

Wild at Heart – Week 6a

The Father's Voice

1. We *desperately* need to know our name the way Maximus knew his. Our sense of mission, purpose, our ability to fight for others and especially our impact on those we love most. Over the course of your Christian life, how would you classify your knowledge of God...and of yourself?

2. Have we been looking to God just to make our life easier or to develop, challenge and stretch us? Has this chapter made you think differently about what's been happening to you over the last few years?

3. What do you think God's been up to with you? How would you describe his activity (or non-activity) in your life? Has your view of that changed since working through this book?

4. What are the questions you've been asking God? What has been the subject of your prayers before reading *Wild at Heart*? Are they different now?

Field Notes

COMMODUS: Your fame is well deserved, Spaniard. I don't believe there's ever been a gladiator that matched you... Why doesn't the hero reveal himself and tell us all your real name? (Maximus is silent.) You do have a name?

MAXIMUS: My name is Gladiator. (He turns and walks away.)

COMMODUS: How dare you show your back to me?! Slave! You will remove your helmet and tell me your name.

MAXIMUS: (Slowly, very slowly lifts his helmet and turns to face his enemy) My name is Maximus Decimus Meridius; Commander of the Armies of the North; General of the Felix Legions; loyal servant to the true emperor, Marcus Aurelius; father to a murdered son; husband to a murdered wife; and I **will** have my vengeance, in this life or in the next.

Now there's a man who knows his true name!

A BREAK IN THE CLOUDS

When I talk about knowing our "true name," I hope you understand that I mean it in a metaphorical, or symbolical, way. Jacob was given his first name at birth, for he came out of the womb "grasping" Esau's heel. (Jacob means "supplanter", "trickster" or "he deceives.") For many years he lived out the identity that went along with that name—getting his brother to sell him his birthright for a bowl of porridge, tricking his father into giving him the blessing, living off his cleverness, grasping. But there came a time in Jacob's life when God changed his name—when through a great trial he both crippled him and blessed him. God gave him the new name Israel—which means "he who wrestles with God." (A much more noble identity, wouldn't you say?)

The name given us in life—whether our actual name or a nickname or just the deep identity bestowed on us—is often far from who we truly are in God's eyes, the man he created us to be. So to speak of finding our true name is to describe that process whereby we shed the old identity for a new one, with that new identity comes a deeper strength, a life mission, a sense of self given to us by God. And yes, it may be embodied in an actual name like Israel, or it may be contained in a series of new "names" or phrases such as "one who fights for the truth" or "tender warrior."

O God, I have tasted Your goodness, and it has both satisfied me and made me thirsty for more. I am painfully conscious of my need of further grace. I am ashamed of my lack of desire. O God, the Triune God, I want to want You; I long to be filled with longing; I thirst to be made more thirsty still. Show me Your glory, I pray You, that so I may know You indeed. Begin in mercy a new work of love within me. Say to my soul "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away." Then give me grace to rise and follow You up from this misty lowland where I have wandered so long. In Jesus' Name, Amen. (A. W Tozer. The Pursuit of God)