

The name of Jesus

'Thy name is as ointment poured forth.' Song of Solomon 1:3

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING: 1 Peter 2:4–10

I knew nothing about the fear of God. I never had a hearty desire to keep his commandments, till I began to know a little of Christ. I was starving and he fed me; I was sick and he visited me; I was naked, destitute of all good, and he clothed me with his own righteousness; I was shut up in the prison of sin and he came and burst open the doors and set me at liberty. How great is his goodness; how great is his beauty. In comparison of this tree of life, all the tallest of the sons of men are empty and barren. He is the chief among ten thousands and altogether lovely. The soul ranges, as it were, through the whole creation to find some worthy similitudes of her Lord, but all are scanty and insufficient. Let us consider this in my text. It may lead our thoughts not only to the excellency that is in Christ, but to his suitableness to us, and afford a glass in which you may see yourselves and be able to judge by the light of the Holy Spirit whether you are indeed worthy the name of Christians.

Thy name. This in general means his person (as in Revelation 3:4), or rather the manifestation of his person, that by which he is known. The name of Christ includes the whole revelation concerning him, who he is, what he has done—all that we read of his love, his power and his offices, make a part of his great and glorious name. The soul that is taught by the Word and Spirit of God to understand a little of these things, receives such a sense of love and joy, that the very sound of his name is sweeter than music to the ears, sweeter than honey to the taste. He is named a Saviour, to save from guilt, sin and hell. This implies a Mediator. There is an important concern between us and God—but how shall we approach?—who shall interpose? This name affords a comfortable answer. He is named a Husband. Our wants, debts and fears are many. But he is made known by this name (Isaiah 54) and he is rich enough to supply all.

FOR MEDITATION:

Dear name! the rock on which I build,
My shield and hiding place;
My never-failing treasury filled
With boundless stores of grace.

JESUS! my Shepherd, Husband, Friend,
My Prophet, Priest and King;
My LORD, my Life, my Way, my End,
Accept the praise I bring.⁸⁷

SERMON: SONG OF SOLOMON 1:3 [1/5]

His name like ointment

'Thy name is as ointment poured forth.' Song of Solomon 1:3

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING: Luke 10:29–37

This name is compared to *ointment*. These were more frequent in use, and many of more costly composition, than common amongst us.

Some were healing, applied to wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. Now the sinner, when he is awakened and comes to himself, finds himself like the man (Luke 10) stripped and wounded and half dead. Jesus, like the good Samaritan, comes with an eye of pity to pour in the ointment of his name. This is a certain and the only cure for the wounds of sin. Many can witness to this. How, when they began to feel their misery and see their danger, they made use of many means, but found them all physicians of no value. Like the woman in the Gospel, when they had spent all their time and strength in this way, they were no better but rather grew worse. But this ointment made them whole.

Some were cordial and reviving. The believing soul is subject to fainting—it has but little strength and meets many discouragements—but is relieved from time to time by the good savour of this ointment. The name of Christ refreshes it with new strength under the remains of sin, assaults of Satan and troubles of life.

FOR MEDITATION: O the name of Jesus—indeed it is as ointment poured forth.⁸⁸

[John Newton to Thomas Haweis, Liverpool, May 1763]

How sweet the name of JESUS sounds	It makes the wounded spirit whole,
In a believer's ear!	And calms the troubled breast;
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,	'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And drives away his fear.	And to the weary rest. ⁸⁹

A distinguishing savour

'Thy name is as ointment poured forth.' Song of Solomon 1:3

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING: Isaiah 61:1–3

Ointments were used in feasts (Luke 7:46; hence Psalm 23:5), and the name of Jesus is a precious banquet to the believing soul. This fills him as with marrow and fatness; this puts an honour and a beauty upon him; therefore (verse 4) *more than wine*.

Precious ointments have a savour, a perfumed smell, which distinguishes the person that bears them. So this ointment of the name of Jesus, when poured into a believer's heart, it makes him smell as a field which the Lord has blessed. It is this communication of grace and holiness which they have received from their beloved which makes them known to each other and distinguishes them from the world.

Who have a right to the bread and wine? Even all those who see the value and long to know more of the virtue of this ointment. Fear not, ye who seek Jesus, but come. Are you wounded? Are you fainting? Let not this keep you away, but rather constrain you. You cannot do without it.

FOR MEDITATION:

By Thee my prayers acceptance gain
Although with sin defiled;
Satan accuses me in vain
And I am owned a child.⁹⁰

Yes, dear Mrs Barham⁹¹ is gone home. She lived honourably and died peaceably. Were I to preach a funeral sermon, I should say but little about her; but I would make the people stare, if I could, by telling them what a wonderful Friend she had; one who paid all her debts, and was so attentive to her that his eye was never off her by night or day for a long number of years; one who, by looking at her, could sweeten her pains, renew her strength, and fill her with wisdom, grace and peace. She is gone to see her best Friend; and I hope, one day to see her with him.⁹²

John Newton to William Bull, 13 October 1781

Filled with his fragrance

'Thy name is as ointment poured forth.' Song of Solomon 1:3

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING: Psalm 22:1-31

How *poured forth*? We read in Mark 14 that the woman brought precious ointment in a box—and when she broke the box, then and not before, the whole house was filled with its fragrance. Thus the grace and virtue of this name was confined and known but to few while our Lord conversed upon earth—but afterwards it was poured forth when he suffered. The precious vessel that contained this precious ointment was broken upon the cross—the savour of his name, his love, his blood, poured out from every wound in his sacred body. *See from his head, his hands, his feet, sorrow and love flow mingling down.*⁹³ From that hour, it was quickly spread and diffused far and near. And here we are still to look for it. When we desire a new savour of this ointment, let us turn our eyes, our thoughts, to Golgotha. To behold him by faith as he hung bleeding and dying, with outstretched arms inviting our regards and saying, See if any sorrow was like to my sorrow. This is a sovereign balm for every wound and a cordial for our care.

FOR MEDITATION:

When on the cross, my Lord I see
Bleeding to death, for wretched me;
Satan and sin no more can move,
For I am all transformed to love.

Here I forget my cares and pains;
I drink, yet still my thirst remains;
Only the fountain-head above,
Can satisfy the thirst of love.

His thorns, and nails, pierce through my heart,
In every groan I bear a part;
I view his wounds with streaming eyes,
But see! he bows his head and dies!

O, that I thus could always feel!
LORD, more and more thy love reveal!
Then my glad tongue shall loud proclaim
The grace and glory of thy name.

Come, sinners, view the Lamb of GOD,
Wounded and dead, and bathed in blood!
Behold his side, and venture near,
The well of endless life is here.

Thy name dispels my guilt and fear,
Revives my heart, and charms my ear;
Affords a balm for every wound,
And Satan trembles at the sound.⁹⁴

Refreshing ointment

'Thy name is as ointment poured forth.' Song of Solomon 1:3

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING: Acts 13:32–52

This ointment was *poured forth* in the preached gospel. It was appointed for this end. And everything that bears the name of preaching, if it does not diffuse the knowledge of this good ointment, is dry and tedious, unsavoury and unprofitable. But by this foolishness of preaching it is spread abroad. The scene of our Lord's life was confined to a few places and it was a long while ago—but the ointment thus poured out has reached to distant lands and ages. Countless thousands have experienced its efficacy, and blessed be God, it is still fresh and still flowing. It is poured out amongst us at this day.

Farther, the expression *poured forth* may signify abundance (there is enough to spare) and freeness (it is not enclosed but open and common to all who know its value, as the light or water).

The Lord has likewise special seasons of pouring it into the hearts of his people. These are called times of refreshment (Acts 3:19): usually at the time of their first conversion; often in an hour of distress and trouble. They may expect it likewise at the hour of death. He often meets them with it in the ordinances—particularly when they approach his table. At this feast he revives them with the savour of his ointment and pours it upon their heads. He anoints them with this oil of joy and gladness above their fellows.

FOR MEDITATION:

Weak is the effort of my heart
And cold my warmest thought;
But when I see thee as thou art,
I'll praise Thee as I ought.

Till then I would thy love proclaim
With every fleeting breath;
And may the music of thy name
Refresh my soul in death.⁹⁵