

Isaiah Chapter 9 v 1 - 7

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Date: 25 December 2014

Preacher: Peter Robinson

- [0 : 0 0] Good. Wonderful gifts. Wonderful gifts. It's lovely to give, isn't it? And it's lovely to show. Oh, one more thing. I've got to show you my present. It's my best present, but it's my smallest present.
- It's a key ring, and it says, the old man's keys. Can you believe that? The old man's keys. You can ask me who gave me that later, but I think you might be able to guess.
- Good. So, we're going to take up an offering now as we sing our next song. It's not an offering for the church. What we do at Christmastime is we, as you know, as a church, we support various Christians in ministry and in training around the world.
- And this gift we're going to bring, this offering, is going to go to David Woolin and his family who are in America, studying, preparing for Christian ministry. So, remain seated as we sing 217.
- Remain seated as we sing 217, and we'll bring our gifts to the Lord. Amen. Amen.
- [1 : 2 1] That's a key ring, and we'll bring our gifts to the Lord. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Manyoping harp. Amen. Amen. Amen.
- Amen. Amen. CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS
- CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS difficult time. So let's come to prayer together. Let's pray as we bring these gifts as well and give thanks for the way that he's blessed us so abundantly. Let us pray. Oh wonderful, Heavenly Father, we are those who've received from your hands so many blessings, so many good gifts.
- We thank you for those that we've been able to share with our children and our grandchildren, our loved ones, our family and friends. We thank you again for those that we've received as well and Lord, thank you that you've given us so much that we're able to share it and to give.
- [4 : 0 5] And we do again remember those who are giving so much this Christmas. We think of those who are providing food and warmth and shelter, Lord, to the homeless and to those who have no family to share their meals with. We think of the Salvation Army and others like them who are tirelessly giving their time today. We thank you again, oh Lord, for the opportunity for us to love and to share and to give at Christmas. And we ask that this may not just be something we do once a year, but maybe something which is part of our very daily exercise that we may be loving and caring and supportive.

We know that Christmas is a time for family and joy, but we confess and acknowledge that for many of us it's a time of sadness too. We think of those who are on their own, very elderly. We think of people like Gladys unwell and unable to be with us and others too, Lord, who won't be able to share with us this morning or through the day. We think of those who, particularly in this past year, have lost loved ones and find this time such a sad time. And yet, Lord, we thank you that the reason you sent your son into the world was that he might give us hope in the face of bereavement, light in darkness, joy in sorrow, that he might raise us up when we are downcast. And we pray, Lord, for all those who are struggling this Christmas, that they may truly be aware of your presence and your nearness and your goodness. We thank you especially again, our God, for the gift of your son. Once more, we can't help but thank you for him. Not because he gives us just a reason for time off work or time with family.

Oh, but the blessings that he's brought into our lives, we've put our faith in him. The joy that he's given us, the liberation, the freedom, the sense of peace, the assurance of your nearness all year through in the ups and the downs. Lord, we're so grateful for him. And we pray that as we think about him briefly this morning, that again, that you'd open our eyes and open our hearts to really enjoy and rejoice in the gift of Jesus Christ, your son. Lord, we ask that he may be the center of our lives, not just today, but throughout our lives, day by day. And that, Lord, as we center our lives on him, we find the real purpose and meaning for life itself that we were created and made to know you and to enjoy you, our wonderful God. So continue with us in this time and bless us together through this day, for we ask it in his name. Amen. I'd like to read from the Bible now from Isaiah in chapter 9.

That may be, for some people, a surprising place to turn. The Old Testament, when we think about Christmas Day, but of course, as Christians, we know that the Bible is all about Jesus. And Isaiah wrote about 600 years before the Lord Jesus was born, but wrote about his coming and gave to the people an expectation. So I'm going to read from Isaiah chapter 9. And hopefully, as you hear these words, you'll begin to pick up clues that clearly this is talking about one person only, the Lord Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past, God humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future, he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles by way of the sea along the Jordan. The people walking in darkness have seen a great light. On those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned. You've enlarged the nation and increased their joy. They rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as men rejoice when dividing the plunder. For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you've shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. 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 increase of his government and peace, there'll 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.

[8 : 57] Well, let's sing together once more as we come to think about those words. Number 212, See amid the winter snow, born for us on earth below. 212.

See amid the winter snow, born for us on earth below. See the Lamb of God who cares, from his prolifer years, from his prolifer years.

God's prolifer years, from his prolifer years. When the justin History cannot know, tell your love all their Prozent rislement, 2017 years of innovations, maratham-ô- philanthropists that we know,■■■■■ in Israel.

Be seated. So we've seen some of the presents that some of the children have had. All of us, I'm sure, have received gifts.

Perhaps some of you maybe think, well, we don't open our presents until after Christmas lunch, so you've got to wait and see. But I wonder if you'll get what you wanted for Christmas. I know that boys and girls often get to write a list or even perhaps send a letter with the things that they like or what they want and mum and dad listen out and try and work out what do they want for Christmas.

[10 : 49] And then you've got to try and work out those people who've got everything. What do I get them for Christmas? But I wonder, did you get what you wanted? We give gifts, of course, at Christmas time because we're remembering the wonderful gift of God at Christmas, which was the giving of his son.

It's even there in Isaiah 9. For to us, a child is born, to us a son is given. That's an interesting phrase, isn't it? A son is given. Reminds us of the words in John chapter 3 of the Gospel.

For God so loved the world, he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. And in this verse, particularly verses 6 and 7, we have a description of the gift.

We're told what this gift is like, what this gift will bring, what this gift will do. And instead of just one gift, in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have four gifts.

We have in him four wonderful aspects of the character of God. Wonderful blessings for us to enjoy. And I want us just to take a moment to think about these four ways in which the Lord Jesus Christ, in coming to the world, brings to us the great gift of God's love and grace.

[12 : 09] And we see there that he will be called wonderful counselor. Wonderful counselor. A counselor is someone who gives you counsel. To give counsel is to give advice, give direction, to speak into somebody's life and circumstances helpfully and usefully.

And that's what Jesus Christ came to do. He's the wonderful counselor. He's the one that God has sent to speak to us God's very word.

To live out for us God's truth. In fact, the people who saw Jesus and heard Jesus acknowledged that truth. When they heard him teaching, they said, This man speaks like nobody else we've ever heard before.

The words of Jesus captivated and still captivate people today. His words still have power and influence. They're still recognizable. They're still transforming.

The words of Jesus, the wonderful counselor. See, God is a God who speaks. God is not dumb. God is not deaf.

[13 : 18] God is not inactive. God is the one who is always speaking. He speaks to us in the world he's made. He speaks to us through many aspects of our lives.

But he particularly has spoken to us and made known to us his truth in Jesus Christ. That's why when the gospel writer John writes about Jesus, he uses the title, the Word.

Jesus, the Word. He really is the outspeaking of God to this world. Jesus' words. And they're such amazing words that they are words which speak to us where we are and they give us illumination.

That's why earlier in the chapter, Isaiah writes, The people walking in darkness have seen a great light. When Jesus came into the world, he said, I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me will no longer walk in darkness. I'm sure we've all got questions, haven't we? About life, the universe, about purpose and meaning, about the future.

[14 : 27] We feel at times as we go into the new year that to a certain degree we're in darkness. What will the year bring? What will life bring? What is the future? Well, Jesus is the wonderful counselor whose words speak to us and give light to us in the darkness.

Elsewhere in the Bible, it speaks about God's Word. Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. How can we find our way to God?

How can we know Him? Many people don't know Him. Many people feel that He's distant and far away, that He's unapproachable. But Jesus, in giving to us this counsel, is the light who directs us to God.

I am the way, Jesus said, the truth and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. Jesus speaks. For many of us, we think of Christmas as Jesus as the baby in the manger.

A baby that has nothing to say. A baby which is silent. We like our babies quiet, don't we? Particularly at three o'clock in the morning. We'd like them to be quiet. We like Jesus to be quiet.

[15 : 35] But He won't be quiet. He won't stay in the manger. He didn't stay in the manger. But He came to preach, to teach, to declare and proclaim the kingdom of God.

The very first message that Jesus spoke to the people when He began His ministry was, Repent and believe the good news. The kingdom of God is here.

Are you willing to listen to this Jesus Christ? Are you willing to hear His wonderful counsel? What He has to say about you? What He has to say about God? What He has to say about your place in this world?

Or do you want to leave Jesus quiet in the manger? The second thing about Jesus that we see here is that He will be called Mighty God.

Mighty God. Jesus grew. And of course in His life, not only were people amazed by the things that He said, they were amazed by the things that He did.

[16 : 35] The miracles that He performed. The amazing works. Nicodemus, who was a very strict Jew, came to Jesus at night and said, No one can do what you're doing unless God was with him.

Because He was making blind people see. He was making lame people walk. He was even making people who were dead to be raised back to life again. Why did He do those things?

To prove, to show that He is the Mighty God. Not just a babe in the manger, but the Mighty God who is active in this world. Not only is the God the God who speaks, but He is the God who acts.

The God who hasn't got His hands tied by man's wickedness or sin. Not a God who stands away or in some ivory tower separate from His creation. But in Jesus Christ we see that truly, above all, God is a God who transforms lives and acts.

And so He did then. The people that He met, every one of them who was sick, He healed. Those who were possessed by evil spirits, He delivered. And today, the Lord Jesus Christ is still the one who is able to deliver us from those debilitating of all illnesses, which is sin.

[17 : 50] He's able to set us free from those things that oppress us and rob us of joy. That's why we read here again in Isaiah 9. Speaking of Jesus' coming, you've shattered the yoke that burdens them.

And the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. One of the sad things that will be happening this Christmas is that people will feel that they are doing exactly as they please.

As they overindulge in alcohol. And overindulge in food. And overindulge in all sorts of outward pleasures. But none of those things satisfy. Satisfy.

They're just passing. They're just for a moment. In fact, many of those things are oppressive. People find Christmas something of a burden. The things I've got to do. The things I've got to buy.

I've got to drink too much. I've got to eat too much. I've got to make sure I enjoy myself. The trouble with sin is. The trouble with pleasing yourself and serving yourself is not being master of your own life.

[18 : 52] But as evidence, the Bible says that we are under the control of a sinful nature. We're looking and searching for something which will truly satisfy and give us freedom and joy.

And that only comes through Jesus Christ. He's the life changer. He's the one that transforms. He's the one who can perform a miracle in your life and mine. That sets us free.

And that makes us whole again. But again, many of us want Jesus in the manger, don't we? That baby who is helpless and weak. Who can't do anything for us or for himself.

He doesn't make any threatening to us, does he, when he's like that. But he is the mighty God. The mighty God. Who is able to do glorious and wonderful things in your life and mine.

He's able to show his power. To set free. To give life. To change. Is that what you want him to be? That mighty God.

[19 : 52] Or that babe in the manger. And then we see he gets called a third title. Which to us may seem very strange indeed. He's called the everlasting father. The everlasting father.

Why? We know that in the Bible we're told that God is three. Three persons. God the father. God the son. And God the spirit. Why is Jesus called the everlasting father?

Well he truly is from everlasting. God has no beginning and he has no end. And in Jesus Christ as he came into the world that was not the beginning of the life of the son of God.

That was the eternal living God entering into the temporary world that we live in. He is the everlasting. But why is he called the everlasting father? Because Jesus himself made it very clear.

John 10 and verse 30. I and the father are one. In the mystery that we call the trinity. God the father, the son and the spirit are one God yet three persons.

[20 : 52] Don't spend too much time trying to work that out because you'll only get a sore head. But the truth is this. That Christ who came into this world was one with the father. But there's something more than that as well.

There's something about him that is special. Because the father is one who gives life. One disciple of Jesus wrote, this is love.

Not that we loved God but he loved us and sent his son. A father should be loving, shouldn't he? A father should be protective and caring of his children.

A father should be many things that we as fathers aren't if we're honest. Maybe some of us have had very bad effects from our fathers. Poor examples. Little love.

But Lord Jesus Christ comes to us as the everlasting father. With a love which is indeed greater than any love we've ever known. And it's a love which is a life-giving love.

[21 : 50] He gives us to be the children of God. He gives us life. Here in Isaiah 9. God promises through Jesus that you have enlarged the nation.

In other words, added to the number of the people. Giving life to them. Jesus Christ came as the life giver. Not only that we might overcome death and have eternal life.

But that we might have spiritual life. That we might have the life of God within us. That's the miracle and the wonder of becoming a Christian. Is that God's life enters and is united with our life.

So that we no longer simply live. But we live. Jesus said, I've come that they might have life and have it abundantly.

Becoming a child of God is the wonder of becoming a Christian. Again, John in his gospel writes, Those who receive Jesus, he gave the power to become children of God.

[22 : 51] Do you know that? Do you know that wonderful love of God the Father in the Lord Jesus? Do you know that wonderful life? That newness of life. That he gives and supplies.

That life that means that we are in communion and fellowship with him. Able to speak with him. Many people feel God seems so distant. Well the reason is the Bible says because we are dead towards God.

Because of sin. But Jesus restores the connection. Jesus in the manger. Or Jesus the everlasting Father.

Jesus in the manger who has no effect upon me. And I can just look on him and walk away. Or Jesus the everlasting Father who breathes and gives new life.

And makes me a child of God. So I know a Father's care like I've never known it before. There's one last thing here. Isn't it one last title? Each one of them is so wonderful.

[23 : 49] And in of itself we could rejoice and delight in them. But when Christ came into the world. He came not only as a wonderful counselor. Speaking to us and making known to us the reality of God. He came not only to be the mighty God.

With power to heal and to break the chains that ensnare us. He came not only as everlasting Father. That we might be wrapped up in the love of God. And given life in its fullness. But he came as the Prince of Peace.

Wherever Jesus went peace followed. People who were troubled in their hearts. Because they had a sick child who was dying. Jesus came into that family and he brought peace.

Peace to those who were outcasts from society. Who were the lepers. Who could not come into contact with anybody else. Jesus came and healed and brought peace. He was truly the man of peace.

Who brings an end to conflict. To battle. And especially warfare and battle with God. That's why again here in Isaiah 9 verse 7.

[24 : 49] There's a picture of the end of battles. It says every warrior's boot used in the battle. Every garment rolled in blood. It's a horrible scene of bloodshed and warfare. It's burnt in the fire.

It's the end. It's the end of warfare. See the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world. Not just to perform the miracle of healing. Or raising the dead.

But he came particularly to perform the miracle. Of bringing peace between men and women and God. On the cross he completed his life's work. Because there he died in your place and mine.

There he took the punishment that you and I deserved. There he as the sinless and perfect son of God. Made peace between us and God. See when we sin.

When we choose to go our own way. And live our lives our own way. We're not simply just being selfish or greedy. But we are alienating ourselves more and more away from the God. Who created us and loves us.

[25 : 48] He is holy. And when we sin we push him away. But Jesus Christ came to bring peace. Because as we push God away. Then we incur his righteous and just anger against our sin.

But Jesus came to take it away. In his death in our place. So that we should no longer be enemies of God. But that rather we should be brought into the family of God. And made right with God.

And friends with God. And children of God. See at the cross. The Lord Jesus not only won peace with God for us. But he won for us real peace. Peace with ourselves.

Peace to know that we are forgiven. Peace with our past. Peace with all that baggage. And all that guilt. That we carry around with us day by day. But pretend through our smile isn't there.

Peace to know. And accept ourselves for who we are in Christ. And through that to bring peace in our relationships with one another. Why is the world in such a mess?

[26 : 49] Why is it that people are killing one another. And fighting with one another. It's because they have no peace with God. Whatever religion they call themselves. And until we have peace with God.

We cannot have peace with ourselves. And peace with one another. But Jesus is the prince of peace. Why is he the prince of peace? He's the royal peace bringer. He's the best peace bringer.

He's the only peace bringer. He's not just the best. But he's the prince of peace. The peace that he gives to those. Who are in conflict.

Within and without. The peace that he brings. To those who are disturbed and distressed. Is a peace which is quieter than the whisper. On an autumn morning.

Jesus is the one who brings peace. So let me ask you again this Christmas morning. Have you got what you wanted for Christmas?

[27 : 47] Have you really got what you wanted for Christmas? Or have you left behind this wonderful gift. The son that God has given. Have you left him in the cradle.

In the manger in Bethlehem. Is he just the Jesus of the crib. Or is he the Jesus of the cross. Is he the Jesus who's the safe baby.

Who's quiet. Or is he the baby. Is he the man who from the. From the cross shouts. It is finished. It's completed. It's accomplished.

It's been done. What do you wish for this Christmas? My prayer and longing for each one of you. And I pray it would be yours as well.

Is that you may receive. And enjoy. And unwrap. The gift of the Lord Jesus Christ. Who is to you the wonderful counselor. He is to you the mighty God.

[28 : 43] To you the everlasting father. And to each and every one of us. The prince of peace. Let's sing our final carol this morning. Oh come all ye faithful.

It means simply this. Come everyone who has faith. Do you have faith in the Lord Jesus. To be all these things to you. It is his desire to be so.

Then come and adore him. Come and enjoy him. Come and worship him. 209. Let's stand as we sing. We'll sing all four verses. Of this carol. Let's sing.

Let's sing. CHOIR SINGS The Grey House

God created. Oh, come let us adore him. Oh, come let us adore him.

[30 : 53] Oh, come let us adore him, Christ alone. Sing, cries of angels.

Sing in exultation. Sing, all ye citizens of heaven.

Glory to God in the highest. Oh, come let us adore him.

Oh, come let us adore him. Oh, come let us adore him, Christ alone.

May God be with me. On his heavenly morning, Jesus, to thee, be glory.

[32 : 04] Lord of the Father, now in fresh appearance. Oh, come let us adore him.

Oh, come let us adore him. Oh, come let us adore him, Christ alone.

Behold, says Jesus, I am coming soon, and my reward is with me. And so we say, Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. tung Making the Kopf accusing Mm