

A Lesson from the Humble King
Isaiah 9:6-7; Philippians 2:5-11
December 11, 2013 – Advent 2

***Isaiah 9:6-7** 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 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.*

***Philippians 2:5-11** Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Unless you are the most egotistical person alive, there is someone in this world that you admire and would like to meet. Maybe that person is a political figure, a sports star, an actor or actress. That person might be a prominent evangelist, a popular singer, or a stock car driver. Whoever it might be, all of us have someone we look up to, someone we kind of idolize, or someone we would like to be like.

Now, imagine that person is coming to your house. He or she is coming to dinner at your house. What would life be like the week before that dinner engagement? I imagine you would be cleaning the dust out of every nook and cranny. You would unpack the good china and shine up the silver. You'd make sure the table cloth was neatly pressed. The menu would be out of this world. And you would do all this because you want to honor your guest.

Tonight, we stop to remind ourselves that Jesus is the one we want to meet at Christmas. Jesus is the one, who should be motivating us to put on our best, do our best, be our best. No matter whom you had in mind a moment ago, when we talked about a special dinner guest, Jesus is greater. To invite Jesus into your life is to invite the ultimate guest.

Part of the reason we lose the wonder of Christmas is because we focus on a baby in a manger. We all like babies. Babies touch our hearts in a special way. But babies aren't awe-inspiring. We don't tend to see babies as greater than ourselves. So, instead of focusing on the baby in the manger, we need to see the king in the manger.

Isaiah says: *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 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* (Is 9:6-7).

Let's take a closer look at what Isaiah had to say about this baby.

Isaiah calls Jesus the Wonderful Counselor. Jesus knows the hearts and minds of all people. There are several places in the New Testament that say Jesus knew what was in the people's hearts or he knew what the people were thinking.

Jesus understands human nature and human predicaments better than any human ever has. Jesus knows our needs and he knows how to meet our needs. Jesus knows us so well that he can eliminate the confusion in our lives. He does that by giving us eternal vision. He calms today by reminding us of tomorrow. The counsel he gives is completely trustworthy.

That's why Bible study is so important. The closer you are to God's Word, the more you will realize you are holding all the answers in your hand. Scripture is the key to life's situations because Scripture brings us into contact with our Wonderful Counselor.

Next, Isaiah tells us that Jesus is Mighty God. It's important that we don't add any words to that description. The Bible doesn't tell us that Jesus is like God or he is to be thought of as God. The Bible says that Jesus is God. The power of God is his. The sovereignty of God is his. That means worry is out the window because Jesus is in control. With Jesus, there is no chaos. The promises he makes, he keeps. His kingdom lasts forever.

John MacArthur writes this about Jesus, the Mighty God: *Christ the King loves to step into a life of chaos and not only provide wonderful counsel, but also display his divine power by bringing order to the chaos. In other words, he not only tells his subjects what to do as a Wonderful Counselor but he also energizes them to do it – because he is the Mighty God. He is God and because he is God, he can forgive sin, defeat Satan, liberate people from the power of evil, redeem them, answer their prayers, restore their broken souls, and reign over a rebuilt life, bringing order to our chaos.*

Isaiah also uses the term, Everlasting Father. The problem with our elected officials

is that they are always running for office; always trying to get re-elected. There are very few statesmen today. A statesman does what is right without regard for what other people think. Since politicians are always running for office, too many decisions are made according to popular opinion rather than right and wrong.

Jesus is not elected. His term never ends. Therefore, he rules by righteousness, not public opinion. Jesus wasn't Savior and Mighty God only while his was here on earth. Jesus is King forever.

He is also our Father. Like all good fathers, he loves us enough to protect us, he loves us enough to discipline us, he loves us enough to give us all good things, he loves us enough to tell us no, and he loves us enough to never leave us or forsake us.

As the Prince of Peace, Jesus came to earth to reconcile, to bind up broken relationships. Jesus reconciles sinful men and women to God. Jesus reconciles sinful people with their pasts, no matter what their pasts might be. Jesus reconciles ethnic groups, age groups, economic groups, and gender groups. Jesus came to earth to heal wounds, and he has the power to do just that.

Let's go back to the dinner invitation. Whatever special person you have in mind, not one of them can hold a candle to Jesus. His greatness exceeds all others. And, if all you can see in the manger is a baby, you will miss the most astonishing part of the Incarnation. That baby is true royalty. We don't go to the manger to see a baby. We go to the manger to see the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

When we see the true identity of the baby in the manger, our worship becomes reverent. Our respect for the infant skyrockets. And we are willing to derail all our human plans in order to show him how much we value him.

We have done this study on the identity of the King in the manger so we might learn something about being humble. You have to have a good grasp on the Incarnation, in order to understand what it meant for Jesus to be one of us.

Let's now turn to our reading from Philippians: *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross* (Philipp 2:5-11).

Hear what Paul is saying. Even though Jesus is fully God, even though all the power, honor and privilege are his, he laid all that aside to be born as one of us. He

didn't stop being God. He just refused to draw upon what was rightfully his.

Jesus could have called legions of angels to his aid – but he didn't. Jesus could have struck down his accusers with just a word – but he didn't. He laid aside his rights as God so he might become a human. Furthermore, he did all of this willingly. No one had to force Jesus to become one of us. No one had to force Jesus to die an agonizing death for us. He willingly gave up all that was his so that hateful, rebellious mankind could have eternal life.

This Christmas, if you would like to give that King in the manger the best present possible, take a lesson from him. Now that we have considered the lengths that Jesus went for us, let that be our benchmark in how we approach other people.

Most people will tell you that the joy of Christmas is in giving, not receiving. That's true – not only at Christmas but all year long. But there is more to giving than giving. The attitude of the gift always overshadows the gift.

The wonderful blessings of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection are all ours. Because of him we have forgiveness, salvation, everlasting life, and a new relationship with the Father. But the attitude of the gift overshadows the gift. All of these things are ours because Jesus loves us more than he loved his own earthly life.

This Christmas, as we give gifts to our loved ones, as we help those less fortunate than ourselves, as we serve other people, as we spend time on our knees praying for other people, remember that the attitude of the gift always overshadows the gift. This year, conduct all your dealings with other people with the same humble attitude that it took for Jesus to become one of us.

This year, may your gift to the baby in the manger be the same humble attitude that it took for the King of the universe to meet you at the manger.