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THE INVOCATION: What's in a name?

We begin the service with the **Invocation**. The term comes from the Latin word *invocare*, which means 'to call upon.' We find it in the English word invoke. In the invocation, we firstly call upon God. We can only do that because God has revealed his name to us.

Look at Moses' first encounter with God in Exodus 3:13-16. Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob--has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation." Moses wanted to know God's name. Only then could he get a handle on God. Only with his name could he form a relationship.

God has bound himself to his name. Matthew 18:20 says, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them." When we ask God to be present, we have his promise that he will be. In the invocation, we are asking God to be present and we are also confessing that we know he will be. We are saying that his name is powerful.

What does the Bible say about the name of God?



Deuteronomy 28:58b

Revere this glorious and awesome name—the Lord your God.

Psalm 30:4

Sing the praises of the LORD, you his faithful people; praise his holy name.

Psalm 135:13

Your name, Lord, endures forever, your renown, Lord, through all generations.

Colossians 3:17

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The invocation also reminds us of our baptism. The words used are the same as in our baptism. "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Matthew 28:19

Luther said that we should daily remember our baptism and what it means for us now. Every week in church, the invocation reminds us how we can come before God and worship him; and that through baptism we became part of God's family.