

Isaiah 9:1-7 (6-7) The Fourfold Name 12/17/17

But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

*² The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.*

*³ You have multiplied the nation;
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as they are glad when they divide the spoil.*

*⁴ For the yoke of his burden,
and the staff for his shoulder,
the rod of his oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.*

*⁵ For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult
and every garment rolled in blood
will be burned as fuel for the fire.*

*⁶ For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

*⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.*

The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

(Pastor prays)

One week and one day and it's Christmas, the day our good and sovereign God broke into humanity in a saving way, a Gospel way. What we believe about Christmas is that we are sinners separated from a good and holy creator, and Christmas is mercy. Christmas is Christ. Christ became one of us to die for us. He became like us to free us. He walked among us to guide us. He stayed with us to teach us. He died on the tree to purchase us. He defeated death to save us.

Christmas is Jesus. Word became flesh. Eternal became mortal. Glory put on sandals. Majestic wore clothes. Creator walked among us. The truth should enlighten our minds and lift our hearts and cause us to worship. This morning we are pointed to the one who is worthy of our worship and our very lives.

Isaiah 9:6 gives us the fourfold name of the victor King. Those four names are throne names. What I mean is that those names in verse 6 are names for a King. All four names are important. In fact, a close friend of mine, Brian Black, an Irish Ulsterman and expositor, preached a sermon for each name. He told me that I would never get it done in one sermon. He said that because he understands that a name speaks *of* character and *to* power. And the names in verse 6 speak to the extent of Christ's authority and the nature of His rule and give us great cause to slow way down and look at the meaning of Christmas.

Christmas is about you as a sinner being brought into the loving favor of our good God. More pointedly, Christmas means that Christ, His life, death and resurrection and your faith in that through and in Christ, you have nothing to fear. In our text this morning, the prophet Isaiah looks forward to one coming who will put a glorious end to the judgment of God and bring to every believer hope for tomorrow, joy for today and real peace forever.

Christmas is God Reconciling Sinners to Himself In Christ

Christmas Means Mercy

Mercy: God not carrying out judgment on us even though we deserve it. That is mercy in verse 6. Who is it for? Unto us a child is born and a son is given. It is for *us*. The "us" is sinners, like you and me, separated from God and dead in sin, living short,

miserable lives and then dying and going to Hell. And mercy came for us everyday people who are in need of a Christmas-day Savior.

How did mercy come? A child is born, a son is given. In John 1:14 the Bible says, “Word became flesh.” The theological word is “incarnation.” Here is the virgin birth – writ large. Offspring of the Holy Spirit with no earthly father and no sin nature. Do you remember what Paul says about the incarnation in Philippians 2:6-8? *who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.* There it is – God’s mercy. A child born to us. A son given as a substitute.

The assurance of mercy is also in verse 6 – “and the government shall rest upon his shoulders.” What government? Here Isaiah speaks to the absolute rule that Christ has over the universe. Isaiah is telling us that the one coming will be able to bear the burden of governing, leading, and managing all the affairs of the entire universe. I mean He is in control, and when I say control, I mean *absolute* and *total* control. He holds in His hands the fate of providence, and the coming Savior King will bring to pass all the purposes of God the Father. And part of God’s purpose is showing mercy. Christmas means mercy.

Christmas Means Clarity

Clarity. To see clearly. That’s what this first name speaks to in verse 6. His name shall be called “Wonderful counselor.” Let’s take it apart. Counsel: to advise, to plan out, to plot, and not just to listen but to give a course of action that is true and right and God-honoring. Christ is not just a counselor, He is the Wonderful Counselor – Full of Wonder, a counsel that goes beyond human reason and understanding. This counselor is infallible in His words, His direction, His purpose and His power to save.

Colossians 2:3 says, *in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* And for clarity’s sake and your own wellbeing, you must learn to trust Him, to adore Christ in worship, be motivated by His example, be compelled by His love and be filled with His Spirit. If He is, in fact, the Wonderful Counselor, you will trust His word. You

will obey His command and you will submit to His rulership over your life. Here's clarity. Jesus is Lord! Christmas means mercy. Christmas means clarity.

Christmas Means Power

I don't mean my power or your power or horsepower. We don't have power, we have *need*. *He* has power. Verse 6 says He is the Mighty God! This is important as we clearly state who Jesus Christ is. He is fully God. He had to be fully God to carry all our sins. As Mighty God, all might, and power belongs to Him. In John 10 Jesus said, I and the Father are one. As the Mighty God, He is the one with authority over our lives. Nothing is impossible for Him. No marriage is too estranged, no sin so grievous that He can't forgive. As the mighty God, Jesus has all authority. The resurrected Jesus said to His disciples in Matthew 28:18, *All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me*. He has the authority to answer prayers, heal broken hearts, and change lives. Listen, as God's redeemed children in Christ, we are chosen by God and bought by Christ to live under His authority. We trust His word, follow His commands, live for His kingdom and seek His grace. He is the Mighty God, as such, He is worthy of inconvenience, sacrifice and hardships. His glory is worth your trouble. Christmas reminds us of this authority, that you are not your own. You were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies. He has authority to alter the course of your life, to test your faith, and to strengthen your resolve through trials. Christmas means mercy and clarity and power.

Christmas Means Security

That's the sense you get in the third name – Everlasting Father – eternal, reminding us of what the writer of Hebrews said in Hebrews 1:3, *He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high*, It speaks to His reign as forever. "Father" speaks to His tender dealing with us as His children. He is the perfect Father to so many who have had less-than-perfect childhoods.

In fact, not too long ago, *USA Today* came out with a study that said that 70% of adults grew up with troubled childhoods. That means that the majority of people in this sanctuary come from troubled homes. And this morning, Isaiah gives the promise of

one coming who will be the eternal Father, who will never leave you or forsake you, the Father who will lead you beside the still water and the one who will walk with you through the valley of the shadow of death. This eternal Father gives great security in a life that is a struggle. He's never anxious, He never frets, He always provides and is always safe for His children.

This is the security that so many are looking for. This is the security that keeps young girls from believing lies of some boy. You don't need the affection of some boy with the devil in him. You have the eternal Father. He gives you security and defines who you are. The eternal Father can rebuild your life and He made you secure in Christ when He purchased you in Christ. Paul says He redeemed us, chose us, adopted us and loves us. That's security. Christmas means security. Are you secure in Christ? Christmas means mercy, clarity, power and security. I'll give you one last word. It's part of His name.

Christmas Means Security

Isn't that what the text says? He is the Prince of Peace. The chief peace-giver. The Prince. He is the sovereign ruler who gives peace to His people. And through His cross He declares that the war is over. You have Peace with God.

In Romans 8:1 it says, *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.* And you should know there is no peace with God without the cross. You also have the Peace of God. Remember what Paul says the effect of prayer is in Philippians 4:6-7, *do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* Peace. It's what Christmas means. This baby in the manger is the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. It's God's doing. Christmas is God reconciling sinners to Himself through Jesus Christ. Christmas means mercy, clarity, power, security, and peace.

(Pastor prays)