

Daily Devotional

April 19, 2005

(Contributed by David Berry)

Theme: He Calls His Own By Name

Text: John 10:3 (NIV) The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

There is a unique and intimate relationship each person has with their own name. More than just a means by which we identify ourselves, our name is directly and intimately associated with our past, our future, and the relationships we share with others. I remember distinctly the sound of my name being called by my parents and all of the feelings associated with the sound of their voice calling my name. If my first, middle and last name were called out...I knew it usually meant I was in trouble. If my mother spoke my name gently, I knew it was to be followed with a word of encouragement or support. Today, when my children call me 'dad', I can tell by the inflection in their voice whether the need is urgent, casual or playful. My name is the shelf that holds the trophies of past accomplishments, the snapshots of my past mistakes and the memories of all those who used it with regularity.

My name is not foreign to God. Yours isn't either. Our names are known by Him for the purposes he created us to fulfill and for the joy he intends us to receive. Many times we all too easily get distracted and forget that our names have an intimate association with the Shepherd. He doesn't just know the names of the Patriarchs and the Prophets and Kings. He knows your name and all that is associated with it, and it brings Him pleasure. Hearing His call may be easier for many of us if we can learn to turn down the volume on all the other noises and simply be available to listen to Him.

Reflection:

- If the Shepherd spoke your name right now, would you feel peace? Why?/Why not? What do you long to hear Him say?
- Do you have a hard time believing that His voice would come to you gently and filled with kindness? Have you talked with Him about your feelings?
- How might you come to recognize His voice more easily?

Prayer: Jesus, help me to know today that I am not simply the product of circumstance. Help me to know that I am not just the result of my parent's influence or simply the child of my generation. I am uniquely designed by you and for your purposes and glory. I can only feel afraid and insecure when I answer any other call than yours.

There are many "calls" that come and stir my heart – but only your voice brings peace.

Please make my heart more sensitive and more aware of your instruction and more open to your encouragement. Allow me Jesus to ignore the whispers that come to me from others – those spoken and those implied.

Free me Lord from the affection I receive from my own ego. Cut the chains of past mistakes and the taint of their memory. Father, introduce me again to the nurturing voice of the Good Shepherd and give me courage to hear and follow His call. Amen