

I.N.I.

First Sunday after Christmas  
Dec. 30, 2012  
Isaiah 9:6

In Christ Jesus, whose name is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father,  
Dear Fellow Redeemed,

All of us here this morning share some things in common. For instance, we all have eyes, ears, mouths and hearts. These are all things we were born with. In fact we all had them months before we were born. But there is something we all have in common that we were given right after we were born and we still have it, in fact no one can take it away from us, and we carry it with us everywhere we go. It's our name.

When each of us was born, our parents took loving thought in giving us a name that would be just the right one for us. From out of thousands of names, they selected the one that would stay with us the rest of our lives.

When we look into the Bible we see that some people had names that sound very common to us today: names like Joshua, Daniel, John and Luke---Sarah, Rachel, Ruth and Mary, while others had names that sound very unusual to us. There were ladies' names like Gomer and Cozbi, and there were men named Hashabiah and Tychicus to name just a few. Many people choose names not just because they sound pleasing to the ear, but because of what they mean.

Did you know that our Savior has about 40 names? And each of them means something very important about His person or His work. Some of those names are: **IMMANUEL, MESSIAH, BRANCH, SON OF GOD, SON OF DAVID, SON OF THE HIGHEST, WORD, LAMB, PRINCE OF PEACE, SAVIOR, SHEPHERD, REDEEMER, ALPHA & OMEGA, LORD and KING.**

What's in a name? All of the names of Jesus are very important. These names describe who He is and what He can do and has done for us. The names from this morning's sermon text are no different.

**WONDERFUL COUNSELOR  
MIGHTY GOD  
EVERLASTING FATHER  
PRINCE OF PEACE.**

The first thing we notice in our text is that Isaiah is writing in the present tense, yet is speaking of a future event. It is as good as having taken place, because God has prophesied it. What is being prophesied? Isaiah already wrote in 7:14 God's words to King Ahaz that **THE VIRGIN SHALL CONCEIVE AND BEAR A SON, AND SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL (GOD WITH US).** Here he tells more about that Son.

Notice that Isaiah says that this Son is born and given to **US.** Jesus would come into the world for our benefit, as a gift--to deliver us from sin as God had promised to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:15. This Son would rule over all things. His government (rule) would be over all the world (heaven and earth), but especially over His people. In Luke 1:3 we are told **AND HE WILL REIGN OVER THE HOUSE OF JACOB FOREVER, AND OF HIS KINGDOM THERE WILL BE NO END.** In II Samuel 7:12-13 the Lord promises King David, **WHEN YOUR DAYS ARE FULFILLED AND YOU REST WITH YOUR FATHERS, I WILL SET UP YOUR SEED AFTER YOU, WHO WILL COME FROM YOUR BODY, AND I WILL ESTABLISH HIS KINGDOM. HE SHALL BUILD A HOUSE FOR MY NAME, AND I WILL ESTABLISH THE THRONE OF HIS KINGDOM FOREVER.**

Isaiah now lists four divine names for this Child.

The first is **Wonderful Counselor.**

Isaiah uses the word **wonder**, which is stronger than the word for **wonderful.** This child will literally be "**a wonder of a counselor.**" He is a wonder in that He is God Himself. A good

counselor has certain credentials. You wouldn't want to counsel with someone who has had no training, or is not learned in the area of his counseling. Jesus is the best Counselor because He is authorized by His Father to counsel and because He is God in human flesh. He knows our needs, He experienced our humanity firsthand.

A good counselor examines the need, sees the problem, decides on a plan of action and then carries it out. Jesus examined the need: **MAN NEEDED FORGIVENESS OF SINS, PEACE WITH GOD AND SALVATION.** He saw the problem: **MAN'S TOTALLY DEPRAVED HEART OF SIN.** He decided on a plan of action already in **eternity: GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON.** He then carried it out: **BUT GOD DEMONSTRATES HIS OWN LOVE TOWARD US, IN THAT WHILE WE WERE STILL SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US.**

Jesus' counsel is His Word. His Word not only tells us of our salvation through His perfect life, suffering, death and resurrection, but His Word also gives us the power to believe it and to live in loving obedience to it. His counsel is wrapped up in John the Baptist's message: **REPENT AND BELIEVE THE GOSPEL.** This Gospel message tells us of God's grace, which no sinful human mind could imagine or comprehend by itself. We cannot by our own reason or strength believe in it or come to this Child; He must draw us to Him through His Word and work in us the faith to believe in Him.

What great counsel for us who are plagued day in and day out by our sins, our failures, our frustrations, our worry and the distress and stress of life. The counsel is that we have an ever loving God who became Man for us and did everything we could not do so that we would be able to live with Him forever in heaven. The counsel is that as we live in this life as His children, He will work **ALL THINGS** out for our eternal good, come what may. What greater counsel can we have than the words of Paul in Romans 8: **IF GOD IS FOR US, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US? HE WHO DID NOT SPARE HIS OWN SON, BUT DELIVERED HIM UP FOR US ALL, HOW SHALL HE NOT WITH HIM ALSO FREELY GIVE US ALL THINGS?**

How do we know that this Child can accomplish all of this?

Because He is also the **MIGHTY GOD.**

Here we see the incomprehensible dual nature of the Messiah--He is true Man, born of the virgin mother yet at the same time true God Almighty. He had to be both natures in one in order to be our Savior. He had to be true Man to be placed under the Law for us and to keep the Law in our stead to meet God's justice. He had to be true God so that He would be the perfect Sacrifice for our sins. He had to be true Man in order to die for us on the cross as our Substitute. He had to be true God to be able to conquer all of our enemies, defeat Satan, pay for our sins in full and conquer death. Jesus is the only Savior the world has ever or will ever see. For He is the only God-Man. He is the only One who had the power to lay down His life for the sins of the whole world and then to take it up again for our justification.

The next name is **EVERLASTING FATHER.**

Usually we think of the Holy Spirit when we speak of the Counselor. For so He is called in the New Testament. But it is the Word that the Holy Spirit uses to counsel with and who is the Word but Christ Himself. Remember Isaiah says that Jesus is "**a wonder of a counselor.**" In somewhat the same way, we usually think of the first person of God as the everlasting Father, and He is, so why would this Child, born of the virgin be called **EVERLASTING FATHER?**

Because it describes the nature of Jesus' ministry. He has loved us with a fatherly love. This term speaks of the attitude this Child has toward His people. David suggests this meaning in his words from Ps. 103:13,14 **AS A FATHER PITIES HIS CHILDREN, SO THE LORD PITIES THOSE WHO FEAR HIM. FOR HE KNOWS OUR FRAME; HE REMEMBERS THAT WE ARE DUST.** This term, literally "**Father-forever**" refers to the loving, fatherly concern the Christ has for those who have been committed to His care. This is not in anyway teaching that the person of the Son is somehow intertwined with the person of the Father. They are one in purpose and one in will, but not one in substance.

We see in this beautiful term the extreme love that the Christ would go for us. He would sacrifice Himself for us like a father giving himself up for his children. We see that same fatherly concern in Psalm 23 where we read of the Lord being our Shepherd who leads us with a

Shepherd's or father's care along the grassy meadows, the spring waters, and the dark valleys of the shadow of death. Jesus repeats these words when He calls Himself the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep. In this way our Savior brother, serves us as an ever loving father in His love and sacrifice.

The last term **PRINCE OF PEACE**

signifies our Savior's rule over all things and His power to bring about peace in a world of turmoil, terrorism and warfare. Jesus came into a world that was and still is hostile toward God. Man by nature is an enemy of God, he hates God. We read from John 1 this morning: **HE WAS IN THE WORLD, AND THE WORLD WAS MADE THROUGH HIM, AND THE WORLD DID NOT KNOW HIM. HE CAME TO HIS OWN, AND HIS OWN DID NOT RECEIVE HIM.**

Satan did his best to lead Jesus into sin. The enemies of the Lord God thought they had put an end to the man Jesus of Nazareth when they crucified Him on the cross, but in all reality they were just accomplishing what He had come to do, bring about **PEACE**, peace between God and the sinner. This peace was accomplished by Jesus' payment of the debt we all owed God because of our sins.

We heard the angels announced that peace on that first Christmas night: **GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST AND ON EARTH, PEACE GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN.** Because of this peace, the word peace has taken on a whole new meaning for the child of God. It does not mean the absence of war between one nation and another, it means the removal of the wall of sin and separation between God and man, it means the harmony and oneness that again exists between God and His highest creature; mankind. **THERE IS THEREFORE NOW NO CONDEMNATION TO THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST JESUS.** God in Christ is a God of peace. Jesus tells us of His peace when He said in John 14 **PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU, MY PEACE I GIVE TO YOU; NOT AS THE WORLD GIVES DO I GIVE TO YOU. LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED, NEITHER LET IT BE AFRAID.**

Jesus rules and lives in our hearts through His powerful Words of love. When we are brought to faith in Jesus as our Lord and Savior we are transferred from a kingdom of Satan, destined for eternal destruction and damnation to the Kingdom of Christ filled with peace and ordained for everlasting peace and harmony.

Has Christ established that peace in your heart? If He has then the author to the Hebrews is speaking to you in chapter 13:20-21 **NOW MAY THE GOD OF PEACE WHO BROUGHT UP OUR LORD JESUS FROM THE DEAD, THAT GREAT SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP, THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT, MAKE YOU COMPLETE IN EVERY GOOD WORK TO DO HIS WILL, WORKING IN YOU WHAT IS WELL PLEASING IN HIS SIGHT, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, TO WHOM BE GLORY FOREVER AND EVER.**

I mentioned this a few years back but it bears repeating. During a trip to the Holy Land in 1865, Philip Brooks was in Bethlehem and he was deeply moved as he worshiped in Manger Square in the Church of the Nativity on Christmas Eve. Three years later Brooks wanted a special Christmas carol for his children's Sunday School. He recalled his peaceful worship in Bethlehem that Christmas Eve and wrote, "O Little Town of Bethlehem." What more beautiful song of peace and quiet do we have handed down to us.

But do you know that word "bedlam"---which is the opposite of peace, meaning **wild uproar, confusion, madhouse**,---the word "bedlam" comes from the word Bethlehem? In 1247 the hospital of St. Mary in Bethlehem was an insane asylum and the word Bethlehem became shortened to bedlam to mean the noise and confusion and craziness of an insane asylum.

Ask yourself, now that the Christmas rush is over: was Christmas bedlam for you--an uproar, madhouse, and crazy with all of its business and activities or did you take the time to go to the quiet of Bethlehem to see and worship the Baby who brings Peace to your heart and life? It is never too late to do that.

We pray that the Prince of Peace rule in our hearts today and throughout all of our tomorrows until we experience that perfect peace of our heavenly home.

Amen.