

THE HOPE OF CHRISTMAS: Everlasting Peaceⁱ Isaiah 9:6-7

INTRODUCTION:

Merry Christmas, Trinity! It is good to see you here this morning. If you are a guest with us, thanks for joining us on this Lord's Day. We would love the opportunity to get to know you more. You can help us connect with you by texting the keyword, TBCMP, which stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mount Pleasant, to the number 94-000. When you send that keyword, a link will be sent back to you and that will take you to a short form. When you submit that form, it notifies me, and I look forward to following up with you.

Or feel free to swing by our information center located in the fellowship area. There we have a gift we would love to put in your hands as a way of saying thank you for being our guest today. We are thrilled you have chosen to worship with us today.

SERIES OVERVIEW:

Today we wrap up our teaching series, The Hope of Christmas. So far, we've talked through a promise foretold, and a promise fulfilled, a Wonderful Counselor, and a Mighty God. Today we are looking at everlasting peace.

I have invited Pastor Jeff alongside me this morning. I'm so very grateful for Pastor Jeff. How about you guys?! He has been a blessing to me in my time here at Trinity.

But I had this idea that on Christmas Day I might invite you into a normal session in our week on staff. When I get to studying our passage and preparing my sermon for Sundays, I often get so excited about it that I got into Pastor Jeff's office, and I bounce concepts off of him. And as is always the case, he provides incredible insight into more of what shapes my messages. If you've been around Pastor Jeff any length of time, you know what I'm talking about. He has an unique ability of gaining insight into the application of the bible. So, you're in for a treat today, I hope, as we kind of bounce off of each other this morning.

So, I want to invite you to take your bibles and turn with us to Isaiah chapter 9, as we look at the two final titles given to Jesus, "Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace."

ILLUSTRATION: Inability to understand

Now, I don't know about you, but I have like 2 brain cells and there are often things that people will say or suggest that I don't understand. I think every married man knows what I'm talking about on this.

I can remember one time when Cathy sent me to the store to pick up a few items and one of the things on the list were olives. I couldn't find the olives. I went to the section of the store that had I been the stocker, I would have placed the olives and nothing. So, I had to call her and tell her that Walmart was completely out of olives. To which she said, "Chris, they are in such and such section." Mind blown. Can't comprehend.

I think if there are any two subjects that are difficult for anyone to understand, it's eternity and peace. The two titles of Jesus that we are talking through today.

Think about it, our minds can't begin to fathom the vastness of the universe. How space just goes on forever. How can anything go on forever. Well, Jesus is our everlasting father. Mind blown.

Or think about peace. I came across an article in my study this week published by the NY Times. Of the 3,400 years of recorded human history, the world has only known peace for 268 years. Only 8% of human history has been peaceful.ⁱⁱ 92% of the time there is conflict in the world. Crazy, huh?

But today we are going to try our best to help each of us understand that Jesus came to be our Everlasting Father and our Prince of Peace. So, I thought we'd tackle this morning's message by looking at each of the terms in those titles and then talk through a couple of hopeful application points for us today. And Pastor Jeff, just like we do throughout the week, jump in. Okay?! Awesome.

Let's read Isaiah 9:6-7 and then jump in together. *⁶For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, **Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.** ⁷Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.*

MESSAGE:

Let's first examine...

1) Everlasting Father.

Two words here that are extremely important. Everlasting and Father. Let's first look at the word everlasting and then we will examine the word, Father.

Some translations have the title here as Eternal Father. The idea of everlasting means existing in perpetuity.ⁱⁱⁱ And I know that we mentioned this at last night's Christmas Eve service, but the eternality of Jesus extends in both directions. Not only will He exist in perpetuity from His birth on, but His preexistence extends into eternity past. When Jesus says, and what John recorded in Revelation, I am the Alpha and the Omega, He literally is the beginning and the end. This is something that is extremely challenging to wrap our minds around.

[Give Pastor Jeff an opportunity to add here if he has anything.]

So, we've talked about the everlasting component to this title for the Messiah. Now, let's look at the father aspect. There's so much to say here. Let's see if we can break it down.

We know these titles are given to Jesus, who is the Messiah. So, is Jesus saying that He is the Father? No. We know that while the Bible doesn't not use the term Trinity, the teachings of the Trinity are evident all throughout the Scriptures. That is that the Godhead is one God existing in three distinct persons, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. We know Jesus to be God the Son, He is not God the Father. This is another topic that is very hard for us as humans to understand about God.

There is a heresy, Pastor Jeff, known as modalism. We believe in one God existent in three persons. Modalism is one God, one person. So, those subscribing to modalism believe that sometimes God shows up as Father, sometimes as the Son, and other times as the Holy Spirit. Same person, just one that wears a different hat here and there. But that's not what The Bible teaches.

To say that Jesus is the everlasting Father is not saying that Jesus is God the Father. No, it is talking about a couple different things.^{iv} First, to say that Jesus is Father is to say that...

A) He is the originator of.

My kids say (O.G.) all the time to refer to something that is original. Jesus is the original. The O.G. But more than that, when you apply that idea to the title, Everlasting Father, it means that Jesus is the original, the originator of everlasting. In other words, He is the creator of eternity, the source of that which is eternal.

[Give Pastor Jeff an opportunity to add anything here.] – Satan is the Father of lies... The Granddaddy of them all (bowl games)... etc.

So, to say that Jesus is the Everlasting Father is to say that He is the originator of that which is eternal. But to also call Jesus Father is to describe His...

B) Type of reign.

In other words, Jesus reigns not as a dictator or an elected official. Jesus rules and reigns in a fatherly way, caring and compassionate. Isaiah 49:15 says, *"¹⁵Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you."* I read one commentator say about this that God almost has to leave the analogy of a father and go to motherhood to help us grasp this.^v There is not a mother in the world that would forget her nursing child. There is no mother in the world that would not have compassion on her child. It is beyond this that Jesus cares for us.

Pastor Jeff, our world has such a distorted view of fathers today, or even of manhood. You teach Fireside, a Men's Bible Study here at Trinity. Talk about this idea from a manhood perspective.

So, to say that Jesus is Everlasting Father means that He is eternal AND He is a father to us. We are going to come back to this in the application in just a minute. But we have another name to talk through this morning...

2) Prince of Peace.

Again, there are two terms in this title, Prince and peace. Let's first examine the word, "Prince."

We understand that a Prince is a person of royalty. But in the original language, the word translated, "Prince," is a word that means chief, captain, ruler, governor.^{vi} The word in the Hebrew is the word, "sar." I point that out to you so

that you can hear the word and understand how it is applied in other contexts. For example, the head of the Roman Empire was Caesar, a form of sar. Russians have referred to their leaders as Czar. That's the word.

Now, that's important because we have a tendency to think of a prince as a son of a king. But this word carries way more than that. It is talking about a point leader, ruler, chief. Jesus is chief, king.

The second word in this title is the word, "shalom," peace. So, quite literally, Jesus is the ruler of peace.

Think back, just for a moment, to the Luke 2 birth narrative. The angels appeared to the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night, announcing the birth of Jesus. Luke 2:12-14. *12And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.*¹³*And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 14"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth **peace** among those with whom he is pleased!"* The coming of Jesus was an announcement of peace.

Now, we would say this all sounds great and wonderful, but why isn't that the case? Why are we not experiencing peace right now. Didn't Jesus come over 2,000 years ago?

Well, the word "shalom," portrays way more than what we typically think of in the word peace. What are ways that we typically think of peace? Sitting calmly by a river getting some peace and quiet. We think of the absence of conflict. But that's not the picture the word, "shalom" gives.

Shalom is the concept of wholeness, completeness.^{vii} Let me give you an example. Remember when you were driving on vacation or somewhere and the kids went to fighting in the back of the minivan?! No? Just me? Sound like it's too fresh?! Sorry about that. In those moments, you would yell above all the arguing and say something like, "Quiet! You better shut up or I'm pulling this van over!" What happens then? It's quiet, right? But is there peace? No. Why? Because the relationship between the kids is still strained. It's quiet but there's no peace. There's no longer conflict, but there's not peace. You get the picture?

But the peace that Jesus brings is a restorative peace, true resolution. Jesus is our Prince of true peace!

[Pastor Jeff talk about how Jesus transcends conflict in our lives to bring peace.]

So, we have talked through Jesus being our Everlasting Father and our Prince of Peace. In the short amount of time we have left, I want to talk through some...

3) Application Points.

Just two takeaways from today's message.

A) Allow The Lord to be Your Father.

Now, I know that as I say that it conjures up a variety of emotions. For some of you, you have a good relationship with your dad. You have fond memories of time with your earthly father. But for others, you don't. Perhaps your dad was non-existent, maybe your relationship with your dad was filled with strife, or maybe your dad was there physically but absent emotionally. The thought of allowing Jesus to be your father does not excite you. But here's the deal... God is calling you to see things differently today.

[Pastor Jeff talk about how our view of God is often informed by our view of our earthly dads. Then talk about the difference between seeing God through the lens of your earthly father and seeing your earthly father through the lens of God].

That's so good, Pastor Jeff. Jesus is a good, good, Father. We can trust Him and allow Him to be our Father. The second takeaway is...

B) Allow The Lord to Give you Peace.

Some of us here today are crying out for peace. If we're honest, our lives are filled with turmoil. And what we need is not just quiet, we need restoration. This, my friends, is the beauty of Christmas. Jesus is the gift of exactly what we need.

Max Lucado once said, "If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent an educator. If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent a scientist. If our greatest need had been money, God would have

sent us an economist. But since our greatest need was forgiveness, God sent us a Savior.”

The truth is that we need peace. We don't need tranquility and quiet, we need restoration. The Bible says that in our sin we were actually opposed, at war, with God. But in the gift of Christmas, we have restoration with God.

CONCLUSION:

Jared, why don't you come back up here and lead us in a time of response.

Jeff, thanks so much for joining me today. This was fun!

Here's the deal. I'd love to introduce you to Jesus today. I can't think of any better way to spend Christmas than to come to faith in the one that Christmas is all about! Pastor Jeff and I will be here at the front excited to receive you this morning and share with you what it means to make Jesus your Lord and Savior.

Perhaps others of you are in need to peace. You need an Everlasting Father to guide you and direct you. Would you allow us to pray with you and over you this morning?

I'm going to pray, we will stand and sing, but let's respond to Jesus. [Pray]

ENDNOTES:

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- ⁱ Works consulted in preparation of this message: Brian Hedges, “*He Shall be Called: Everlasting Father*,” sermon preached at Redeemer Church, December 12, 2021, accessed online: <https://redeemer.ch/sermons/everlasting-father/>; Brian Hedges, “*He Shall Be Called: Prince Of Peace*,” sermon preached at Redeemer Church, December 19, 2021, accessed online: <https://redeemer.ch/sermons/prince-of-peace/>; Scott Rodgers, “*He Will Be Called #3*,” sermon preached at Life Church, accessed online: <https://open.life.church/resources/1304-he-will-be-called/>; Craig Groeschel, “*He Will Be Called #4*,” sermon preached at Life Church, accessed online: <https://open.life.church/resources/1304-he-will-be-called/>; J.D. Greear, “*Hope Has A Name: Everlasting Father*,” sermon preached at Summit Church, accessed online: <https://summitchurch.com/message/everlasting-father/>; Raudel Hernandez, “*Hope Has A Name: Prince of Peace*,” sermon preached at Summit Church, accessed online: <https://summitchurch.com/series/hope-has-a-name/>; Skip Heitzig, “*Peace of Earth – At Last*,” message taught Sunday, March 28, 2021 at Calvary Albuquerque, accessed online: <https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/series/312/sermon/4555/>; Skip Heitzig, “*His Kingdom Foretold*,” message preached Sunday, December 27, 2015 at Calvary Albuquerque, accessed online: <https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/series/276/sermon/3661/>.
- ⁱⁱ Chris Hedges, “What Every Person Should Know About War,” article published by The New York Times, July 6, 2003, accessed online: <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/07/06/books/chapters/what-every-person-should-know-about-war.html>.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Strong’s Concordance, 5703.
- ^{iv} These two ways were referenced in Skip Heitzig’s message, “*Peace of Earth – At Last*.”
- ^v J.D. Greear points this out.
- ^{vi} Strong’s 8269.
- ^{vii} Strong’s 7965.