

ADVENT #4
Everlasting Father

WHAT IS "THE REASON FOR THE SEASON?"

I saw this on a church sign on Thursday... Jesus is the reason for the Season.

Yes, in a sense. But there is a reason why Jesus came– our sin and rebellion against God. in pursuit of our personal autonomy.

Isaiah 1-7 lays out the tragic situation of rebellion on the part of Israel and other nations. And then in chap 9 we have the hopeful Throne titles that are given with the promise of a baby to be born, a son to be given. When we grasp for the first time or renew our understanding of these promises, then the Christmas Spirit wells up in our hearts.

REVIEW

As we understand God's redemption plan, it will promote a response in us:

Let the joy of Christmas give you a 5 E focus in your life.
Exalting the Father
Embrace the Son
Equipped by the Holy Spirit
Encouraging His followers
Expressing the Good News of the Gospel of the kingdom

On the 8th we saw the First title – Wonderful Counselor

Not just an agreeable counselor, but the Wonder working God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Isaiah, John the Baptist, Joseph, and Mary

The wondrous miracle of Immanuel – God With Us- was foretold from Genesis to Malachi and the devout believers like Simeon and Anna were looking for the consolation and redemption of Israel.

In the familiar passage of Isa 9 we see several titles of this child who was to be born, the son who was to be given.

LAST WEEK we saw the second couplet – MIGHTY God.

The Mighty wonder working God of Eternity came to us.. He came in the flesh for us.

He didn't send more prophets; he came from heaven to be born as a baby to bring Redemption and Restoration. Jesus, in his incarnation, laid aside the glories of heaven to be made like man.

Phil 2 He did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped
1 Infant holy, infant lowly,
for His bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing, little knowing
Christ, the babe, is Lord of all.

Today we look at the third couplet – Everlasting Father

Isaiah 9

v. 1-5 speak of the great light that will come upon the people who walk in darkness.

Then the restoring promise begins in v. 6

6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

7 There will be no end to the increase of *His* government or of peace,
On the throne of David and over his kingdom,
To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness
From then on and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.

A recent Bari Weiss podcast talks about how investors and how good investors were able to see around the corner into the future and what is going to happen and then they move in that direction. Well, that could be applied to the Old Testament prophets, particularly Isaiah. He sees around the corner to the Messiah who is coming and the future kingdom which means that we would be wise to follow that lead and invest our lives in eternity

The prophet is telling of THE future birth of Immanuel, who is humanity's great fault line (P. Tripp) Christmas is of cosmic importance because every person's eternal fate is set by the rejection or acceptance of Jesus as the Redeemer. There is no neutral ground.

This baby to be born bears the title Everlasting Father. That's an odd name for a baby.

EVERLASTING

This is an attribute that can apply to God/ Yahweh alone. He alone is inherently eternal. He alone is uncreated and knows no end or beginning.

The title Everlasting is also an attribute of God Himself. It relates to the very name by which God revealed Himself to Moses in Ex 3.

When God encountered Moses at the burning bush, He revealed himself as YAHWEH, "I AM THAT I AM". This means that God is the self-existent one. He is from eternity to eternity, from everlasting to everlasting.

EX: This mind-boggling reality hits home when your child asks, "Where did God come from?" THAT'S a normal question because even children know that everything came from something. NOT SO WITH God.

In fact, there must be something that has in itself the power of being or else NOTHING would be, for nothing could be.

The self-existent Everlasting God, Yahweh, is that which has the power of being in Himself. This means that He can be a refuge and fortress for his people.

When Israel asked for a king, they were looking for a sense of stability.

We've noted the context of chap 7-8 in which the people are described as being in darkness. It was a dark time for Israel as God was bringing divine discipline on His rebellious people.

AND THEN here in chap 9 a light breaks through giving hope. A baby will be born and given to us.

This is a baby of cosmic significance – Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father...

The Messianic promises relate to a king who would establish the line of David forever. This continuity of rule and the picture of an eternal reign for the Son of David would bring hope to a people who are being threatened by the great powers of their day.

Hope and perseverance are possible in the context of a mighty king, a powerful father who will come and make things right.

The OT IS filled with stories of great men and women, great leaders who die. There were those who lived for hundreds of years and those who lived the normal life span and those who died relatively young. But they all died.

EX: The oft repeated refrain from my father was, "There are only two things certain in this

life...?:?DEATH and TAXES.

The bad kings AND THE GOOD KINGS of Israel / Judah died. All of them.

But here in Isa 9 there is a promise of a King who will defeat death. He is an Everlasting King.

EX: We find that hard to believe because we live in a world where nothing is designed to last forever. We check our food and medicine for the expiration date.

BUT THIS KING has no expiration date. His kingdom is forever and ever.

Exodus 15:18

“The Lord shall reign forever and ever.”

Psalms 146:10

The Lord will reign forever,

Your God, O Zion, to all generations.

Praise the Lord!

The NT extends this everlasting reign to Christ himself.

Revelation 11:15

Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.”

FATHER

Father is not current in the Old Testament as a title of the kings. Used of the Lord, it points to his concern for the helpless (Ps. 68:5<6>), care or discipline of his people (Ps. 103:13; Pr. 3:12; Is. 63:16; 64:8<7>) and their loyal, reverential response to him (Je. 3:4, 19; Mal. 1:6). ... Probably the leading idea in the name *Father* here is that his rule follows the pattern of divine fatherhood.

This term is rich with significance for us as believers for Jesus taught his disciples to address God in prayer by saying, “Our Father, who art in heaven.”

The concept and experience of God as Father is so significant that J.I. Packer puts it at the center of our understanding of Christianity.

WHAT is a Christian? Packer p. 200...

‘If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God’s child, and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all. For everything that Christ taught, ... is summed up in the knowledge of the Fatherhood of God. “Father” is the Christian name for God.’

Sadly, too many believers downplay or ignore the fullness of what it means to know God as our Father. It may be because of their experience with their earthly fathers.

Larry Crabb taps into that reality when he says, “I’ve met very few men or women who are as close to their fathers as they wanted to be. My guess is that few of us had a father you would speak of with great affection, or that you longed to be around. But you can’t stop wishing that he were.”

The underlying bass note of sadness in the lives of so many isn’t because of what they experienced with their fathers; it is for what they wanted, but never had.

We long for and dream of a relationship with a father who loves us, delights in us, who wants to be with us and look after us.

WE have trouble with A FATHER based Christian life because too many of us have a relationship with our father that resembles the song “Grown men don’t cry.” – Tim McGraw

I Keep having this dream about my old man
I'm 10 years old, and he's holding my hand
We're talkin' on the front porch watchin' the sun go down
But it was just a dream, he was a slave to his job and he couldn't be around
So many things I wanna say to him
But I just place a rose on his grave, and I talk to the wind
I don't know why they say grown men don't cry

Both aspects of Everlasting Father are important: (paraphrase A W Pink)

Both truths should engage our minds and our hearts.

Everlasting without 'father' tends toward an impersonal cold view of God, who might be referred to as 'fate, or the universe'. This is like the "Force" of the Star Wars movies. This view sees God as distant and silent – more shadow than substance. It might provoke dread but not comfort and peace.

"Father" without "Everlasting" tends toward a low view of God and an irreverent familiarity. This is "The man upstairs" mindset that views God as an old man with a white beard trying to look after things but can't quite do it. He means well, but he's very limited.

1 PET 1:17

I Peter 1:17 If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth;

A healing balm for our wounds, including our father wound, can be found through Christ. By obtaining a biblical understanding of what a father truly is, and through a relationship with Jesus Christ, we can begin to experience spiritual healing.

Knowing the Everlasting God as Father, a father who loves, forgives and accepts us in Jesus brings freedom and healing in our hearts, and it draws our hearts to him in prayer.

THAT IS GOOD NEWS!!

We long for a Father, a Papa, and through Jesus we have one. His name is God, Yahweh. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is God in the flesh. And He rejoices over us with singing – Zeph 3

A word to our visitors or those who may not be sure about the whole "God" thing, or God as father thing. If you're like me, you grew up hearing about how "we're all God's children, and he is the father of us all." And we all say, "Of course." While that might make us feel good, it doesn't square with the Bible, and specifically Jesus' teaching, which is that the status of child of God comes through adoption, not by simply being born.

While we are created as God's image bearers, one becomes an adopted child of God through the process of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

"To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God" (John 1:12). Paul states this as the purpose of the incarnation: "God sent forth his Son . . . so that we might receive adoption as sons" (Galatians 4:4, 5).

The fatherly gaze of God is the height of OT blessedness – Num 6

EX: kids on a playground – "Look at me"

EX: Christ was cursed and lost the gaze of the Father's face – "Why have you forsaken me."

Ultimately, that is what Christmas is all about. The Father sent His Son so that by faith, we might become sons, daughters, and fellow-heirs with Christ.

Paul Tripp puts it well in saying that spiritually we rise or fall with our response to Him. You either worship

Him or mock Him. You confess your need for him, or you turn away with an independent autonomous attitude.

The great line that divides humanity is not political, social, economic, or ethnic. The great fault line is Jesus.

The baby in the manger was on a rescue mission.

As Isaiah said, "the son given to us is the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father.

Don't forget that this Christmas.

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