

For to us a child is born

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[0 : 0 0] Well, good morning, everyone. Merry Christmas. Good to see you all. If you don't know, I'm Nick. I'm the pastor here at St. Mark's, and if you're a visitor with us, it's great to have you. We love having visitors, especially on such an important day where we celebrate and remember why Jesus came to this world.

There's a large company overseas that receives a number of job applications and CVs each year from applicants. So boys and girls, CVs are basically when a person applies for a job, they have to write down what they're good at and what they like and what they don't like and what jobs they've done before, things like that.

That's called a CV. I'm sure you'll write your own CVs in years to come. But this company's HR department collected some of the funniest statements that they read in CVs over the years, which they've now published online.

And so the following that I'm going to read out are actual statements applicants made that are actual statements included in their CVs. So one of them, in describing his past job, said, Responsibilities in my previous job included recruiting, interviewing, and executing candidates.

Another, in explaining the reason for leaving their previous job, said this, After receiving advice from several different angels, I've decided to pursue a new line of work.

[1 : 1 7] Another boasted of being bilingual in three languages, while still another, listing their strengths, said, Excellent memory, strong aptitude for numbers, excellent memory.

And this one was my favorite. Under other interests, one applicant said, My interests include cooking dogs and interesting people. Amazing the difference a comic in me.

But you'll know if you've ever worked in an HR department, Not everyone that applies for a job is fit for the job. Sometimes it's really hard to find the right person, especially when the job is an important one.

Well, at Christmas time, we celebrate the birth of a king. Now that is one important job, isn't it? Especially this king, because this wasn't just any king.

He wasn't just born to be the king of one nation. He was born to be the king of your life and mine. And I'm sure you'd agree. You're not going to let just anyone fill that position, right?

[2 : 1 6] And so that's why, before Jesus even came, hundreds of years before, God decided to send us his CV. Ahead of time, through the prophets, God told us what this coming king was going to be like, And just why he is so capable to rule.

And that's what these four names in Isaiah 9 verse 6 are there to do. We've been looking this whole month at each of these four very significant names. That the Messiah, who turns out to be Jesus Christ, is called by the prophet Isaiah hundreds of years before he came.

And we've been looking at each of these names because they are here in the Bible to convince you why Jesus is qualified to be in charge of your life. And if he is not yet in charge of your life, I'm hoping this morning that going over these points on his CV will help you to see why he is even more qualified for that job than you are.

So let's look at them. The first name on his CV is Wonderful Counselor. Now a counselor is basically someone who helps you to make wise decisions in life.

And wisdom is defined as choosing the right course of action for the best possible outcome. Because we have to make a lot of decisions. We've got to make a lot of choices in life, don't we?

[3 : 33] But we're not always sure what the best choice is. And lots of the decisions you make will matter. The choices you make will affect where you live, who you marry, where you end up in life.

Important decisions. But there are also some decisions in life even more important than those ones. Decisions that will affect where you end up in eternity. Decisions about what to believe, who to listen to, who to worship, whether to worship or bother with that at all.

How do you make those decisions? What criteria do you use? In all the different religions out there in the world, how do you know what's true and what isn't? When they're all saying different things.

How can you really know what's on the other side of death? You see, when it comes to those questions, we're actually in the dark, aren't we? It's like being in a big dark room after ESCOM has just loadshitted and turned all the lights off.

And we're walking, imagine, a room full of people but there's absolutely no light. And you're walking around in this room and people are all bumping into each other because they're walking in different directions. And then you hear some people trying to lead groups and say, no, follow me, this is the right way.

[4 : 42] And other people going, no, follow me, this is the right way. And they're all bumping into each other and they're fighting about whose way is right and whose way is wrong because they're all actually in the dark. Well, that is what the world is like when it comes to religion.

And yet Isaiah predicted something was going to happen to change that situation when he prophesied this. I quote, he says, the people walking in darkness have seen a great light.

And so he was saying that one day he was prophesying. God was giving him this clue as to what was going to happen in the future. And he was saying one day light was going to come and take away all that darkness and confusion so that if we respond to that light, we can find a way out of the darkness.

And we can know what we're doing here, what this life's about and where we're going. Well, when Jesus came 700 years later, he said these words, I quote from John 8, I am the light of the world.

See, I am the one, he's saying I'm the one that God sent to light the way out of the darkness like the prophet Isaiah said would come. And then he didn't just say that, he proved it to us.

[5 : 46] He proved that he was who he said in his miraculous signs and ultimately his ultimate miraculous sign rising from the dead. See, that proved to us that his words were true.

He wasn't just saying this, he was the one prophesied. He was the one that can lead us out of the darkness and the confusion. And so that's the first reason he's more qualified to run your life than you are because he's the light in the darkness.

He knows how you can live your life wisely for the best eternal outcome that you can't possibly know yourself. That's the first name. The second name is Mighty God. Now, have you ever wondered why we have so many superhero movies?

Why our culture loves the ideas, the idea of superheroes so much? We just love them. I mean, there's the Marvel movie series made more money than any other movie series ever.

Why do we love superheroes so much? Well, because I think we realize we can't fight evil by ourselves because evil is strong. You only have to look at all the bad things happening in the world to see that.

[6 : 49] It's too strong for us to fight. We need a hero who is stronger than ourselves to fight evil. And that's what the Hebrew word mighty means.

In that name, mighty God. Mighty literally means hero. Someone who is stronger than us, who can rescue us from the evil that is too powerful for us to fight. But not just the evil out there in the world.

Also, he can rescue us from the evil in here, in our hearts. Our sin that causes us to do things we know are wrong and yet we still do them.

In fact, listen to how this mighty hero is described a few verses before in Isaiah 9 verse 4. It's said that he will shatter the yoke that burdens us, the bar across our shoulders and the rod of our oppressor.

Now, when the Israelites originally heard that, they would have assumed it was talking about the Assyrian and the Babylonian armies who were at that time invading their country and capturing their people into captivity, making them slaves.

[7 : 48] But it turns out, as we read on in the Bible, that Isaiah was actually talking about a much bigger, more evil slave driver, and that is sin. The Bible says, by nature, we are slaves to sin.

We can't but sin. I mean, I can prove that to you. Try keep the Ten Commandments for one week and tell me how you do. See, we can't not sin, especially after Jesus showed us how we break those commandments in our hearts even before we do in our actions.

By ourselves, we are slaves to sin. And so we need a hero to break its power over us, which is exactly what Jesus does in the lives of those who trust and follow him.

He breaks the power of sin over their lives. It's an amazing liberation that a person can have when they come to trust and follow Jesus. Third name that is given to Jesus in this passage is everlasting father.

Because, you know, there is one need that every human being has in order to live properly. And I'm not talking about a physical need like air or water, but an emotional need, which is just as important.

[8 : 59] And we often don't realize we need it. And yet we really, really do. And you know what that is? It's the need to be loved unconditionally. That's why parents are such an important part of people's lives.

Your parents are the people who you know will always love you unconditionally, even if no one else will. Boys and girls, you can know that your parents will never stop loving you. Even that time you decided to paint the lounge floor or set fire to your mom's prized bonsai tree or whatever it was.

You see, your parents don't throw you out when you do things like that, do they? Now, that doesn't mean you should do things like that. But it does mean that even when you do bad things, you know that your parents still love you.

And that's an assurance that a child should have as they grow up. Because that's what parents do. And so when Jesus is called everlasting father, it's saying that although he is a king come to rule, he acts towards the people under his rule like a parent, like a father.

Which means that if you are one of his people, if he's your king, you can know that he loves you unconditionally. No matter what you do.

[10 : 12] And the reason for that, it seems strange that a king who must bring justice to the world can also love people like you and me, sinners, unconditionally. The reason, and it's so important, the reason he can and the reason he does love his people unconditionally is because he did another thing that parents are willing to do for their children.

He gave his life to save yours. When he died on the cross, he took the sins of his people on himself. He got punished for their sin, all of it, past, present, and future.

So that if he is your king, all of your sin, all of it that you've committed, that you still will commit, has already been paid for if you trust in Jesus. And so as the apostle Paul says, nothing you ever do can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

If you're saved, if Jesus is in charge of your life, that means you're in the family of God unconditionally and nothing you ever do can get you disqualified from that. It's not based on what you do, your position in that family, but it's based on what Jesus did for you if you put your faith in that.

So that's the third name, everlasting father. Then his final name, prince of peace. Now human beings have invented a lot of cool stuff, haven't they? It's amazing what we can do.

[11 : 30] We can send people into space. We can send messages instantly to people on the other side of the planet. I'm sure today many people will be having Skype calls or WhatsApp calls with family on the other side of the planet instantly as if they're in the same room.

It's amazing what we can do. We've figured out how to do a lot of useful stuff, but there's one thing that humans have never been able to figure out. You know what that is? Peace. We still haven't cracked that one.

We still have as much fighting going on in our world as we've ever had. It's estimated more people have been killed in wars in the past hundred years than in all the previous wars combined. We just can't seem to figure out how to be at peace, and not just politically.

In our own lives too, we just can't seem to figure out how to be at true peace. Can we? It's very easy to fight with other people. It's very difficult to be at peace with them.

Even within families, brothers and sisters fight, don't they? I know. I'm a dad of a brother and a sister. Moms and dads fight. I know.

[12 : 32] I'm a dad. But you see, the reason that we're so susceptible to fighting and why peace is so difficult, the reason we struggle to have peace in our lives and in our world is because by nature we're not at peace with the God who made us.

And we can never have true peace with other creatures and human beings if we're not first at peace with our Creator. That's where it all starts. That's where peace has to start, in our relationship with God.

But by nature we aren't at peace with God, the Bible says. In fact, we are at war with God by nature. We resist His rule in our lives. We rebel against Him. We want to run our own lives, don't we?

We don't want God in charge, even though He knows much better how we should live, because He made us. And hearing the instructions from the manufacturer is always the better way to do something, because the manufacturer knows what the product is made for.

God knows what your life was made for, and so He's the best person to be in charge of it. And yet we don't want that. We want ourselves to be in charge. We want to be able to call the shots and look where we've landed up.

[13 : 39] We don't listen to God, and yet we still wonder why we're never satisfied. We still wonder why we're chasing things. We still wonder why we're still frustrated.

Why we're never at peace? Well, that's because we're at war with God. But you see, the Bible also talks about a world to come. A wonderful, beautiful world that's real, and that is coming when Jesus comes back.

And in that world, it says humans will know true peace. We will know what peace is like, both outside in our relationships with other people, and peace inside in our hearts.

No unfulfilled desires, no frustrations. But that world of true peace will only be possible because Jesus died for our sins so that we can have peace with our Creator first.

And that needs to happen first before we can be in that world to come. We need to be at peace with God first through Jesus so that we don't have to fear His punishment and so that we have a real relationship with Him in this life and in the life to come.

[14 : 43] And this new world where Jesus will rule as King, it will never see war or conflict. It will have no suffering, no death, because the cause of all those things, our sin, will be no more.

The question I want to leave you with today, this Christmas, is are you going to be part of that new world where Jesus will be King?

Are you going to be there? The Bible talks about that new world to come. It is set in our future as a species. That new world is coming. God has planned it.

The whole Bible is about His plan to bring a new world of peace. But are you going to be there? Are you going to be in that world where Jesus is King? Well, you know what? You can tell by seeing if Jesus is King of your life now.

And I hope that as you've considered His CV this morning, as you've seen His qualifications to be your King, I hope you see why Jesus is far more qualified to be in charge of your life than anyone else, even you.

[15 : 43] And I hope that in response, this Christmas, as you celebrate His birth, you will give Him His rightful place as your King. Let's pray. Yes, Lord Jesus, we thank You so much that You are alive and You hear our prayers right now.

We thank You that You rose from the dead and ascended to glory to return one day and to bring Your new world. And we thank You, Lord, that You've given us a way to that world of peace and joy, that world we always know that we were made for and yet we don't see in this world.

Thank You that it is coming. Thank You that You are bringing it. And thank You that we, even as sinners, can have a place in that new world because of what You did for us on the cross. I pray, Lord, that You would help us all as we leave this place and celebrate Your birth.

Help us all, Lord, to trust in what You did for us on the cross and to follow You as our rightful King in charge of our lives. Amen. Amen. Amen.