

## **11-27-22 1st Sunday in Advent**

### **Sermon- Call Him Wonderful Counselor**

**Scripture-** Isaiah 11:1-10, CTW Ps 72:15-19

**Hymns-** To be selected by Nancy and Ron

**Theme-** It is said that on Christmas Day, all those years ago, we received the greatest gift ever given...but do we really understand what that is? Today we look at the "**Wonderful Counselor**" designation...the one who always gives the right advice...

### **I. Introduction: Help On the Way**

Most people feel a bit uneasy when they see an ambulance racing down the road. First, it catches us off guard, and, then, all other vehicles try to get to the side of the road so that the speeding ambulance has a clear path through the traffic. Those flashing lights and blaring siren send a somber message; **someone is in desperate need of help.**

Often times, a speeding ambulance puts things in perspective. Not only is it an obvious sign that someone is hurting, but it also reminds us that we are all too mortal ourselves. We all need help at one point or another in our lives.

### **II. Here, Isaiah says, "Hang on. HELP HAS ARRIVED.**

That's the very same message God gave to the people of Judah in the eighth century B.C. To them, and to us, Isaiah says, "Hang on. HELP HAS ARRIVED.

Someone has come to save you--someone uniquely qualified for the job. He has the Spirit's anointing on his head. And he has righteousness tied around his waist." Those two characteristics make Him a Wonderful Counselor for all of us!

## **A. He Has the Spirit's Anointing on His Head**

Just as an ambulance seems to come out of nowhere, Isaiah tells us that help is coming from an unexpected place. The bulk of the first half of Isaiah's book is about how Judah was on its way to destruction, because of its sins of idol-worship and immorality.

God was going to level Judah like a lumberjack clear-cutting a forest, one who leaves nothing behind but stumps. **Even the tallest, mightiest tree in Judah--the line of kings descended from Jesse, father of King David--was going to come down.**

The kings, together with the people, would go away into exile in Babylon. It would look like the once-great nation of Judah was finished.

**1. But then suddenly, a little sprout would come up from the stump of David's family.** A baby would be born to a poor couple and laid in a manger. But this would happen in Bethlehem, the City of David. That was because the baby would be a direct descendant of King David, on both his mother's and his father's sides. The baby, of course, was Jesus Christ.

Did you ever wonder why we call him Jesus Christ? Christ is not Jesus' last name. Christ is his title. Christ, or Cristo~ in Greek, means exactly the same thing as **Messiah or mis-shu-ah** does in Hebrew.

**It means "the anointed one." You see, back then, prophets and priests and kings were anointed.** They had a little sacred oil poured on their heads to show they were set apart from the rest of the people and had a special mission to fulfill.

**2. Jesus Christ is Jesus, the Anointed One,** the one set apart by God for a special mission. **But he wasn't anointed with oil. He was anointed with the Holy Spirit.**

Jesus, of course, is both God and man. As God, Jesus needed no anointing from anybody, and didn't need any gifts from anybody.

But as man, Jesus received the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and with it, all the Holy Spirit's gifts.

**3. Just a few of the Holy Spirit's gifts are listed here.**

The Holy Spirit is called "the **Spirit of wisdom and understanding.**" No one could ever be a **Wonderful Counselor** without the anointing of the Holy Spirit, fount of all wisdom.

Now this isn't mere intelligence. Isaiah isn't simply predicting that Jesus would be a smart. In the Bible, "**wisdom**" has very little to do with facts and information. **It has everything to do with morals. Wisdom is the ability to make good use of knowledge, 1 Corinthians 1:30 says Jesus has become for us, the wisdom from God.**

**When the Spirit of Wisdom comes, he gives a keen sense of the difference between right and wrong.** He gives "understanding"--which more literally here means "**discernment,**" the ability to sort out various options and choose what's best, what's right.

**Remember what James 1:5 says: If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God who gives generously without finding fault.**

**B. This Spirit referred to is also the Spirit of counsel. A person who has the Holy Spirit is a person you can go to for advice.** He not only knows the right way for himself; he can help you see what it is for you.

When you study Jesus' teaching and see how clear and to the point it is, and see the help it gives you, the light it throws on your path every day, you thank God for giving Jesus the Spirit of counsel.

And you also see that Jesus is full of the Spirit of power; power that healed the sick and raised the dead; power that stood up and told the truth, **even when it cost Jesus his life.**

**1. But the Spirit's greatest gift is "the fear of the LORD."** Does this mean that the Holy Spirit, when he comes, makes us afraid of God, so that we want to get as far away from God as we possibly can? Of course not.

The Old Testament talks about, and praises, "the fear of the LORD" constantly. And when you study that phrase you see it's talking about the **kind of fear you have**, not for a burglar or an enemy, **but for your father.**

Think about this. If you're a child in a healthy, normal household, you love your father. **But you also respect him.** You know that your relationship with your father isn't the same as it is with one of your friends at school.

**2. You realize that dad is in a position of authority and responsibility over you**, and that he's going to discipline you if you step out of line. And so you are afraid to do anything that would hurt or anger your father, because you love him.

**3. When the Bible talks about "the fear of the LORD," it's talking about the kind of reverence you have for your father**, only multiplied many times over. It's really the Old Testament's way of talking about what we New Testament Christians call "faith."

**C. And Jesus had that faith more than anyone who's ever lived. He honored and revered his heavenly Father with every thought he had, every word he said, and every move he made.**

He kept the **First Commandment--the commandment to "fear, love and trust in God above all things"**--perfectly, throughout his entire life. And he kept it for us.

For us whose relationship with God is never all it should be, for us who have dishonored God by things we've said and done, for us whose "fear of the LORD" has sometimes been that of the let's-avoid-God-as-much-as-possible variety, **Jesus substitutes his**

**perfect love and trust in God for our indifferent love and shaky trust.**

**1. Jesus makes a switch, and replaces our spotty, blemished record with his clean, perfect record.** And then he sends us some of the same Holy Spirit with which he was anointed, who is--right now--hard at work, creating the "fear of the LORD" inside each of us.

### **III. He Has Righteousness "Tied around His Waist"**

That's good news for sinners like us. Later in Scripture the Apostle John says, "If anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense--Jesus Christ the Righteous One." Jesus is "Christ," the anointed. Why would we ever want a counselor who was not anointed by the Father in Heaven?

**A. And Jesus is the "Righteous One." His righteousness is perfect. It never leaves him; Isaiah says it's like a belt tied around his waist.**

When the Messiah, Jesus, puts his belt of righteousness on, that's like saying he's rolling up his sleeves. He's getting down to business. He's got a job to do, and what a job.

**B. The world he comes into at the time...was a mess.** Nations and cities are in turmoil. The courts are looking only at the surface of things: they're deciding by what they see with their eyes and hear with their ears, showing partiality to whoever can get them on their side, and justice and fairness are being trampled into the dust.

**The rich are oppressing the poor. The wicked have everything their own way. War and bloodshed are everywhere. And God's people are wondering how much more they can take. SOUND FAMILIAR?**

Jesus fixes all these things. But how? Not by starting a **revolution** and **overthrowing** the government. Not by **violence**, or by the **ballot box**, or by **legislation and negotiation**, or any of the other weapons people use to try to right what's wrong with the world.

Jesus does come and "strike the earth;" he does "slay the wicked", but not with swords or guns.

**He does it with the "rod of his mouth...THE Word of God!**

**B. He uses his word. His message. His truth, as a Wonderful Counselor should.** Jesus doesn't waste time dealing with the symptoms of the disease. He goes immediately to the root of the problem.

The problem with this world is not that there is oppression, and violence, and injustice in it. **The problem is there's evil in it. It's evil that causes oppression, violence, and injustice.**

**1. We know from Scripture that ultimately we can thank the devil for the evil in the world. And the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work."**

Jesus did that. Because of Jesus' payment for our sins, the devil has nothing he can accuse us of anymore. **There is no longer any wedge the devil can drive between God and us;** we're at peace with God now, and a new kingdom of peace is on the way. For now, of course, the devil is still at his work around here.

**You can see his work everywhere in this world: in the crime, and disease, and war we see around us, but not for long.** The devil, right now, is like a hornet Jesus has stepped on and crushed for us.

**2. That hornet continues to buzz around threateningly here on the floor. He can inflict a lot of pain on you if you decide to hold him in your hand;** but stay away, and you don't need to fear him. He's the one who needs to be afraid.

Because **Jesus' Second Coming** is on the way, that means the other shoe is about to come down. Our response this Advent Season should be "Maranatha Lord Jesus" "**COME NOW!**"

#### **IV. Conclusion: We must resolve ourselves in this Advent Season to rely upon His wisdom as our Wonderful Counselor.**

We live in a world that is in desperate need of help. Yet, help has arrived. **Our Savior – the Wonderful Counselor– has come!** He brings healing for our hearts, minds, and souls. We can now be at peace with God because of Jesus' role as counselor.

**1. By his death and resurrection, Jesus has placed us, not in an ambulance, but in a grand limousine.** And he's the driver. Jesus has taken care of all our enemies – sin, death, and the devil. We're now on our way to heaven. So, look up, not down.

**Turn your hearts to Him and He will not lead you astray.**

As we enter the Advent season and spend time identifying the attributes of this great gift God has given all of us through His Son, **make sure you understand and rely upon all of them!** Make sure you understand as much as you possibly can about this wonderful gift which God has bestowed upon all believers!

**2. This Multi-faceted Son of God did not come so that the merchants can make a bundle of money each year! But I have to tell you if you don't have one already, probably the best reminder of this season that you could have in your house would not be a tree...it would be a creche which reminds us the humble beginnings of our Savior who was foretold in Isaiah as "Wonderful Counselor, Almighty God!"**

**Amen? Let Us Pray...**