

“He Knows Your Name” – by Lorelei Pepe

Isaiah 43:1.....” I have called you by your name; You are mine. “

Imagine what a powerful Bible verse that is. God knows each and every one of our names.

As a kid growing up in Brooklyn, I was curious about my name and when I was about 8, I even had a hard time spelling Lorelei, as it was a German spelling but I enjoyed my name, as I knew I was different and felt that way. Even though in school, kids made fun of it and even teachers mispronounced it, I still liked it. But questioning my mom why she named me that, she explained that when she was young she read a book on Mermaids and one had the name Lorelei. It stayed with her and she decided her first born daughter would be named that. She told me the same thing that it was unique and I was different in a special way. She also told me that God knows all our names and we are His children. I liked that and found it comforting.

I think God smiled down upon one special man called Desmond Doss. Born in 1919, he was a devout Christian man who did not believe in killing although he was serving in WW II. In the documentary about his life, “Hacksaw Ridge”, I learned that Desmond was a medic but refused to shoot a gun. He went into battle anyway and saved 75 men. Desmond, a great man of faith, believed God was with him every step of the way and stood up for his beliefs despite opposition. He was an “overcomer”. He later received the Medal of Honor for his heroism. He was a humble man but not forgotten as he is part of history although not well known.

The preacher David Jeremiah, reminded me of another overcomer in life in one of his sermons. Although there are many “heroes” in the Bible he particularly liked young David who was propelled into battle with the Philistines, where he defeated the giant Goliath with his shepherd’s sling. David had a very colorful life and was anything but perfect. But God never gave up on him, even when he committed unforgettable crimes. His story told in the book of Samuel is a story of passion, forgiveness and redemption.

And then there was Jonah. I smile when I think of him as he was a very reluctant prophet. And he was not cast in a good light. Even today the name is associated with wrongdoing. Jonah’s story began with God telling him to go and preach against the city of Nineveh, which was an Assyrian city. Jonah absolutely had no desire to preach to enemies of Israel. Instead of following God’s wishes, he boarded a ship going in the opposite direction to the city of Tarshish. He was stubborn and thought he could go against God. How many times have we done that? We know the right thing but do the wrong thing anyway. God sent a huge storm that threatened to destroy the ship as Jonah had placed everyone in danger. He was thrown overboard and swallowed by a huge fish where he remained 3 days and nights. After learning his lesson he headed to Nineveh to preach God’s message. Surprisingly, the whole city repented. Jonah was not happy but God explained to him he should be compassionate. This was a real testimony of God’s grace.

So what's in a name? Plenty. I think each one of us has a purpose here on this earth to serve our Lord. We are here for such a short time, like Jesus was. Only 33 years, however He has become the most popular man on this earth. Everyone knows His name. Jesus, the Son of God, who came to save us all from sin by sacrificing Himself on the cross. Jesus came to serve us, change us and teach us about love, forgiveness and compassion. Easy to say, but hard to do. But as I read the Bible and hope you do too, you will really learn the message is very simple.

“Love one another, as I have loved you.” Amen.