

Rev. Benny Parks
Christmas Eve 11:00
“A Child is Born, A Son is Given”
Isaiah 9:6

It's great to be with you tonight for a few minutes. So thinking about the birth of a child. Birth of a child is always a great blessing brings great expectations. We say that someone is expecting. I have two daughters that are expecting. I have my youngest and oldest and they are expecting less than a month apart, ones in early May and ones in early June. We're going to go from one grandchild to three just like that. And so we're very excited. But we expect we know when a child's coming. We have these great expectations we're expecting. But a child normally does not come exactly when we expect the child to come. You know what I'm talking about.

When my son Ben, when he was born, he was born early. And so, I was actually at a retreat with our officers at Chaco Springs. And at two in the morning, an elder came and knocked on my door. And we didn't have cell phones back then. So you couldn't call. You couldn't text. He banged on my door and said, your wife is in labor.” And I said, okay. So I jumped out, got dressed, got in the car, took my friend Randy with me, got home and Ben was born that day and it was great. He was born three weeks early, so we were expecting him, but we weren't expecting him to come three weeks early. So Randy is one of my closest friends says to this day he calls Ben “Little Early” instead of Ben. He says, how's Little Early doing? I said, well, he's doing great. He's thirty two years old, but he's doing great. He's not so little anymore.

Now, when my friend Randy was expecting the birth of their son, and they thought he was going to come on this Friday. Sandra was really feeling like she was going to have the baby. They went and saw the doctor and he said, no, nothing's happening. Go home. Come back Monday if nothing's happened and we'll talk then. And they go home, she's going to rest and take a nap. And he leaves to go down to Tuscaloosa to speak to the football team down there, and his wife could not get comfortable, and she was trying her best to get comfortable and she just couldn't. And so she said, I can't go to sleep. And so she got up. For some reason, she went to their little small, narrow bathroom in the hallway and as soon as she got in there, uh, Randy's mom was over there. She said, Mrs. Overstreet, call 911 - I'm going to have this baby. To which Miss Overstreet said, do you want me to call Benny Parks? She said, NO call 911. And so I don't know why she wanted to call me. I'm a pastor, you know. The paramedics are five minutes away, so they would be able to deliver the baby. Uh, I was twenty five minutes away, but I was impressed that she said that anyway. But paramedics got there in seven minutes. She had the baby eight minutes later. Uh, within a short time of fifteen minutes, he came into this world. They were expecting him, but they were not expecting it that way.

Well, the birth of a child, though, is always a blessing. And in God's Word we hear the Apostle Paul in Galatians say this. But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order that he might redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. This is a great, a great hope for us. And that's what we're going to look at right now. That's what we celebrate. We sing come thou long expected Jesus born a child and yet a king. And we're going to look at one verse, uh, this is in Isaiah

chapter nine. And Dr Redd, if you weren't here earlier, five or seven, I'd encourage you to go back and listen to his sermon. You get more of the background about what's going on in chapter nine, as Isaiah is preaching to the nation of Judah about, uh, the northern Kingdom's downfall. But you want to go and get the background from that, because tonight we're just going to look at one verse. Isaiah 9:6. It's a very common one that we all know. And it says this...

“... 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.”

This is this is explaining our deliverer. He was both born and he was given. And all things rest on the birth of this son. We sing born thy people to deliver. Born a child and yet a king born to reign in us forever. Now thy precious kingdom bring this. This child that was born would become, as we know, the lamb that was slain. That's why we have communion to celebrate his death and resurrection. And this passage says that he will shoulder the rule of the burden of ruling over us. He will. His government will be upon his shoulders. One commentator said that when we release, he releases the burden of ruling from us when he shoulders ruling over us. Is Jesus ruling you today? That's a that's this evening. That's a question that we need to ask ourselves.

Well, this child that would be born son, given his described his nature, is described in his names. We sing. Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see. And really, it's not his names, it's his titles. And there are these four titles Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. And I want to just draw our attention to four applications from each of these titles for us to think about tonight.

First, it says he is a wonderful counselor. He gives perfect wisdom and guidance to us. The world screams for us to follow its wisdom and guidance, but it leads us to nowhere. And yet the one who gives perfect guidance is the one who is calling us to trust him, to follow him, to hear from him. So our first application, the wonderful counselor, is that we would follow him and to follow him. It implies that we listen to him, that we hear his word, and then we do what it says. And that's what we're called to do because of his great wisdom. You know, when this little child grew up, there was a time where he was preaching and it was not a very popular sermon. And it says in John six that many stopped following him who had been following him earlier. And Jesus turns to his disciples, and he says, So Jesus said to the twelve, do you want to go away as well? Peter wasn't always. He was always, uh, not always saying the right things. But this time he got it right. Simon Peter answered and said, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. He is the wonderful counselor. And so therefore, we need to follow him.

Well, then the second thing we see in this passage, in this title is he is the mighty God. Nothing is too difficult for the mighty God. But we have formidable enemies around us. Our Shorter Catechism, Westminster Shorter Catechism, says that Jesus is conquering all his and our enemies even now. But these enemies are strong, too difficult for us. John Calvin, the great sixteenth century reformer, said this about our enemies. He says, you better believe these

enemies are too strong for us. Well, actually, that's not how he said it in the sixteenth century. But that's how I would say it. You better believe these enemies are too strong for us. But John Calvin actually said this with good reason. Does God call him strong and mighty? Because our contest is with the devil, death and In sin. Enemies too powerful, too strong. By whom we would be immediately vanquished if the strength of Christ had not rendered us invincible. Do you feel invincible tonight? Scripture says we're more than conquerors in Christ. I don't feel invincible. I don't feel like more than a conqueror. But we, in fact, are if we are in Christ because of his power. Great. Uh, Puritan Richard Sibbes wrote a book called The Bruised Reed, and in it he says, even when a Christian is conquered, he conquers because we have Christ who is making all things new and doing a great work. So this second application of the mighty God, it calls on us to rely on him, to rely on him, to depend upon Him and His power. He gives us the power to follow him, uh, to be able to listen to him. And so there's this great passage in First Corinthians that puts both of these together. Uh, his power and his wisdom. And it says that Jesus was preached to the Jews and the Greeks to the Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God. He is the mighty God. We are to rely upon him. But then it's also says that he that also says he is an everlasting father. Everything that your heavenly father allows you to experience on your path to heaven. Everything that he puts on your plate, no matter how difficult. Ultimately, he will cause to work together for your good because he's an everlasting father. He cares for us. We have total security in him and we can trust him. We can love him.

And that is our third application because he loves us. He's demonstrated that to us. Then we can trust him, the mighty, the everlasting Father to take care of us and to provide for us. He has shown how much he loves us by sending His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who treats us in this way everlastingly as a father, caring for his children. So we trust him.

And then finally, finally it says the Messiah would be the Prince of Peace. And Jeremiah the prophet cries out and says that the world cries out the prophets. The false prophets cry out peace! Peace when there is no peace. And yet Jesus is true. There is no government. There is no government, there is no president. There is no ruler that can bring everlasting peace. But the King of kings, the Lord of Lords, the Prince of Peace, is in fact doing that now as he's bringing people into his kingdom, saving them and changing them to bring about not only everlasting peace in their hearts and our hearts. But in this whole world and in the new heavens and the new earth.

Now, I had an elder text me earlier and said, I'm going to be praying for you tonight. I know your favorite Christmas hymn. As I heard the bells and I said, I'm going to quote it tonight, because in that one phrase it says, in despair, I bowed my head. There is no peace on earth, I said, for hate is strong and mocks the song of peace on earth, goodwill to men. Then the next line says, then rang the bells more loud and deep. God is not dead, nor does he sleep. The wrong shall fail, the right prevail with peace on earth, goodwill to men. So this last and final application with the Prince of Peace is rest in him. Rest in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is bringing about peace in our souls and in our society.

Do you have peace today in the deepest parts of your soul? Well, God wants to do that. My son in law wrote a song recently, did an album release in Opelika, Alabama a month ago, and my favorite song is the one I want to tell you briefly about. And he is kind of his story and he tells the story. He had this concert a month ago, and it was fifteen years to the day at midnight that night, fifteen years to the day that God rescued him out of his decadence. He had dropped out of school, went down to the beach, sang, made a lot of money, but got involved in many, many depraved things, uh, destructive behaviors. And he was despairing completely. And he tells the story that he was, uh, about to end his life, that he put a bullet in the chamber of a gun, was on a pier at the beach. And it was at that moment that God reached down and rescued him and changed him. And he's just a wonderful man now, but he has this song that he talks about, and, and it goes, he talks about how in the song that, uh, he starts this way, he says, *there's so much I wish I had known. Life was coming at me fast fighting hard to belong harder fighting harder to outrun my past. Because it was a bad past.* But then there's two phrases in the song that I love, he says, *but oh, oh, your eyes. They were set upon me.* And when he started telling this story, he just started weeping. I'd have to say that water welled up in my eyes too as he was crying, but he says, *oh, oh, your eyes. They were set upon me. Nothing I could ever do would take them off me, he said. My own mom turned her face. She couldn't stand to see where I'd become, where I'd gone. But then the second phrase he says and oh, oh, your love, it was set upon me. And when the time was right, you called me.* But what's wonderful is he doesn't just say you called me. He says what? You called me. He said *you called me son. Son. You called me son. After all that I had done, you still called me son.*

That's the wonder of the gospel. The son who was born, who was given to us, the son of the Most High lived, died, rose again, so that he could reign in us and bring us into his kingdom to be sons and daughters of the Most High. That's the gospel message. We have a wonderful counselor, a mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. And we can we can follow him, rely on him, trust him and rest in him. But you must come to him first.

So tonight, if you're a believer, that should encourage you. Let's say you've walked away from the Lord. I'd encourage you to come back. Say you've never put your trust in the Lord. Tonight would be a great time to do that. To repent, to turn. Later in Isaiah and Isaiah fifty nine, it says, The Lord's hand is not so short that it cannot save. It's your sins that have made a separation between you and your God. But whenever we stop running, whenever we repent, he reaches down and grabs us and makes us sons of the Most High. As I read just a few moments ago. So I'd encourage you to put your trust in the Lord Jesus if you never have, and thank him for what he's done for you if you've come to know him. Let's pray...

Heavenly father, I do ask this evening that if, uh, that if there are for your children, that you would just you would just remind us of the blessing, the incredible blessing it is to be called children of God, sons of the Son of God. Father, I pray if there are any who have run away from you, that they would stop running and come back to you. And then, father, I do pray. If there is anyone here who's never put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, that you would cause them to pray simply in their hearts. Lord Jesus, I have been running. I have not surrendered to you. But tonight is the night that I want to stop running. I want to put my trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and ask that you would come in, that you would change me and make me the kind of person

that you would have me to be. Lord, we love you. Thank you for loving us. We pray these things in Jesus name.

Amen.