When I was growing up my mother would address me two ways. Either as Steven, or Steven Daniel and in the time in which it took my mother to say the next word time would stand still. The reason being is that the difference between being addressed as Steven and Steven Daniel was night and day. If I was just being called Steven, it most likely meant I had done something my mom approved of. Those were things like doing well on my report card. It would happen when I was playing organized sports, and I say organized because I behaved much better when I was playing with my travel baseball team than when I was down the block playing football and dodgeball and wiffleball in the street.

And then there were the times when I was addressed as Steven Daniel and time would slow down, my heart beat would quicken and my palms would get a little sweaty. Steven Daniel Gallego, you get your butt in here. I knew I was in trouble. It happened when I played a little too hard with my niece and nephews and one of them got hurt. It happened when I was playing in the street and word traveled through the grapevine that we had broken a neighbor’s window. It happened when we were told not to rough around in the house and would still do so and end up breaking something.

You see, what happened when I heard my name both ways when I was younger, were two things that are important for us today. The first is that when I heard that loud Daniel in my middle name, my brain would tell my body to begin to produce cortisol because my stress and anxiety would begin to rise through the roof. And one of the effects of cortisol is that the immune system begins to get weakened because it causes the body to decrease it white blood cell count literally making it easier for you to get sick.

The second is that, when I heard that softer sounding Steven my brain would send impulses to my nervous system and my nervous system would then tell my body to begin to produce endorphins which are natural pain relievers.

They are produced by the central nervous system and the pituitary gland. Since endorphins act on the opiate receptors in our brains, they reduce pain and boost pleasure, resulting in a feeling of well-being by helping to reduce our stress and anxiety, acting contrary to cortisol

What I am getting at here is that there is power in hearing a name. When we hear a name it can either set us up to have a good day, or a bad day. We can either get a boost of cortisol the stress hormone or we can get a boost of endorphins. We can either get happy about something, or we can get sad about something. We can either perk up because the name is associated with someone we love and care about, or we can get saddened because that name we hear is associated to someone that we just cant stand.

I say all of this because there was something that I didn’t grasp the first, second, or the third time I read the Psalm. It was not until I read it the fourth time that I was able to see this. For me the Psalms can be broken down into three categories. Psalms of orientation when things are going well. Psalms of disorientation, psalms written about or in the midst of the storms of life such as a psalm of lament. And then finally Psalms of reorientation, these are songs after someone has been delivered and the deliverance is mentioned in the psalm. In this way the psalms fall in line with the cycle of life.

So when I first read this Psalm, I thought it was a psalm or reorientation because of line three where we are told the psalmist was calling out to God in the midst of the storms of life and God answered them and part of that was by increasing the strength within them. They have been delivered, and delivered so well the psalmist is exclaiming that they are giving praise with their whole heart, or their whole being, every fiber of their body is giving thanks to God.

But then verse 7 happens and we hear that even though the psalmist is walking in the midst of trouble they acknowledge that God is keeping them safe. Now after this jumped off the screen on the fourth reading, I understood this was not a psalm of reorientation, this was a psalm of disorientation, and you might be asking me, how can this person be delivered in verse 3 and still in something in verse 7.

The answer for me is that the psalmist has learned several things. The first is that no matter what is going on in our lives, we shall always shower God with our praises because even if God does nothing more than save me from my sins and redeems me by the blood of Jesus, God has already done enough to be eternally praised.

The second is that when we are going through the toughest times in our lives the best place to be is in the church, surrounded by your brothers and sisters in Christ. The worse thing we can do when things get rough is to stop coming to church. That is when you need your church family to be there for you and help you pick up your broken pieces and put them back together again one piece at a time.

The third is that God can use any situation that occurs in our lives to breathe life into us.

The reasons this is important might surprise you. It gets back to the power of a name. There was a Duke University study of believers and non-believers to study auditory neurological responses that is a study to show the effect a name has on the release of endorphins and cortisol and what they found out is that there is one name that releases more endorphins than any other name. There is one name above all else that when you call on it and hear it will make you feel better than any other, and that name is Jesus. They found out that when you say or hear the name Jesus it releases a rush of endorphins greater than any name we could possibly hear.

So what I want to tell you is that the reason when we show up in church even though the storms of life are surging, that when we praise God in the midst of the storm we begin to say and hear the name of Jesus, and there is power in that name, there is healing in that name.

This is why I believe the psalmist is able to stand in confidence and proclaim that God has answered his call and at the same time he is still going through the trials of life. The psalmist gives praise because when we praise the name of Jesus it can literally change our perception of our reality. When we say that name of Jesus we can go from a woe is me, to a God will get me through this mentality. When we call on the name of Jesus we can begin to see the light at the end of the tunnel. When we call on the name of Jesus we can remember that he loves us deeply and will never leave us nor forsake us. When we call on the name of Jesus those endorphins flood our bodies and change our mood so that we can see all the good that God has done. When we call on the name of Jesus above all, we are reminded of what the psalmist was, that God’s steadfast love endures forever, and that God does not abandon the works of his hands.

Wont you call on the name of Jesus Christ and know that he is good. Wont you call on the name of Jesus and let his name begin to change your perception of your reality and shape your internal conversation about your situation. Call on the name of Jesus when you wake up, Call on the name of Jesus throughout the day, and call on the name of Jesus when you go to bed. Call on the name of Jesus and see how it changes your day.