power of the devil. The Lord's face shines on you, bringing light from above that shines in the darkness of your life. The Lord's countenance is lifted upon you, giving you gladness and joy, and especially peace. Where the Lord's Name is, there is His blessing.

Jesus' Name is your name through Baptism. For "In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead." (Col. 2:11-12). Yes, Jesus' circumcision is your circumcision through faith in the Promise of the Seed of the woman Who crushes the head of the serpent to redeem mankind from the devil's grasp. All this is yours because of what happened eight days after Christ's birth. His blood shed even as a baby is your righteousness that sets you free from the shackles of the Law and gives you freedom in Christ forever.

So what did your true love give you on the eighth day of Christmas? The same thing He gives you every eighth day—Jesus, forgiveness, life, salvation, and His name. With those blessings have a happy new year. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Rev. Timothy J. Landskroener