

HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 8/8/2022

Dear Friends in CHRIST,

ONE AT ONE – *Every day this week beginning on Tuesday, August 9 you are encouraged to pray for one minute at one o'clock. This week, pray for those who are falsely imprisoned in our country and throughout the world. Ask GOD to send people to help find ways for these people to be set free. Pray for justice that those who are unfairly incarcerated might find peace in their current situation and soon be restored to their proper status of freedom.*

The most important name in the Bible, of course, is that of GOD'S. Starting with Genesis, GOD'S name is given as the tetragrammaton (four letters) YHWH. The early Hebrew alphabet had no vowels so only consonants were given. Vowels were added in for pronunciation and the later included in this ancient alphabet. So, GOD'S name was pronounced YAHWEH, though you never said this. This is GOD'S name and the Jews sought to never violate the second commandment, "You shall not take the LORD'S name in vain." To make sure they never violate this command, identities like *ADONAI* ("My Lord) or *HASHEM* ("The Name") are said whenever YAHWEH is encountered in reading the scripture. *ELOHIM* is another word used for GOD in the Old Testament and translates to "LORD GOD." In Latin, YHWH is transliterated with vowels into the word JEHOVAH, also the name for GOD.

Exodus 3:14 tells that when Moses asks who should he say sent him to free the Israelite slaves in Egypt, the answer he received was to say, "I AM WHO I AM" as the name for GOD. YAHWEH is often understood to mean "I AM." That becomes significant throughout the Bible and especially when JESUS is speaking about HIMSELF. Marcia Ehlers' Sunday morning adult class (you can participate in this class by Zoom and the information is available from the church office) is exploring the "I AM" statements of JESUS:

"I AM the Bread of Life." – John 6

"I AM the Light of the World." – John 8

"I AM the Gate for the Sheep." – John 10

"I AM the Good Shepherd." – John 10

"I AM the Resurrection and the Life." – John 11

"I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life." – John 14

"I AM the True Vine." – John 15

By using the term "I AM" in this way, JESUS is not only teaching about HIMSELF, and thereby GOD, HE is also identifying HIMSELF as GOD. In John 8: 24, JESUS says, "If you do not believe that I AM HE, you will die in your sins." For JESUS to speak this way would be considered heresy and certainly was a contributing factor to the resistance JESUS received from the religious leaders of HIS day. Yet, by doing so, JESUS is telling us something very powerful about GOD. Because JESUS is

GOD and lived as a human being, we have a GOD who knows all our experiences and feelings and has tremendous empathy for each of us. Another name for JESUS is IMMANUEL, which means “GOD WITH US.” We most often hear this name at Christmastime when we celebrate GOD coming into our world to dwell among us as one of us.

We are blessed to be able to call upon GOD and to share our joys and concerns with our CREATOR. GOD’S name is such a special gift that we should do all we can to honor and treasure it. We should never let the name of GOD become common or something we just throw around as though it means little to us. GOD is always ready to hear our prayers. We can show how we value that in the ways that we choose to use the name of GOD and the occasions upon which we call upon “I AM.”

In CHRIST'S love,
Pastor Jeffrey