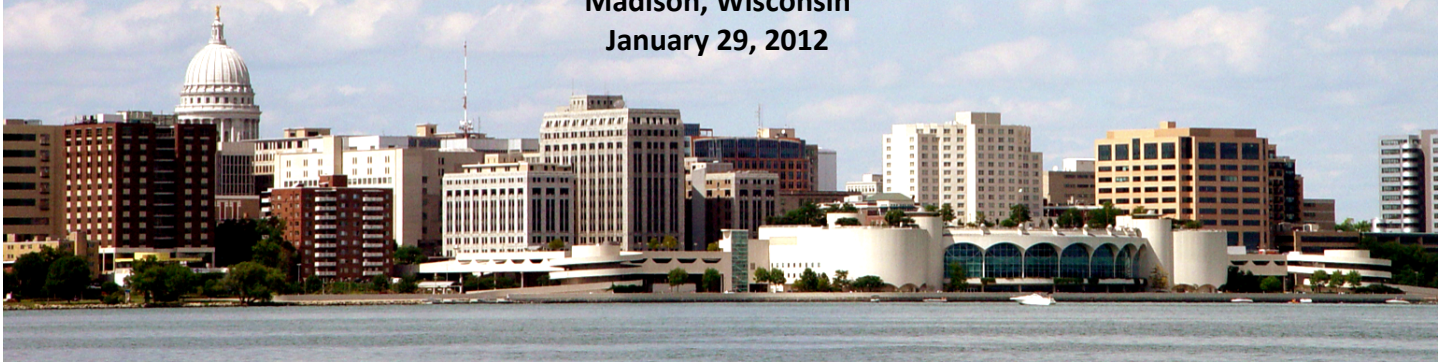


# ***“The Names of Jesus”***

ISAIAH 9:1-7

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I would imagine that roughly half of the members of this congregation have a Facebook account. And for those of you who know anything about Facebook, then you know that (in theory) they require you to use your real name. Well, as most of us also know, there has been some controversy on this point over the past few years. Earlier this week, for example, I read an article on the tech site CNET, where the author described the difficulties faced by a young married woman by the name of Caitlin Shaw. She signed up for an account (no troubles there at all), but then she realized that those who knew her before she was married might have a hard time finding her. The trouble began when she tried to add her maiden name. Her maiden name, by the way, is Batman! Facebook saw that she was changing her name to Caitlin Batman Shaw, and the name was rejected for some reason! Well, according to an article in the *Washington Post*, she appealed that decision for a number of weeks before the name was finally accepted by the officials at Facebook. Others who have gone through similar hassles have last names such as Pancake, Six, Super, Yoda, Christmas, Beer, and Kissner. Most of us, though, can hardly imagine going through life with a name like Batman!

This morning as we take a few moments to study God’s word as a congregation, I would like for us to consider someone from the Bible who was given a series of rather unusual names. I am referring to Jesus. Many of us probably know that the name Jesus literally means “Jehovah Saves.” And, of course, most of us refer to the Lord by that name. Jesus is the name that Joseph was told to give to the Lord at the time of His birth. It is an accurate and powerful description. Later, Peter would go on to explain in Acts 4:12, “***...there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.***” We also read in Philippians 2:10-11, “***...that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.***” Jesus, therefore, is a powerful name. However, as we read the Bible, we find that more than 100 names have been used to describe the Lord. In fact, roughly 700 years before His birth, the prophet Isaiah goes into some amazing detail with a series of powerful names, and he does so during a very dark time in the history of God’s people. The people were in the process of falling away from God. Some were just barely hanging on, but most had already drifted off even to the point of worshipping pagan idols. Isaiah, therefore, comes on the scene and warns the people that they must repent; that is, they must turn around and go back to God; otherwise, punishment is coming. In many ways, the book of Isaiah is a rather dark book. However, there are times when the prophet Isaiah gets a glimpse of the far-off future. He sees the coming of the Messiah, and the message changes dramatically from a message of doom and gloom to a message of

hope. It is one of these glimpses of hope that I would like for us to consider this morning, a prophecy about the coming arrival (the birth) of the Messiah. As you can see from the wall, our passage for this morning comes from Isaiah 9 (p. 1083). The passage is Isaiah 9:1-7, and again, it was written during a very dark time in the history of God's people. If you will, please look with me at the first seven verses of Isaiah 9,

***But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.***

***The people who walk in darkness  
Will see a great light;  
Those who live in a dark land,  
The light will shine on them.***

***You shall multiply the nation,  
You shall increase their gladness;  
They will be glad in Your presence  
As with the gladness of harvest,  
As men rejoice when they divide the spoil.***

***For You shall break the yoke of their burden and the staff on their shoulders,  
The rod of their oppressor, as at the battle of Midian.***

***For every boot of the booted warrior in the battle tumult,  
And cloak rolled in blood, will be for burning, fuel for the fire.***

***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,  
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.***

***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.***

There is so much that we could consider from these seven verses, but for the purpose of our study together this morning, I would simply like for us to focus in on those four names (those four descriptions) that are given to us in the second half of verse 6, where we find that when the Lord is born 700 years in the future (from the time this verse was written), His name will be called ***“Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.”*** And although this verse was first written roughly 2700 years ago, the message it brings is still a message of great hope and a message that all of us here this morning need to consider.

- I. **As we look back at this passage, we find, first of all, that the Lord Jesus is given the name WONDERFUL COUNSELOR.**

What is the first thing most of us think of when we hear the word counselor? Most of us probably think about some kind of a therapist, a person who listens to our problems, a person who perhaps helps guide us through some kind of decision-making process. From time to time, all of us need a counselor. We all need someone to talk to, someone to bounce ideas off of. And I suppose that this is part of the idea here that Jesus is a Wonderful Counselor, but it is certainly much deeper than that. In the ancient world, a counselor was more of an advisor. A counselor was someone who gave advice to the king. A counselor was someone who told the king how to handle every situation. We might even compare it to the position of the president's Chief of Staff or the president's Senior Advisors. In that sense, Jesus is the Amazing Advice-Giver. He is the Wonderful Counselor. In every situation, He will know what to do. And unlike today's political leaders who are always consulting focus groups and polls, the Lord gives His own advice. He does not have advisors, but He is the Advisor. As one author has pointed out, when it comes to being a Counselor, the Lord "affirmed the generosity of Zaccheus, confronted the greed of the Rich Young Ruler, asked a crippled man if he wanted to get well, offered grace to the Samaritan woman at the well, and restored the fallen Peter." As a Wonderful Counselor, the Lord always knows the best thing to say in any given situation.

As we carry this over into our lives today, we need to realize that the Lord is not just any Counselor, but He is OUR Counselor. In fact, He understands exactly what we are going through. As the Bible says in Hebrews 4, ***"...we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."*** Having come to earth and lived, He knows our struggles. He knows what it means to be tempted. He knows what it means to lose a dear friend. He knows what it means to be betrayed by a friend. He knows what it means to be afraid. He knows what it means to be hungry and even homeless. He knows what it means to suffer terrible physical pain. Therefore, let us allow Him to be our Wonderful Counselor. We do that by leaning on His word. Now, this doesn't mean that if we're having trouble raising our children that we just do a quick search for the word "teenager" in the Bible, because the word is not there! But it means that we regularly read the Bible, that we become familiar with it, that we soak in everything the Bible teaches on raising children, and patience, and discipline, and so on.

With all of this in mind, I would like to challenge each of us here this morning to make an appointment this week to sit down for a discussion with the Wonderful Counselor. Let us tell Him what is going on in our lives, and then, let us patiently listen for ways that His word can apply to our situation.

**II. As we go back and look again at Isaiah 9:6, we see a second name that is given to Jesus as He is referred to as MIGHTY GOD.**

How strange—that a newborn child could be referred to as mighty! We think of the way Jesus was born: No room at the inn, born in a stable, placed in a feeding trough instead of a crib or a cradle, the child of a very young mother, raised as a carpenter—nothing to indicate His mightiness to the world. And yet we know that when the Lord grew up, He did have the power to calm the wind and the waves, because He was the Creator of the world and everything in it. He had the power to heal all kinds of diseases. He had the power to raise the dead. He had the power to call on great numbers of fish to be caught in a net. He had the power to give sight to the blind and hearing to those who were deaf. He had the power to cast out demons, and walk on water, and feed thousands with just a small handful of food. He had the power to forgive sins. Truly, Jesus is the Mighty God referred to here in the book of Isaiah.

His coming was also foretold by Daniel, as Daniel looked and saw in a vision someone in the future who was ***“...given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.”*** And to us as human beings, this needs to be amazing to us—the idea that all of God’s power came to this earth in human form, born as one of us. We might be tempted to think it foolish to bow down to a baby that needs to be fed and clothed by its mother, but the Bible teaches that Jesus is Mighty God, even as an infant.

As I was preparing for this lesson, one author pointed out that when God came to this earth as a baby, it might have been one of the most powerful acts in all of history. He compared it to setting a huge bull loose in a china shop...but it does not break a single thing. To us, that would be impossible. The power and size of the bull would make it impossible move around without breaking anything. In the same way, God is all-powerful, God is dangerous, we might even say, but He came to this earth in the form of a helpless little baby. The same God who made the stars, came to this earth in human form. He limited Himself. As Paul says, He poured Himself out into the form of a man (Philippians 2:7).

Many people think of Jesus as being rather weak—someone who would turn the other cheek, someone who got beat up by the soldiers, someone who was forced to carry His own cross. And yes, these things are true, but He was not weak. Instead, He controlled His great power so that our sins could be forgiven. The lesson is: We can trust Jesus to be our Mighty God. He has the power to carry our burdens. He has the strength to fight on our behalf. We no longer need to make it through our struggles alone, but Jesus is ready and willing to help.

**III. As we go back to Isaiah 9:6, we see a third name that would be given to the newborn Jesus: The name EVERLASTING FATHER.**

And here, many of us would say, “Wait a minute!” because we understand that Jesus is not the Father. Jesus is the Son. And yet Isaiah does refer to Jesus as being the Father. So we need to ask: In what sense is Jesus a Father? There is an interesting little passage in Hebrews 2 where we have Jesus referring to ***“...the children whom God has given Me.”*** In other words, yes, Jesus is God’s Son; but in another sense, we are also the children of Jesus. Jesus, therefore, is our Father. He is our Everlasting Father.

Of course, as we think about our own fathers, we realize that they are hardly everlasting. Here in this life, fathers come and go. Here in this life, many fathers are good, but some are bad. Even the best of fathers are far from perfect. Jesus, though, is our Everlasting Father. He is our provider. He is an example for us to follow. We can trust that He is looking out for our best interests. And as we discussed before, we can go to Jesus our Father for advice. We remember what Mark Twain said about his own father, “When I was a boy of 14, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to 21, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in 7 years.” We go to our fathers for advice, and comfort, and safety. In a similar way, Jesus is our Father, and we approach Him as children. We are the children of God, the children of Jesus. He is our Everlasting Father.

**IV. As we come to the end of this list of names in Isaiah 9:6, we find that Jesus is also described as being the PRINCE OF PEACE.**

Sometimes we think of a prince as being the son of a king, but that is not really the way it is used here. The Hebrew word is more broad and refers to a commander, a chief, a governor, a leader, an officer, an official, an

overseer, a ruler. And the idea is that Jesus is a ruler who brings peace. Well, once again, we have a problem, because the world has obviously never really been at peace. Like many of you, I was born during the Vietnam War, our nation has been involved in some kind of conflict pretty much my entire life, and I am sure that various wars will continue for as long as I live. It is hard for us to imagine living in a world where there is no war. Most of us cannot even picture what that would be like. And so when the Bible says that Jesus is the Prince of Peace, we have a problem.

What we need to realize, though, is that the word referring to Jesus is SHALOM, a word that does refer to the absence of conflict, but it also refers to completeness, soundness, or welfare. In other words, peace in this context is not just the absence of war, but it is a state of being complete or well, perhaps the idea of a sound or solid or healthy relationship. We might say, then, that Jesus came to establish peace between us and God. We sinned, and so God had a problem with us, but Jesus came to make it right. Jesus came to make the relationship solid or whole again. As Paul said in Romans 5:1, ***“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”***

And so the question for us is: Are we at peace with God? Are we okay with God? Is God okay with us? Or is there tension between us? Is the relationship good and healthy, or is the relationship broken? If it is broken, we need to remember that Jesus is the Prince of Peace. He came to make things right. He did that by offering His life as a sacrifice for our sins.

### **Conclusion:**

This morning we started by looking at some rather unusual names that have been rejected and then ultimately accepted by Facebook as being real names. We have learned that Jesus also had some rather unusual names: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace: Do you think Facebook would accept any of these names as being real? I really doubt it. The real question, though, is whether we will accept the Lord's request. God has taken the first step; it is now up to us. We can accept Him into our circle of friends, we can accept Him as our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace, or we can turn away.

We accept His request by repenting of our sins and by allowing ourselves to be briefly buried in water so that our sins are forgiven, so that our sins are covered by His blood. If you have any questions, let us know. If you have something we need to pray about, we would invite you to write it down and either give it to me after the service or bring it to the front right now. But, if you are ready to obey the gospel, we invite you to let us know by coming to the front as we sing this next song. Let's stand and sing...

To comment on this lesson: [fourlakeschurch@gmail.com](mailto:fourlakeschurch@gmail.com)