

In the Name of Jesus

Midweek Advent Service #2 – December 11, 2019 (Prince of Peace, Loveland)

Sermon Text: Isaiah 9:6 – UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN:

HIS NAME WILL BE CALLED *MIGHTY GOD, EVERLASTING FATHER*

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:26-38

Hymns: 564, 90 (1,4-8), 89 (1,5), 275

Our text tonight is once again drawn from the Book of Isaiah, the evangelist of the Old Testament, as we find it recorded in his 9th chapter, verse 6: **“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government will be upon His shoulder; and His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”**

In the name of Jesus, our coming Savior-King, dearly beloved of God:

Last Wednesday we considered the first two names Isaiah ascribed to the coming Savior in this verse: Wonderful and Counselor.

- We talked of the reasons Isaiah had to call Jesus “Wonderful.” He would enter the world in a wonderful way. Though Lord of all, He would be born lowly in a structure designed for farm animals. His birth town wouldn’t be an important city like Jerusalem but the sleepy out-of-the-way village, Bethlehem. He to whom belong all majesty and power would grow up as a tender plant and a root out of dry ground to serve His people in a wonderful way, by taking upon Himself the burden of our sins, suffering our death, enduring our punishment.
- He would also be called “Counselor” for a good reason, for He would serve as the spiritual Healer of souls. He would comfort poor sinners cumbered with a load of guilt with the assurance that where sin abounds, God’s grace abounds more, that our transgressions against God’s holy law would be deleted permanently from the divine ledger book so that we not fear His righteous anger or punishment.

Tonight we consider two more names that Isaiah ascribes to the coming Messiah: **MIGHTY GOD** and **EVERLASTING FATHER**. Again we’ll talk about reasons why these names fit the infant Christ to a T ... why they were apt names for the Baby whose birthday we will soon celebrate.

1.

First, let’s consider the name: **MIGHTY GOD**. What does it tell us about the Savior? It reveals the sublime truth of the Bible that the Baby born so helpless (as all children are born) ... so weak ... so in need of the TLC of His stepfather, Joseph, and His mother, Mary ... was at the same time the all-powerful, all-glorious, preeminent God, the King of kings, Lord of lords ... so it could be said about Him, as Martin Luther did in his famous carol *“From Heaven Above to Earth I Come”*:

**Were earth a thousand times as fair, Beset with gold and jewels rare
It yet were far too poor to be A narrow cradle, Lord, for Thee.** [TLH 85:10]

He is so rich in glory, so high in His greatness ...

**... that all the world's wealth, honor, might,
Are naught and worthless in [His] sight.** [TLH 85:12]

This, of course, was essential if He was to function as our Savior. A baby born as all ordinary humans are born would be able to help no one. A Child born a mere mortal couldn't defeat the fierce enemies He was destined to face. They would have been far too powerful ... too formidable. Only One who is **MIGHTY GOD** would have the competence ... the strength ... to quash them. To neutralize sin's power, remove death's stinger, depose the old evil foe. Only the Sabaoth Lord (the Lord of all the angel armies) would possess "the right stuff" to engage our spiritual foes in fight and come away victorious!

But is He *really* **MIGHTY GOD**? Many say no. They reject this teaching. They are ready to admit that He was a notable figure in the world's history. He was a great spiritual leader. He was the founder of one of the world's major religions. But Mighty God? No way, they say. For us, though (thanks to the working of the Spirit in our hearts), there's no question!

- All the *titles* the Scriptures give to Jesus confirm His deity. Who else but One who is **MIGHTY GOD** could be called "the Resurrection and the Life" ... "the Good Shepherd" ... "the Alpha and Omega" (and dozens of other divine names the Bible gives to Him).
- All the *miracles* He did prove His divinity. The Holy Spirit caused them to be recorded in Scripture just so that we might know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (John 20:31).

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Two miracles I'd like to mention in particular this evening, where Jesus put the omnipotence He has as **MIGHTY GOD** on display in an impressive way:

- One is the account of His visiting the Capernaum synagogue (Mark 1:21-28). The people were listening to Him teach on a Sabbath and they were astonished because He taught them as one who had authority, not as the scribes. There was something about Him that they recognized was extra special. There was a man in the audience who was controlled by a demon who shouted: "**Leave us alone! What do You want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are – the Holy One of God!**" Jesus then gave the order: "**Be quiet! Come out of him!**" And after convulsing the man, the demon came out with a shriek. When the people saw it they were stunned. They said: "**What is this? A new teaching with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they listen!**"
- The other story is Jesus' encounter with the man from Gadara (Mark 5:1-20). The poor fellow possessed by a *legion* of demons, so that nobody could control him. He broke the chains people put on him to try to restrain him. These demons also

recognized Jesus' true identity. When the man saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of Him. He shouted at the top of his voice: **"What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?"** When He ordered them to leave the man, they did. Right into a herd of swine who stampeded over the cliff and drowned in the lake.

Let people question Christ's deity. Let them celebrate Christmas as the birthday of a good and kindly man, a teacher on the order of Mohammed or Gandhi. We will celebrate it as the birthday of the Son of God sent from heaven to crush for us the serpent's head and save us from our sins, as only He could do!

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That Jesus is **MIGHTY GOD** is cause for rejoicing for another reason. Shortly before returning to heaven He told His disciples: **"Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."** As we celebrate Christmas, let's keep in mind that Jesus was not only "God with us" two thousand years ago. He *still* is! When we feel overmatched or overstressed by the daily battles we face in our lives ... when burdens press us down ... when the days seem hard ... when we're lonely ... let's take heart because our omnipotent Friend is at our side. He will use His omnipotence as **MIGHTY GOD** in our best interests just as He did in His work as our Savior two millennia ago.

2.

Next we consider the name **EVERLASTING FATHER**. It too, reveals the glory of Bethlehem Manger Child.

Once when the unbelieving religious leaders of the Jews were having a "run in" with Jesus ... casting aspersions on His messianic claims ... a question they put to Him was: *"Are You saying You are greater than our father Abraham, who died (as did all the prophets). Who are You making Yourself out to be?!"* Recall Jesus' answer? He told them: *"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it, and was glad."* When they retorted: *"Why, You're not even 50 years old, and You claim to have seen Abraham?!"* ... He floored them with the statement: **"I tell you the truth, before Abraham was, I AM!"** He was making it clear that He was the everlasting Lord of all by whom and through whom all things in heaven and earth have been made, in whom alone is life. As the hymn writer put it:

**Of the Father's love begotten Ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega, He the Source, the Ending He,
Of the things that are, that have been, And that future year shall see
Evermore and evermore.** [TLH 98:1]

By this sublime teaching God, once again, gives us the assurance that the Baby whose birth we will soon be celebrating possessed the credentials needed to save us. Because He is the eternal I AM He's capable of carrying out the mission His Father gave to Him.

That name **EVERLASTING FATHER** also helps us understand something about the *attitude* that motivated Jesus to come here. What qualities do we usually think of when we hear the word “father”? Don't we think of someone who has a heartfelt concern for his children ... whose love leads him to do all in his power to provide for them, to keep them safe and warm, happy and healthy (even to the point of sacrificing his own comforts and cares). That's the attitude Jesus had, and *has*, for us. Because of the love with which He has loved us, He undertook to do everything necessary to provide for our eternal happiness and safety, even though it meant making the *ultimate* sacrifice of leaving His rainbow-circled throne, putting aside the full use of His glory for a time, and dying on the cross.

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Another thought to share on that name **EVERLASTING FATHER**: It can remind us that the love He has for us won't change. Just as He is true God from everlasting to everlasting so too His merciful kindness is from everlasting to everlasting.

- **“I have loved you with an everlasting love”** (Jeremiah 31:3), He tells us.

All human relationships will have an end, but not the loving relationship Christ established with us through His Savior-work.

Consider too how *old* the Christmas Gospel is. Over two thousand years! And yet we're still hearing it today! The Lord will never allow it to become obsolete. He will never stop using it bring to Christians that peace and joy which His angel messengers sang about to the shepherds over the Bethlehem fields so long ago. This is yet another comfort we may draw from that title given to Baby Jesus: **EVERLASTING FATHER**.

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What reason we have to sing and to pray again this Christmas:

**Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,
Make Thee a bed, soft, undefiled,
Within my heart, that it may be
A quiet chamber kept for Thee. [TLH 85:13]
Amen.**