

The Four Gifts Of Christmas

Isaiah 9:6

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Isaiah 9:6, I've titled my message to this morning, The Four Gifts of Christmas. And the names that he bears are the gifts that he shares. We're going to look at Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, the Prince of Peace, the gifts that Jesus brings to us at Christmas, Isaiah 9:6, and some of the surrounding verses.

Let's pray. Father, we are so thankful to be here this morning to worship you, to study your word and to break bread this morning, to have communion. This morning, we celebrate the Lord's supper and the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the cup. We remember you and why you came at Christmas, but you became a man to give your life on the cross for our sins. And we want to look back and remember. We want to look forward in joy and anticipation of the day you will come and bring in a whole new world.

So Lord, speak now through what you've spoken. Thank you for the rich blessings that we have in this church. And thank you most of all for Jesus Christ who came for us, suffered and died. Speak now, we pray through your word, we ask in Jesus' name. And everyone agreeing said, amen.

I want you to follow with me as I read Isaiah 9:6, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. And the government shall be upon his shoulder. His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

We have in this text a birth announcement, but it is different from any other birth announcement in that it was given 700 years before the child was born. Now, we all get birth announcements, right? But the birth announcements we get are after the baby is born. And it usually tells the date of the birth, and the time of the birth, and the weight of the birth, and the length of the baby, and all of that stuff, and the baby's name. And we look at the picture, and we rejoice with the parents that a child is born.

But this birth announcement, 700 years before the baby was even born. Seven centuries later, an angel would arouse some sleepy shepherds and say these words, "Fear not for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people for unto you is born this day in the city of David a savior, which is Christ the Lord." This child whose birth was prophesied by God and proclaimed by angels was indeed unique.

Years ago, I looked up in the Webster dictionary the word unique. I wanted to know what do we mean by unique? And the definition I found, I thought, was interesting, one of a kind, having no equal. Jesus Christ is truly unique. He is one of a kind. There is no equal. Never before in history, never again in history will there be anyone like Jesus Christ. And we're going to see in this marvelous passage the uniqueness of this baby born, the uniqueness of this child.

Now, I want you to notice what Isaiah says in his opening prophecy in verse 6, "Unto as a child is born," that's pretty normal, no big deal. But here's where it's interesting, "Unto as a son is given." Not only is a child born. Listen carefully. There, we have his humanity, but also a son is given. There, we have his deity. The reason Jesus Christ is unique is because he is both man and God. He is the child born his humanity. He is the son who has given his deity. We're all familiar with John 3:16, the Bible in one verse. Say it with me, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten son that whosoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life" For God so love, he gave his son. He is the son who has given his humanity and his deity. Jesus Christ is the unique God man.

Now, first of all, he is the child born. I never get tired of the Christmas story to you. I don't. And as many years as I've heard it, my whole life won't tell how many years that is, but it's a long time now. Every year at Christmas, I just rejoice to read again, to hear again the Christmas story, how God sent an angel, Gabriel, to a little town of Nazareth. Nazareth was nothing. People would say, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth? It was just like bad place."

And this angel came to a young little girl. She was maybe 12, 13, 14 years of age. And she trembled and was frightened that is coming. And he said, "Don't be afraid. You're highly favored. You've been blessed by God. God has chosen you to be the mother of Messiah, the savior of the world." Mary said, "How can this be, seeing I know not a man?" And the angel said, "The power of God will come upon thee. The power of the highest will overshadow you, and that which is conceived in your womb shall be the work of the Holy Spirit."

And oh, blessed Mary, she submitted to the will of God for her life even though there would be a stigma upon her. She said, "Lord, be it unto me according to thy word." I believe in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. I believe the Bible teaches the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, and I believe the Bible. And without the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, you do not have Christianity. You don't have a sinless Christ. And without a sinless Christ, you don't have a Jesus who died on the cross for the sins of the world.

You have a man who died for his own sins. You undermine the very foundation upon which our faith is built. There are people claiming to be Christian today that deny the virgin birth. You cannot deny the virgin birth of Jesus Christ and have Christianity. It is essential. And so, Mary became pregnant through the work of the Holy Spirit. And Joseph found out they were in their espousal period, that period of engagement. They haven't consummated their marriage. And he's freaking out. He loves Mary, and he doesn't want to have her stoned.

And so he wants to put her away privately. He went to bed troubled one night. And the angel came to Joseph and said, "Joseph, don't be afraid to take unto thee Mary thy wife for that which is conceived in her womb is the work of the Holy Spirit."

And so, Joseph then took Mary as his wife, but they didn't consummate the marriage until after Jesus was born. And then, when Mary was at the stage of giving birth to Jesus, the Bible says that Caesar Augustus sent out a decree that all the world should be taxed. And so they had to

go from their little town of Nazareth, Luke 2 tells us, all the way down to Bethlehem to be enrolled for the purpose of taxation.

Now, that was about a 75 to 80-mile ride in those days. They didn't have freeways and smooth cars. So Mary would be on the back of a donkey in the last stages of pregnancy. And you talk about inducing labor. That'll get you going. So Joseph puts Mary on this donkey, "Okay. Mary, I am sorry I have to do this, but we got to go." And they took off. And when they got to Bethlehem, all the inns were full. And so, they were placed in the stable. And she brought forth her firstborn son.

She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and she lay them in a manger, an animal feeding trough because there was no room in the end. Oh the humility at his birth. No one up at that hour of the night. And so the angels found the shepherds out in the fields, and they awoke them, "Glory to God and the highest. Peace on earth, goodwill toward men." You'll find the savior, the Messiah, the son of God in the city of Bethlehem, and go. And the shepherds went and they worshiped him, and the beautiful, beautiful narrative of the birth of our savior, Jesus Christ.

Now, Jesus was a man just like us, but without our sin nature. The only thing different about Jesus was is that he didn't have a sinful nature. He was tired, he ate, he slept, he was weary. Jesus wept. He was thirsty. He had to eat.

Bible says in all points, he was tempted like we are yet without sin. It is just as heretical to deny or weaken the full humanity of Christ as it is to deny or weaken or lessen the full deity of Jesus Christ. And he had to be fully man and fully God to redeem us. He had to be able to lay his hand on man and his hand on God to be the bridge builder.

And so the prophet said, "Unto us, a son is given," his deity. Jesus Christ is fully God. He is the second person of the Trinity. He came down from heaven. The Father sent him, but he came willingly. He wasn't coerced or pressured or forced to come against his will. Jesus volunteered to come to heaven to die on the cross. Now John 1:1 tells us, "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God."

There are three things said about Jesus. I'm going to preach on these tonight in more detail. But it tells us that he is the eternal word. In the beginning was the word. It tells us that he's the personal word, the word was with God, that is face to face with the Father. And it tells us He is the divine word. The word was God, or God was the word. Then, that eternal word, that personal word, that divine word, verse 14 of John 1 says, "The word became flesh and dwelt among us." Literally, he pitched his tent among us.

And John says, "We beheld his glory, the glory, the only-begotten of the Father full of grace and truth." So God, verse 1, became man, verse 14, of John's gospel, chapter 1. Jesus Christ is the eternal word, the personal word, the divine word. He said, "Before Abraham was I AM."

This is a Christmas miracle. We call it the incarnation. It's a Latin word meaning becoming flesh. Christmas miracle is Emmanuel, God is with us. I want you to think about this. At Christmas,

God is with us. God visited us. God came to us. What is Christmas? It is actually God coming to be with us, God coming to dwell with us. What an absolutely mind-blowing idea that God would leave heaven and come down to earth.

Paul said in Philippians 2 that he emptied himself and took on him the form of a servant and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And because of this, God the Father has highly exalted him and given him a name above every name that the name of Jesus, every knee should bow and every tongue should confess God with us, God in flesh. But the question we need to ask is why would God become a man?

Why would God become a man? Let me give you in brief three reasons why the incarnation or God became a man at Christmas. Number one, he became a man to reveal himself. He became a man to reveal himself. John chapter 1 verse 18, "No one has ever seen God at any time, but the only-begotten son," or literally in the Greek, it's the only begotten God, "who is in the bosom of the Father have declared him."

We got our word exeged from that word declared. He's made him known. He's revealed him. God the Son came to earth and became a man to reveal to us God the Father. You want to know what God is like? Look at Jesus Christ. I've met atheists that have said, "If God is real, why doesn't he show himself? If God is real, why doesn't he appear? Why doesn't he manifest himself?"

And I think, "Are you blind?" I think, "Yeah, yeah, I guess you are. Aren't you?" The God of this world has blinded their eyes, lest they should see and believe the gospel, harden their hearts. God did visit us in the person of Jesus Christ. If God became a man and walked on earth, you'd expect a couple of things. Number one, he would never do anything wrong, right? Jesus Christ never, ever, ever, let me say it a couple more times, ever, ever sin.

He never thought an evil thought. He never said a harsh word. He never said a wrong word. He never did an evil deed. Jesus Christ never sinned. Now, you know people who think they never sinned, but in thinking that, they're sinning, for all of sin to come short of the glory of God. If God became a man, you would think that he would speak like no one ever spoke. And that's Jesus Christ spoke like no one ever spoke. If God became a man, don't you think he'd do some miracles? He turned water into wine. And you know what? I believe that. People go, "Oh, how can you believe that Jesus could turn water into wine?" He's God, duh.

You don't think God can do anything he wants? If God came down to earth, don't you think he can walk on water? Don't you think he can talk to a storm and say, "Peace be still," and the wind would stop immediately? Don't you think he could put his hand on blind eyes and immediately sight would be restored? Don't you think that he could speak to a leprous person, "Be cleansed," and that leprosy would depart and he would be cleansed, or lame man would begin to walk?

That's what happened when Jesus was here. Jesus Christ was God with us, and people were

blowing their minds at the way he spoke and the things he said, and the miracles he performed. And not only that, but he raised people from the dead. He said, "Talitha koum," little lamb, arise, and he rose Jairus' daughter from the dead.

He stood at the grave of Lazarus. He says, "Lazarus, come forth," and Lazarus came forth. That's power. God with us, God among us. He came to reveal God's love, God's mercy, God's grace and God's power. But secondly, God became a man to redeem mankind. To redeem mankind. Man are sinners. We're fallen because of Adam's sin. We sin because of choice. And the incarnation, the crucifixion, and the resurrection, we're all God's purpose and plan through Christ to redeem fallen humanity.

So number one, reveal. Number two, redeem. Christmas is a reminder of God's redemptive plan and purpose. Jesus came into the world to redeem us, to buy us back to God that have been separated by sin. And thirdly, and this brings us to our text, to reign on the throne of David, to reign on the throne of David. Look at verse 6 for just a moment. Isaiah 9, the government shall be upon his what? Shoulders. Don't you wish today that the governments of the world were on his shoulders? Oh, don't you wish the government of the United States were on his shoulders? I do. I wish Jesus Christ were our president. I'd vote for him.

Matter of fact, I do vote for him. And guess what? There is coming a day because of Christmas. There's coming a day because of Christmas when all the governments of the world will be placed on his shoulders. My heart rejoices. Christmas causes me to be filled with so much joy because there's a day when there will be a new world coming, when all the governments of the world will be placed on his shoulders.

And I long for that day. The saints of the ages have prayed for that day. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And we pray, Lord, come. Reign on the throne of David. Notice in verse 7, always take a verse in its context. It says in verse 7, the next verse, "Of the increase of his government and of his peace, there shall be no end. It's an everlasting kingdom. And upon the throne of David, there it is. God made David a promise that his son would sit upon the throne forever." That would be Jesus the Messiah, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. Again, it's a eternal kingdom.

The zeal of the Lord of host will perform this. God will perform what he has promised. You can take it to the bank. God will do what he's promised he will do. There is coming a day. There is coming a day when Jesus Christ will reign upon the earth, and he will right all wrongs. All of the injustices upon Earth will be corrected. The wicked will be judged, and the righteous will be rewarded. Oh, praise God. It's all because of Christmas. The incarnation, crucifixion, and the resurrection are the hope of humanity. It's a Christmas miracle. It's the Christmas hope.

And it's because Jesus Christ came that he will sit upon that throne of David. The angel told Mary, "He shall be great, shall be called the son of the highest. The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his Father, David. He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever and ever and of his kingdom. There shall be no end." You say, "Oh John, when will this happen? When will

the governments of the world be on his shoulders?" And here's the answer.

At his second coming, when Jesus Christ comes back in power and glory. Now, I want to contrast, at his first coming, which we celebrated Christmas, he came in humility. But at his second coming, he's coming in glory. At his first coming, his deity was veiled in humanity. In his second coming, he will come with all the splendor and all the majesty, and all the glory of his power and of his person.

Jesus said, "As the lightning shines from the east unto the west, so shall the coming of the son of man be." Jesus Christ will come in glory and splendor. He came the first time as the lamb to be crucified on the cross. He's coming back the second time as a lion to reign in righteousness and to set up his kingdom. You say, "Well, Pastor John, do we have to wait until Christ returns before we can enjoy the benefit of his kingdom? Must we wait until the second coming to enjoy his reign?"

The answer is no. We can turn the government of our lives individually and personally over to him today. And when we do, all that is expressed in his names, Isaiah 9:6 will become real in our daily lives. Every name that he bears is a blessing that he shares. The names listed here in verse 6, and I want to look at them quickly, are blessings and gifts that he brings to us.

He shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Notice the first name, Wonderful Counselor. Now, in some bibles, there's a little comma after wonderful. And then you have counselor. It handles Messiah. They sing wonderful and then counselor as though they were two titles given to Christ.

But the reality in the Hebrew here, this is one phrase or title for Christ, it should be translated Wonderful Counselor or literally a wonder of a counselor. He is a wonder of a counselor. Now, this takes care of the decisions of life. Life is full of decisions. Have you noticed that at Christmastime how hard it is? What do I buy for Aunt Harriett? What do I buy for Uncle George? And ah, forget it. Just send them a card.

What do we do here? What do we do there? Where do we go? Some of you freaked out this morning just trying to decide what to wear to church. You need counsel. Nervous breakdown. I don't know what to wear. Decisions, decisions, decisions, decisions. But there are more important decisions. Who do I marry? Who do I not marry, or do I go to college? Do I not go to college? Decisions with your children, decisions with grandchildren, decisions with friends, decisions and personal relationships. Life's decisions. The demands of decisions of life.

Guess what? Jesus is your wonderful counselor, and he's promised to lead you and guide you and help you. I'm so glad that I've had Jesus Christ in my life to guide me through all the decisions of my life. And James says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask God, and he will give to you and he will not hold back."

Are you struggling with the decision right now and you need help and wisdom? Jesus is a wonderful counselor. He's also given us the Holy Spirit and His word, His Bible to guide us, to

counsel us. Secondly, he gives us His power. Notice he's called the Mighty God, verse 6. This takes care of the demands of life. Life is full of decisions. Life is full of demands. Jesus brings us the gift of his power. Life can be so demanding. We often feel defeated, and we try but fail. So we want to give up.

Maybe, you've tried to resist sin and you've fallen prey to some sin. Maybe, you've tried to overcome some anger, and you haven't been able to get victory, and you're discouraged this morning. Maybe, it's just depression. Maybe, you're depressed this day. You're saying, "It's Christmas, but I'm depressed." Jesus takes care of the demands of life and he will give you His power.

He's the Almighty God. He's the Mighty God. Here, the Bible, by the way, very clearly tells us Jesus Christ is God. He's the Mighty God. And if you are faint, if you're weary, if you have no strength, Isaiah the prophet said, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint." Amen?

Amen.

God will give you strength today. Paul the Apostle said, "When I am weak, then am I strong." He also said, "I'm crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live, yet not I but Christ in me." So he gives us his power, the Mighty God, over sin, over selfishness and in the midst of our suffering. But the third gift he gives is in verse 6. He is the Everlasting Father. You see that there? The Everlasting Father. You say, "But John, I thought that Jesus was the son." How can Jesus be called here the Everlasting Father, and yet the Bible clearly teaches that he is the second person of the Trinity. And this confuses people.

I need to make some points here to clarify this misunderstanding. Number one, Jesus is the second person of the Trinity. So in essence, he is God, same as the Father. All the same attributes possessed of the Father are possessed by God the Son. All the attributes possessed by God the Father and God the Son, are possessed by God the Holy Spirit.

And Jesus, the second person of the Godhead or the Trinity, he has come to reveal God the Father. So there's really no conflict here. He's come to reveal him. But I believe that Isaiah had something else in mind. I believe that he's using this as a title or an idiom. It's a Hebrew idiom used to describe the Messiah's relationship to time, not as relationship to the other members of the Trinity. So it's an idiom used to describe his relationship to time, not his relationship to the other members of the Trinity. He is everlasting.

The Hebrew phrase could be translated and should be rightfully translated, Father of eternity, wonder of a counselor, Father of eternity. What's that mean? It means that He's the source of eternity or the source of eternal life. We use the phrase the same way, Father of means generator or source of. Satan is the father of lies. By that, we mean or the Bible means that he's a source of lies.

So if Jesus is the Father of eternity, He's the source of eternal life. This takes care of the dimensions of life. Life is dull outside of Jesus Christ. And we must be born again of the spirit, the life of God and the soul of man. And we must have life on a new plane. We must have life with a new dimension.

So Jesus Christ can bring us into that. Life is not only filled with decisions and demands, but it becomes dull. And Jesus said this, "I have come that you might have what? Life. And life how? More abundantly." Right? By looking at a lot of Christians, you'd think that Jesus said, "I've come that you might have bummer and bummer more abundantly."

Jesus came to give us abundant life, spiritual life. When he prayed in John 17, in his high priestly prayer, verse 3 of John 17, he said, "Father, this is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. Eternal life is knowing God the Father and Jesus Christ whom He sent. You're not living until you know Jesus Christ. You ain't living until you know Jesus Christ. Living isn't a car. Living isn't alcohol. It's not drugs, it's not material things. Living is a relationship with Jesus Christ. Amen. That's living.

And until you're born of God's spirit, you're just a walking dead person. And once you become born again, you have the life of God in your soul, and you have this eternal life. But there's a fourth blessing or there's a fourth gift that he brings. And that fourth gift that he brings in verse 6, he is the Prince of Peace. Jesus takes care of the disturbances of life.

Heard of a lady that ran out of time to buy a group of friends of hers, about 20 friends that all exchanged gifts at Christmas, and she was frustrated, "I just ran out of time this year. I'm just going to have to give them cards. Don't have time to buy them a gift, so I'm just going to buy them a card." She ran into the store, grabbed a box of cards, didn't even look at what the card said, "Just sign our best wishes." And she sent the cards out. It was just a couple days before Christmas, sent the cards out. And after she sent all the cards and signed her name, she said, "I better look and see what the card said."

She looked at the card and inside the card said, "This little card is just to say that a gift is on the way." She thought, "Oh no. I sent 20 of these out." Freak out. It is the season to freak. You talk about the disturbances of life. Jesus brings us the gift of his peace. I don't know about you, but I need the peace of God. Now, when you get saved, you have peace with God. And then as you walk with God and you trust the Lord and you live by faith, the peace of God which passes all understanding keeps your heart and your mind through Jesus Christ. So you have peace with God. Then you have the peace of God, and it's a peace of God which passes all knowledge and all. You don't need to get drunk at Christmas because you have peace in your heart, the Prince of Peace.

And all the disturbances and all the problems that we encounter in the coming New Year, Jesus Christ is our peace. Jesus said in John 14, verse 27, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you, not as the world give I unto you." Do you need peace today? You'll find it in the person of Jesus Christ. Now, I don't know what gifts you're hoping to get for Christmas this year, and

I'm sure that, many times, we have Christmas and we get disappointed. We open up our presents, maybe underwear and socks. That's all we get. You ever have those underwear and socks? What did I do wrong? What did I do to deserve this?

But I'm telling you, these are the best gifts that anyone can ever receive. You need wisdom for the decisions of life. You need power for the demands of life. You need a new dimension of life, life itself, life eternal. You need peace for the disturbances of life. All these gifts can be yours today if you will turn the government of your life over to Jesus Christ. Amen.

If you, if I, if we turn the government of our lives over to Jesus Christ, all these gifts that He bears can be ours. God's Christmas tree is the cross for God's so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever, anyone who believes in him, that means to trust him, put your faith in him, to look to him by faith, that he will save you, trust in him, will never perish, but have everlasting life. Communion cannot save you. Communion can't save you. Baptism cannot save you. Living a good life cannot save you. Jesus is the Savior. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a savior, Christ the Lord.

And the only way that Jesus can save you is if you surrender your life to him, and you say, "Lord, take my life. I trust you. I surrender it to you. I believe you died for me. I believe you were buried and rose again for me. And I believe you live for me, and I give you my life. I trust you to save me." If you haven't done that, you need to do that. Anyone here today, we're all sinners. You're invited to celebrate communion with us. But I don't want anyone thinking that taking communion is going to be a ticket to heaven.

It's a symbol of what Jesus did for us on the cross. It's a reminder that he's coming again for us to set up his kingdom. And we do it with thanksgiving. We say thank you to Jesus. But if you haven't trusted him, if you haven't put your faith in him, that's what you need to do today. You need to say, "Jesus, I trust you. I believe in you. I receive you as my Lord and savior."

Let's bow our heads on a word of prayer. Father, we thank you today for sending your son Jesus Christ. Child was born. That's the Christmas story, but he was a son given. And we look forward to that day when the government will be upon His shoulder. But until then, may the government of our lives be upon your shoulder, oh, Lord Jesus. May we surrender the government of our lives upon your shoulders today, Lord Jesus.

Take our life, and let it be consecrated, Lord to thee. Trust him today. Say to Jesus Christ, "I give you my heart. I give you my life. I believe you died for me. I believe you rose for me. I believe you live today to save me. And I'm not trusting in my goodness or my righteousness, Lord. I'm trusting in you who alone can save.

And Lord, we thank you that you gave your body, you gave your blood shed for us. Without the shedding of blood, there's no forgiveness of sin. And so as we eat this bread, we drink this cup, we do show your death until you come. And we with thankful hearts, we with grateful hearts, worship you today. We praise you. We thank you. We glorify you. Lord, meet us here as we put

aside the cares of this life, the hustle and bustle of Christmas. And for just the next few moments, we worship you with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind, in spirit, and in truth. Meet us in the breaking of the bread and the drinking of this cup. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.