

2nd Sunday in Advent

December 6, 2015

Isaiah 9:6: “This Child Is... Mighty God”

- I. The What's to Come.*
- II. Why So Important?*
- III. Our Treasure.*

*Pilgrim Lutheran Church
2155 North Oakland Avenue
Decatur, Illinois 62526*

Isaiah 9:6

Dear Friends in Christ,

In his last speech to Parliament as Prime Minister, Sir Winston Churchill said this:

Which way can we turn to save our lives and the future of the world? It does not matter so much to old people. They are going soon anyway. But I find it poignant to look at youth in all its activity...and, most of all, to watch little children playing their many games, and wonder what would lie before them if God wearied of mankind.

This is the third time I've quoted that statement over the years. Each time, this country's and world's efforts to rid themselves of God's truths have only intensified. And each time, more and more people gloomily wonder why things are so bad and uncertain. The words of Jesus are now barely a whisper heard by only a few: "people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken." (Lk. 21:26)

And here we are, moving through another Advent/Christmas Season. And it will be for us! It will be! A **Merry Christmas**. A **Blessed Christmas**. A glorious **Christ** - mas, as we consider the birth of our Jesus; His names from Isaiah. This Sunday . . .

MIGHTY GOD

I. The What's to Come.

Our first parents fall into sin brought devastation to everything - from human to all creation: The most confused thinking imaginable - the horror of dying and death - the most incredible suffering and strife-ridden human interaction. And worst of all, unending separation from God, from joy, from peace, from comfort, from light, from love! Forever and ever!

And, amazingly, God was right there in that moment with Adam and Eve, with a promise of the One who would make the way for forgiveness, His love and the promise of eternal life. He was right there when he said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." (Gen. 3:15). "He shall bruise your head." That's Jesus. On the Cross. The words, "It is finished." Everything for our forgiveness and eternal life.

Then, many, many generations later, the promise magnified in these words of God to Isaiah: "therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel (meaning *God with us*)." (Is. 7:14) And shortly after that God would give these words to Isaiah: "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 ...Mighty God..." (Is. 9:6) And approximately 700 years after that, those words would be fulfilled in the angel's words to the Shepherds: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." (Lk. 2:11)

The Apostle John writes, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:1,14) It's not that difficult, is it? The Word was God - became flesh - is the only Son!

I find all this incredibly uplifting and re-assuring. Here we live in a time when the progressive liberal churches and theologians discredit the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture - do everything to confuse and confound - and, yet, a clear and honest look at the Word underscores its consistency, understanding of human history and the most astounding prophecies, as our text demonstrates. This Jesus, Whose birth we are to once again celebrate, is **Mighty God**.

II. Why So Important?

And what's the significance? Why is it so important that this Son to be born for us be Mighty God?

Before the flood, God said of man: "...every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Gen. 6:5b) *Evil continually*. And after the flood, God said, "...for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth." (Gen. 8:21b) It is no surprise that the so called *intelligentsia*, the *elitists* spend much time and money trying to prove otherwise. The evidence stands against them. *The intention of man's heart is evil from his youth.*

And, then, there's you...and me. Thus, Jesus re-states in the New Testament what He stated in Genesis: "For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person." (Mk. 7:21-23)

So, who is going to pay for all this sin? Who could possibly bridge the great canyon that separates every sinful human from the One Who hates all human sin? Who will address the delusion that death is normal. Who? Well, the Who has to be man and God. Man, because man sinned against God. God because only God could pay for every sin. Who? You know who. It's what Scriptures say: "while we were sinners Christ died for us. (Rom. 5:8)

And so, the words that might cause some to say, "We've heard this plenty of times." The words I don't ever want to find tiresome: These words: "In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 Jn. 4:10) God sent His Son Who is God the Son.

Recall with me this incident when Jesus walked the earth:

"Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, 'What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?' They said to him, 'The son of David.' He said to them, How it is then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, 'The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet'?

"If then David calls him (that is, Jesus) Lord, how is it that he is his son? (How can David call the Son of David, his descendant by the flesh - How can he call His descendant Lord? God? "The Lord said to my Lord"?) And no one was able to answer a word..." (St. Matt. 22:41-46a)

And neither can we. It is beyond all human comprehension. This child, our Lord Jesus, is **Mighty God**. The filth and monstrosity of every sin would be piled on Him. And He would willingly take it to Calvary. Only God could pay for every sin of every sinner. And only God could extend that love and assurance to us in the written and spoken Word and the visible Word of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

We can only cry out with David, "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens." (Ps. 8:1) What this world thinks of Advent, of Christmas, of Easter does not disturb or threaten the One (as the Psalmist says) "Who sits in the heavens and laughs; the Lord holds them in derision." (Ps. 2:4) Those who persist in laughing and scorning the Lord will ultimately be locked into derision with no way out; locked away from ever knowing the love of God. *The Lord holds them in derision*. Well, what do you think is happening to this God rejecting country and world, today??

III. Our Treasure.

Years ago, the noted preacher Vance Havner wrote:

"Salvation is free but not cheap... The writer of Hebrews speaks of those who count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing. One translation puts it, 'who treats as a cheap thing'; another, 'treated like dirt.'

"We hear these days about 'cheap grace' and how it doesn't mean much to be a Christian. But salvation is the costliest item on earth. It cost our Lord everything to provide it and it costs us everything to possess it.

"We are a generation of cheap Christians going to heaven as inexpensively as possible; religious hobos and spiritual deadbeats living on milk instead of meat, crusts of bread instead of manna, as though we were on a cut-rate excursion.

"In a day when tragedy has become comedy, we play fast and loose with eternal issues. The pearl of great price is not cheap! I have read that years ago in that part of Africa where diamonds in the rough were plentiful, a traveler chanced on boys playing. Closer investigation revealed that they were playing marbles with diamonds! God forgive us today that we handle His treasures as though they were trifles and the coinage of the eternal as though it were play money. It is not time to play marbles with diamonds!" (Vance Havner, *The Vance Havner Notebook*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1989, p. 102)

The Mighty God confronts us this Second Sunday of Advent. This is the One who holds the world on His shoulders. Ultimately, what the world thinks is of no significance. In eternity, it will be of no concern as we stand before Him Who gives us unending love, light and life. Mighty God!

Amen.

Pastor Bill Abbott