

**"The Gift of Jesus"**

12/25/11

Christmas Sunday

Isaiah 9:6

9 &amp; 10:45 a.m.

*Series, "Christmas at CrossPoint"***INTRODUCTION**

About 800 years before Jesus was born, God's prophet Isaiah wrote these words about Jesus, the Son of God, whose birth we celebrate today:

Isaiah 9:6 **"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."**

This Child, this Son to be born, would be the King that the nation of Israel had been promised for generations... the King Who would be the Son of God.

And on Christmas day, we still celebrate His birth... more than 2,000 years later!

The reason we continue to celebrate His birth is because He is what Isaiah said He would be: **"... Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."**

These are so much more than amazing titles. Millions of people have known Jesus to be these very things in their personal lives.

Jesus Himself is our gift at Christmas, and when you receive Jesus, you receive what He brings to your life:

**1. The Wonderful Counselor brings Hope** (8 minutes)

"A mother was at the end of her rope. Nothing she said could get her eldest son to stop his habit of using profanity. So, out of desperation, she wrote to an advice columnist who appeared in her local newspaper. Every day she checked the paper, desperate for a solution.

In about a week she was excited to see her letter and the columnist's advice. The advice was that each time the boy

cursed, she should slap him.

So, the next morning as her two sons came to the table, she asked what they wanted for breakfast. The eldest said, 'I want some 'blankety, blank Post Toasties.' The mother reared back and slapped him as hard as she could.

As he sat dazed on the floor, she then turned to her younger son and asked what he wanted for breakfast, to which he replied, 'Well, I sure don't want any Post Toasties!'"

There's an old Danish proverb that says, "*He who builds according to every man's advice will have a crooked house.*"

Maybe you've experienced that and you're worn out on seeking advice.

What you need to know is that Jesus is the **Wonderful Counselor**.

His counsel is extraordinary, amazing, and marvelous. In fact, it works, and so it inspires hope.

One of the things that happen when you're meeting with a great counselor is that your hope is restored.

Wonderful counselors are an amazing mix of outstanding qualities:

Knowledgeable: insights into what you are struggling with; they know how people and relationships work.

Experienced: not just that they have been a counselor for a long time, or met with a lot of people, but they have become highly skilled, they have paid attention, continued to learn, acquired insight into people and relationships; they have learned to listen well.

Balanced: gracious and truthful, compassionate and confrontive, they know when to be tender and when to give a firm word of encouragement.

When this is done well, the result is hope. Hope. You

went to a counselor because you needed help. You didn't show up the first time you started to struggle. You are in the office because you don't know what to do, or everything you have tried hasn't worked.

But, whether you realize it or not, you need more than knowledge and insights, more than compassion and understanding... you need hope.

Hope imparts confidence that things can change.

Hope gives the expectation that you can rise above what's holding you down.

Hope inspires optimism ... that the glass really is half full

Hope bestows the emotional energy and courage to continue to face your problems and overcome.

When you receive the gift of Jesus, you receive hope; the confidence to face and overcome any situation as you listen to and apply His wonderful counsel.

(MATT) **2. The Mighty God gives Joy**

- a. Anybody remember that elementary argument with your classmate? I don't know if you can identify with this if you are a woman, but I think most men will. "My dad is stronger than your dad." When I knew that my dad, whom I believed to be mighty, was stronger than your dad, I experienced great joy.
- b. Joy is an emotion evoked by remembering God and his work and the confident expectation that God will act to deliver when trouble comes. Joy is not based on your present situation, but on the character of God.
- c. Story: Mark, Lisa, and Joy
- d. You may be here this morning, stricken with fear and devoid of joy. I've got news for you, Jesus, the Mighty God says to you, "Fear not, for I have brought you good tidings of great joy." My prayer for you today is that you will find joy with skin on before you leave this place.

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Isaiah 9:6 "... And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

### **3. The Everlasting Father bestows Love** (6 minutes)

As we come to this third quality of Jesus, **Everlasting Father**, we learn that Jesus is just like His **Father**.

The first part of the description is "**Everlasting**."

One of the things **Everlasting** means is that *God is eternal*. His life has no end. He will always be. That's more than just an amazing truth to ponder... it is something to be greatly enjoyed... because one of the things it means is that Jesus will always be with you... He will never go away, never be absent, He will not die, and, since he is not limited, He will never be too busy for you.

Also, **Everlasting** infers the truth that Jesus is always the same, i.e., He never changes. You don't have to worry about Him being one way on Monday, and completely different on Tuesday. His character doesn't change, His purposes do not change.

Jesus is **Everlasting**.

Jesus is also "**Father**." He is just like His Father, and all the qualities of His Father are His.

When our daughter, Janelle was in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade she regularly brought home lists of words for which she had to write out definitions.

This grew into a game we would play, called "*The Walking Dictionary*." I was the walking dictionary.

I would help her by giving my definition to the word, and she would then look it up in her children's dictionary to see if I was right. Because the words were simple, I was always right. I was "*The Walking Dictionary*."

As she grew older and we had discussions about important life issues, I felt the weight of her questions, and the challenge of providing on-target answers for her life. I couldn't answer every question with the ease of second-

grade vocabulary.

What was at the heart of helping Janelle in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and later with life-impacting issues... at the heart of helping her was love. I loved my daughter. I still love her.

At the heart of Jesus' Fatherhood qualities is love. Love is at the center, and love is the foundation. Love is the motivation and love is the atmosphere.

Jesus' love is expressed in wisdom and availability,

in tenderness and firmness,

by providing for every need, and at times, in allowing us to experience need.

His love for you never changes; He will always love you.

"I'm absolutely convinced that nothing - nothing living or dead, angelic or demonic, today or tomorrow, high or low, thinkable or unthinkable - absolutely nothing can get between us and God's love because of the way that Jesus our Master has embraced us." (Romans 8:35-39, The Message)

If you need something as simple as a walking dictionary, or as enduring as someone who will never leave or forsake you, then turn to Jesus as your personal **Eternal Father**.

(MATT) **4. The Prince of Peace is our Peace**

- a. Every Christmas, my sister and I would ask our mom what she wanted from us. She always wanted two things, (1) peace and quiet and (2) two kids who obey her. We did our best with the peace and quiet but I was never to find two kids who would obey her...
- b. Anyway, in my lifetime, peace has never been more relevant. We want peace in Iraq and the rest of the Middle East, we want peace in our lives as we go day to day worrying about our homes, jobs, and what tomorrow may bring. If ever there was a net loss of peace, it is now.

c. Yet, Jesus claims to be our peace. He is the way to peace with God through the forgiveness of our sins and the way to peace with God as he has sent the Comforter to be with us always. Gospel.

My prayer for you this... that whatever it is you are in need of right now, Jesus Christ offers it in fullness. Through his very names, he offers you hope, joy, love, and peace and he is calling you to respond in acceptance of the gifts that he desires to give you this Christmas.

*"Lord Jesus Christ, I ask you today to forgive me for relying on myself instead of You. I have gone my own way instead of following You. I invite You, Jesus, to take Your place at the center of my life. Thank You for being a gift to me! Amen."*