

Isaiah Chapter 9 v 6 - Everlasting Father

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Date: 24 December 2017

Preacher: Peter Robinson

[0 : 00] manifesto Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[4 : 58] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Good evening. Welcome. Good to see you. Good that we can be here together on this Christmas Eve to sing the praises of our God and to draw near to him.

As we know, the coming of the Son of God, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into the world was not a last-minute ditch attempt by God to rescue a broken world.

It was that which he'd promised and prophesied and declared again and again. And Isaiah, of course, is one of the great prophets that speaks so much of Jesus, so much of his ministry, so much of his coming to be saviour.

And as we thought this morning, just listen to these words of Isaiah 60. Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.

[6 : 51] See, darkness covers the earth, and darkness is over the peoples. But the Lord rises upon you, and his glory appears over you.

Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Our Lord Jesus is the light of the world, the light that has come to dissipate the darkness, the light that has come to those in deep darkness like ourselves.

So let's stand and sing our first hymn, our first carol, 196, in our hymn books, 196.

Angels from the realms of glory, wing your flight, O all the earth. Let's come and do just that.

Let's come and worship Christ, our King. Let's do that in perhaps a time of open praise, open worship and prayer. If I lead, and then a few others, those who feel able, lead us in prayer, thanksgiving, this Christmas, this time when we rejoice in the coming of the Son of God into our world.

[8 : 12] Let's bring our worship to him. O Lord, how we thank you and bless you again for the gift of Jesus, our King, the King of the universe, the King of the heavens, the King of earth.

But the one who humbled himself and condescended and became that babe wrapped in cloths and laid in a manger. Thank you, O Lord, that you are the King.

Not a King that the world recognizes, not a King that acts as the rulers of this world do, but the gracious, the merciful, the good, the saving, the redeeming King.

O Lord, grant us again that as we draw near to worship and praise, that our hearts may be lifted up to acknowledge you for who you are, to receive you as the King of all that we are, and to give you the glory and praise that you deserve.

We know our praises faltering and weak, but Lord, we know that those who have gone before us worship you in perfection and sinlessness. We ask that we might join with them.

[9 : 14] O come, Holy Spirit, and move our hearts to sing his praise. Amen. Isaiah in chapter 9.

Isaiah in chapter 9. And the first seven verses. Isaiah 9 and the first seven verses.

If you have the Red Church Bible, that's page 694. 694. Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress.

In the past, he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali. But in the future, he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles by the way of the sea beyond the Jordan.

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light. On those living in the land of deep darkness, a light has dawned. You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy.

[10 : 20] They rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder. For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressors.

Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire. For to us, a child is born.

To us, a son is given. And the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the greatness of his government and peace, there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. All together. We recognize again, O Lord our God, that the world in which we live is a dark world.

[11 : 45] A world of spiritual gloom and misery and mist. And, O Lord, in our nation tonight and tomorrow, millions, tens of millions of people will continue in that darkness and in that gloom as they drink and eat, as they visit, as they give gifts, as they fight, as they complain, as they feel sadness and loneliness and sorrow, as they search for happiness.

And, no, some measure, no doubt, of that. But, Lord, we know that for the vast majority of our nation, there will be no real thought or concern or consideration of the birth of Christ, the coming of the Son of God into the world.

And because of that, they will stay in their gloom and darkness and their lost estate. And, Lord, we know that this is a great concern of your heart as it is of ours.

You know our prayers, you know our longing, you know our labors, you know our toiling. You know our great burden upon our hearts is that in our nation at this time and in our own day and generation that you would come with light and power and revival, that you would come and dispel that gloom which hangs over us in a tangible, forceful way.

And that men and women and boys and girls may not only hear the gospel and hear it in truth and in clarity, but, Lord, that they may receive it with the power of your Holy Spirit and that they might be saved.

[13 : 28] And, Lord, we do pray again, particularly for this county of Yorkshire, which is considered, certainly it's the largest and most populous and almost certainly, Lord, one which has the very least gospel churches in it.

And we do want to pray. We pray for the work of Dewsbury and we thank you for your ministry and your grace there. We think of our friends at Pontefract and at Pickering. We think of those, Lord, in many other parts of the county who even this evening are meeting and preaching and praying and have been through these weeks leading up to Christmas laboring and toiling in the harvest field as they've shared and they've given literature.

And again, O Lord, with us, we all cry together, Lord, will you not bless our endeavors and own them? Will you not accept them, O Lord, and use them, O Lord?

We know that we cannot save a single soul. We know that we can do nothing to turn a man or woman to Christ. We can do nothing to open their closed and secured hearts.

But you can and you will. And yet you call us to be co-laborers with you and workers with you. You call us to be partakers with you in this ministry. You, the one who yourself, Lord Jesus, sent us by way of your disciples to go into all the earth and preach the good news, to go and make disciples of all nations.

[14 : 54] But we know that we can do nothing except you come down upon us. And so we cry to you again at the end of this year and the looking to the further year.

Lord, all we can see, humanly speaking, is greater darkness, greater descent, greater slipping away from you. Please, O Lord, arrest it.

Please, O Lord, step into our nation. Please, O Lord, do a work now in these days that may give glory and praise and honor to you. Please, O Lord, hear us.

Do not abandon us and give us up. But, O Lord, save sinners. You yourself sent your Son for that very purpose.

And, O Lord, we know that you are doing that work around this world. We rejoice with all that you are doing in many parts of the nations. But, Lord, in our nation we ask, O Lord, do not pass us by.

[15:51] Do not forget us. Do not cast us off forever. As you've been gracious and good to us in previous generations. So, come again. Come again in the midst of the great distress that we are in. Come again, O Lord, we pray. Even those who have heard your gospel this Christmas time. Lord, do not let the seed fall to the ground and be devoured by the evil one. And cause it, Lord, we pray, to fall into good soil. And cause it to bear fruit and to germinate and to grow. You know our desire and longing in all of this is that Jesus may be glorified and lifted high. That he might be the praise of all the earth. Help us in our ministry. Help us in our work. Help us to redouble our efforts, O Lord, in the strength that you provide. And cause us to press on and to persevere for your glory and honour. Speak to us now in your word and encourage us in it, we pray. Minister to us, we ask. And do us good. For all these prayers we bring. In the name of Jesus.

[16:57] Amen. Amen. Isaiah chapter 9 and verse 6.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given. The government will be on his shoulders. Be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

There's a story from the middle of the last century about a father, a Spanish father and his son.

And sadly, as the son got older, they became estranged from one another. They fell out, they argued. Son in anger and frustration or whatever, stormed out and left home.

Father, it wasn't things like internet and mobile phones and so on. The father set out to find his son, went to the city, looked for him.

[18:01] Weeks, months, no sign of him. Finally, at last, in a desperate effort to find his son, he placed an advertisement in the newspaper of the city where he believed his son had gone to.

In that advertisement, in the personal column, he simply wrote this, Dear Paco, meet me in front of this newspaper office at noon on Saturday.

All is forgiven. I love you, your father. Week past, day drew nearer, the father became more

anxious, concerned would his son show up, would he appear in front of that office, had he seen it.

And on Saturday, midday, as the father walked towards the office, there were 800 Pacos stood out front of the office.

Isn't it amazing that when we receive the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ to come into the world, we are told that one of the titles by which he is known and one of the ways in which he ministers to us is here, everlasting father.

[19:18] Everlasting father. Over these past few weeks, as we've been approaching Christmas, in Advent particularly, in the evenings, we've been looking at these four titles of the Lord Jesus revealed in Isaiah chapter 9 verse 6.

We've seen that each one of them represents certain gifts that Jesus brings into the life of the believer. Each one of them, as it were, is something that we receive from him.

Some particular thing that he imparts to us by the very nature of his ministry and his life. And so, we saw at the very beginning that title, Wonderful Counselor, speaks to us of the great need we have for understanding.

It teaches us and reveals to us that we are ignorant of God. that we are confused about the things of life and of eternity and that Jesus came to give us wisdom and understanding.

He imparts to us the very truth that we need to hear. We looked just a couple of weeks ago to mighty God, recognizing again that Jesus comes to us with power because we are powerless.

[20:32] We are dead, in fact, in trespasses and sins. We are ineffective. We can do nothing to bring ourselves to God. We can do nothing to raise ourselves from the dead that sin has brought us to.

But Christ, the mighty God, gives us power to live and power for life. And so, this third title here gives us quite an unlikely description of the Lord Jesus Christ, particularly those of us who are, of course, Trinitarian believers.

but it speaks to us particularly and firstly, of course, of the eternal nature of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is the everlasting Father.

That means that He is from everlasting to everlasting. Hebrews in chapter 13 reminds us that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

He does not change. But He is everlasting in His fatherliness. What does that mean? Well, we know, of course, that Jesus declared very plainly and clearly that He was one with the Father.

[21 : 43] I am the Father, our one, He said to His disciples in John in chapter 10. Now, this title's not here to confuse us. It's not here to blur the distinctions between the three persons of the Trinity. we're not meant to think that the Father and the Son are one person. That's the teaching of Unitarianism. It teaches that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are one God revealed at different times in history.

No, that's not it at all. We know that from the baptism of Jesus Himself, there were the three distinct persons, the Father who spoke from heaven, the Son who was baptized with water, and the Holy Spirit who descended as a dove.

This isn't meant to confuse us. There is a sense in which the Father and the Son, the Spirit, share together not only the very same nature, but as we go through Scripture we see that they are of one heart and one mind, that their ministries are intertwined together.

We are saved by the triune God. Not just saved by God the Father, not just saved by God the Son, not just saved by God the Holy Spirit, but together they work in our salvation.

[22 : 52] They are of one mind and heart in our salvation. And we know that the Trinity is something which is impossible for us to explain.

There's nothing in all creation and in nature that comes close to being similar to the Trinity. That's what makes God God. That's why He is so utterly transcendent, utterly different, utterly wonderful in comparison to anything and anyone in all of creation.

Our finite minds cannot grasp the three persons and the one Godhead. We must be very careful that we don't try to explain away or reason away the very nature of God.

We need, of course, to take it by faith and understand it as the Scripture explains it to us.

Sometimes we need to be very careful we don't go beyond Scripture and we try to make and force an illustration about God which is less than God-honoring.

We know that those who saw the Lord Jesus saw God Himself walking on the face of the earth.

Jesus declared also to His disciples in that same place where He says I and the Father are one.

[24 : 11] He says from now on anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father. Philip's question was Lord show us the Father and He says don't you know Philip even after all this time I've been with you anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father.

So there's a close mysterious glorious oneness about the Father and the Son. And we know that our Lord Jesus Christ in coming into this world came to present to us God.

Hebrews in chapter 1 verse 3 the Son is the radiance of God's glory the exact representation of His being sustaining all things by His powerful Word.

It's because of our Lord Jesus Christ that we can know God as our Father. It's because of Jesus that we come into a relationship whereby God is our Father and we are His children.

Just this morning we thought about how Jesus came to His own John chapter 1 tells us but His own did not receive Him but John goes on to say this yet to all who did receive Him that's receive Christ to those who believed in His name He gave the right or the power or the authority to become children of God.

[25 : 26] We are not naturally children of God we are children of God in that sense that we are created by God but we are not children of God by relationship to Him apart from the work of Jesus He comes and brings us into and gives us the right to the Son of God came to us became one with us that we might become like Him that we might become children of God.

But I think that this particular title in Isaiah is not speaking so much about that. I think this title in Isaiah is speaking about the way in which Jesus ministers to us as a father like an earthly father and when we think about the role of an earthly father there are certain aspects of that position of that responsibility that come to our minds and I want to apply them to the Lord Jesus Christ here and see that He is our everlasting Father He is Father-like in His care of us He is fatherly in His love towards us Now please don't think as I go through these things that I'm being a misogynist by saying that these are things that only fathers can do and many mums who have to take on the responsibilities of being both parents at times many mums who have gifts like these and care for their children but when we think of the role of a father there are three things

I think that come to mind the first is this it's a father's role to provide for the needs of his children it's a father's role to provide for his children he's the breadwinner was the phrase used to be used the one whose responsibility is to ensure that his children needs are met through his own labor through his own hard work he's the one who is meant to go and work and earn and provide and feed and so

on his children and Jesus as our everlasting father is the one who has provided for all of our needs especially of course our spiritual needs he is the one who came and through the labor of his life has made provision to meet the great needs that we have his life was one long ministry his life was one long work one long act one long labor to secure for us righteousness it wasn't just when Jesus entered into the public scene at the age of 30 that suddenly he started to do something for us from the very moment of his birth to Mary in that stable he was doing the thing that we needed him to do for us to provide for us righteousness from God he lived a perfect life a sinless life a law obeying life a life that we could never live God is holy and he rightly calls for us to be holy God God is righteous and he says to us we must be righteous to be in relationship with him but we have sinned and we continue to sin and we break the law so that we cannot keep it fully as God requires righteousness but Jesus did that on our behalf and so we find in Romans chapter 5 19 through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous you speak about an imputed righteousness a righteousness that's accredited to us but it's won by Jesus it's accomplished by his work and not by ours the other great need of course that we have is forgiveness for our sins in scripture often sin is spoken of as being a debt to be paid we know the Lord's prayer as it's written in Matthew chapter 6 forgive us our debts as we forgive those who are our debtors in the parable of the unmerciful steward the unmerciful servant in Matthew 18 you have Jesus teaching about forgiveness he's asked by Peter how many times should I forgive and he gives this parable about a servant who owed what we're told is 10,000 talents to his master but all that debt was cancelled and yet when another servant owed him a much smaller sum he had him thrown into prison until every penny was paid we need forgiveness yes we need righteousness and Christ by his labor of his hands and by his life lived that righteous life for us but we need forgiveness and so the greatest work of

[30 : 31] Jesus was performed on the cross when he purchased our forgiveness by paying the debt that we owe to God with his own blood Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 7 says this in him we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of sins we need forgiveness and we need righteousness our everlasting father has provided them for us but there's something else that we require something else that we need which Jesus as our everlasting father has provided for us and that is eternal life new life resurrection life this he has given to us by that great and mighty work by which he was raised from the dead on that third day that Easter Sunday Colossians 3 1 since then you've been raised with Christ this is the incredible thing that has happened to us our heavenly father has given us life we were dead in sin we had not one spark of life one spark of spiritual life which might be resuscitated or breathed upon or stirred up we were stone cold dead only a mighty surge of life giving power could quicken us and so that's exactly what Jesus came to do in 1

Corinthians 15 verse 45 the first Adam became a living being the last Adam a life giving spirit as we are united with Christ so we receive life as we are united to the vine so his life flows within us he is our everlasting father who has provided for all of our spiritual needs the second thing that I think we would agree is the role of a father is to protect his children it's the role of the father to provide a safe place for his children to keep them from danger and from harm there's a responsibility very very sad news item just recently in a week or so ago of a father who was prosecuted for the manslaughter of his child because he'd gone to a water park and he hadn't cared for his child he hadn't bothered he hadn't taken any notice and the child had gone off and very sadly drowned and he was held responsible he'd not kept the child safe he'd not looked after that child which was his responsibility so there's that sense in which a father's role is to protect not just to provide a home to protect from the weather from the sun and the rain and the wind but also to give to that child that sense of security that sense of dwelling in safety that sense of feeling secure well Jesus Christ our everlasting father has become for us all the protection that we need he's become the one who is our safety net he is the one who surrounds us and encompasses us he's the one who protects us even in the midst of the present troubles of this day 2 Peter 2 verse 9 the Lord knows how to rescue or to keep the godly in trials us that's Jesus in the temptations and the trials and the difficulties we face we have one who is our everlasting father who protects us because he's with us never will I leave you never will I forsake you Jesus says he spoke to his disciples lo I am with you always even to the end of the age and he's the one who protects us as well in the future he himself is our place of protection

Jesus who rescues us from the coming wrath we have no need to fear we have no need to be concerned or anxious as we draw near to death as we consider the reality of that day of judgment

as we know that we shall stand before the living god we have christ who is the one who rescues who keeps who protects who watches over us and of course it is jesus who's provided for us an everlasting home he's the one who has provided for us a place where we shall dwell in safety throughout eternity john chapter 14 my father's house has many rooms i'm going there to prepare a place for you with christ we know that we have an everlasting father one whom we can feel secure in trusting knowing he's able to protect us throughout this life and into the next hebrews 7 hebrews 7 reminds us therefore he's able to save completely or to the uttermost those who come to god through him because he always lives he always lives that's why he's an everlasting father however much we respected our fathers however much our fathers cared for us and provided for us however much our fathers our earthly fathers were there ultimately one day came when they had to be taken from us whether they were good fathers or bad fathers whether they were caring or loving or not ultimately they were only here for a while we were only able to shelter under their protection and love for a while but here is jesus the everlasting father his fatherly care there's one last thing i think here that speaks to us of the fatherly care of the lord jesus christ it's a father's role to prepare his children our lord jesus as our everlasting father is the one who prepares us for life and for living as we should he's the one who instructs us teaches us corrects us disciplines us that we might live holy lives before him that's his ministry to us that's why when he walked on the earth he declared himself to be a teacher he's our greatest teacher and we are to be his most obedient students acts chapter 1 and verse 1 luke tells theophilus that his previous book was all about what jesus began to do and to teach are we as faithful children to our everlasting father do we listen to his words his counsel his instruction do we take his discipline and his correction as we should isn't it interesting that when you see the ministry of jesus amongst the disciples he's like that isn't it why have you got such little faith he would say to them why won't you believe he would correct them he said to peter get behind me saying you haven't got the things of god disciplining it is a good and loving father who disciplines his children who corrects his children who teaches his children and so jesus as our everlasting father fulfills that ministry as well john 13 when he on the night before his disciple before his death he gathers his disciples in the upper room and he says to them you call me teacher and lord and rightly so for that is what i am and then he demonstrates to them how they are to serve one another by the washing of each other's feet he is our example our supreme example whether we have or had a father who we could look up to and imitate there are things about him that we have followed his example in whether we wanted to or not

he had an influence upon us and so it is with our lord jesus christ he is our own perfect example 1 peter chapter 2 verse 21 christ suffered for you leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps jesus is the everlasting father all these things that he does for us in providing for our spiritual needs in protecting us in the things of life in preparing us and correcting and directing and and and teaching all these things he continues to do in our lives day by day year by year moment by moment he never ceases to be that everlasting father to us and he never shall be do i respect him as such do i acknowledge him at the rightful place as my example and my my discipline my teacher do i look to him to provide for my needs and thank him for the provision of them and for all that he's done for me on my behalf that i could never do for myself do i rest in and rejoice in and relax in the security that i have an everlasting father in jesus who will always keep me and bring me safely into the home that he's prepared for me in eternity this is what jesus brings this is what jesus has brought when a child was given and a son was born let's sing together then our final hymn this evening it's number 210 once in royal david city stood a lowly cattle shed let's stand and sing i expectation and singing

Lord show me the Jonas and singing o'er the peice t balances CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS
[42 : 01] CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR
SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR
SINGS O'eray, the land marches the lonely banner, in whose gentleness he lay.

Christian children of us be, and our obedience to the sea.

O'eray, the land marches the lonely banner, day by day by mercy grew.

He grows little, weak and helpless, tears and smiles by mercy grew.

And he cleaveth for our selfless, and he shareth in our goodness.

[43 : 33] When our eyes as one shall see him, through his own redeeming love.

O'eray, the land marches the lonely banner, that he leads his children on to the place where he is gone.

O'eray, the land marches the lonely banner, with the awesome standing guide.

We shall see him out in heaven, set at the light, right at the light.

Where my sons his children come, all in vain shall return.

[44 : 51] Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead, our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will.

And may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.