

Christmas 2025 Series –*Live A Merry Christmas!*

#2 – Christmas Promises!

His name was Artie. I was new to the ministry., just a teenager. A family member that went to our church asked us to visit Artie. I did. Got to know him. Enjoyed him.

Then, the diagnosis came. Artie had terminal cancer, and time was short. I went back to visit him specifically to talk to him about his soul.

After visiting a few minutes, I addressed the diagnosis. “Artie, I understand time is short. I need to know that you know how to be prepared for eternity. Can I talk to you about that?”

He was gracious, and agreed. I explained the gospel, and when I was finished, asked, “Artie, do you have any questions?”

He said no.

I continued, “Artie, have you ever trusted Jesus as your personal Savior?”

He was thoughtful, and then shared a response that I’ve never forgotten.

“Preacher, when I was little my folks told me things about Christmas. More or less promised me they were true, and I believed it with all my heart.

Then, one day, I found out they weren’t.

Ever since, I’ve had a hard time believing promises that seem too good to be true. I’d like to believe that what you shared is true, but I just have a hard time...”

He was honest and polite, but didn’t make a decision that day. I thanked him, and left. It was the last time I saw him alive.

We got the call. “Artie’s passed away”.

His words haunted me. I hope to this day that somewhere between our conversation and his death, Artie trusted Jesus. I can hope. I guess one day I’ll know.

Promises.

- There is something about them **that strums a chord in our hearts. That fans a flicker of hope.**
- **Yet, so often, for whatever reason, they fall short.**

Some of you will perhaps remember the lullaby that parents sing to comfort their little ones... **It illustrates the almost impossible**

struggle between loving desires and endless disappointments...

Hush Little Baby

*Hush, little baby, don't say a word,
Mama's gonna buy you a mockingbird.
And if that mockingbird don't sing,
Mama's gonna buy you a diamond ring.
And if that diamond ring turns brass,
Mama's gonna buy you a looking glass.
And if that looking glass is broke,
Mama's gonna buy you a billy goat,
And on and on... Until finally...
So hush little baby, don't you cry.
Daddy loves you and so do I.*

- After **so many disappointments** – people told **so many things by so many sources** – **it is increasingly hard to believe ANYTHING!**
- **Even this season** heralds promises of ‘love, joy, peace, hope’. Yet, even in the midst and often afterwards, **it leaves a void... Unfulfilled hopes. Unrealized promises no season can deliver.**

- **To the Arties** who have **been disappointed and have a hard time believing**
- **To each individual who has heard promises of all kinds**, and **yet still yearns for words worth believing,**
- **To everyone with that hunger of hope whispering from their heart,**

Behind the glitz and glamour of Christmas, there are promises that are real. Promises made, promises kept. Promises you can dare to believe!

Some of us have an Artie memory — a moment when disappointment bruised belief. **Christmas is the invitation to believe again... not in people... but in God.**

Our theme is, Live A Merry Christmas!

We learned last week that “**Merry**” means, “**Mighty, powerful, strong**”. Merry doesn’t mean **bubbly**... it means **bold with God’s power**

A “Merry Christmas” isn’t shallow — it’s seismic.

That is what we pray for you!

This morning, let’s talk about promises. **Christmas Promises!**

Context:

We turn to the Word of God revealed through the prophet Isaiah. It was written more than 700 years before the birth of Jesus!

Isaiah saw glimpses of glorious wonder, promises. He saw...

- Jesus on His Throne – Isaiah 6. Holy Holy Holy! Isaiah 6.
- A Virgin who would have a son whose name would be **Immanuel**. God – High and Holy – Would **be born** and God Would **Be With Us!** 7:14
- Jesus on the Cross. So torn and bloody he was unrecognizable. Suffering the undiluted wrath of God to reconcile those who deserved that wrath. 53.
- Jesus ruling over His kingdom on earth, promises fulfilled, peace reigning.

Then, there is our text for the day: **Isaiah saw Jesus born and what that birth would mean to the world! To us.**

“Promises. Promises. Promises.”

That is what we often hear from those who’ve heard all kinds of promises but been left disappointed.

But with Isaiah - these promises – As incredible, seemingly impossible, almost unbelievable as they sound – ARE

- **Promises made.**
- **Promises kept.**
- **Promises yet to be kept! (The story isn’t over!)**

I. The Promise of Hope. Vs. 2

A. The Peculiar Wording.

Something in the **distant future** is recorded as having already happened. Why?

When God makes a promise, He doesn’t speak in maybes.

Heaven speaks in past tense about future things — because the **Eternal God** who created the boundaries of our time – Past, present, future – lives **beyond them.**

In God’s mind, **obedience has already met outcome.**

It is done. **Just waiting to be played out in our world of time.**

B. The People

“walked in darkness”

“dwell in the land of the shadow of death”

Born in darkness. Bound by sin. No escape in sight.

That’s us. Everybody.

C. The Problem

Death and darkness are powerless to change.

Any **promise** from **within that darkness** can be **no greater than the source** from which it comes.

“Dwelling” - not just a passing through, **but life**. There was no escaping it.

“land of the shadow of death” – A world that had been **totally touched** and torched by sin

D. The Promises: **“seen a great light”, “Upon them hath the light shined.”**

- Light.
- Life.

Something, or better, **Someone** not tainted or limited by this world **entered it**. Faced it. And forever made a way to escape it:

John 1 – This was John’s explanation decades after experiencing Jesus:

9. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

10. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

13. Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

14. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...

“made flesh... dwelt among us”?

Isaiah, 700 years before, explained.

II. The Promise of Him. Christmas. Vs. 6-7.

"For unto us..."

No one is left out!

You. Me. Artie.

"a child is born" – The ***Story we celebrate*** was nothing more than a wild dream as Isaiah wrote... **A PROMISE.**

A virgin?

A baby with no earthly father?

Immanuel. GOD with us?!

"a son was given" –

They probably couldn't fathom that one. But later, God would explain.

The child born

- **To a virgin –**
- **In a manger.**
- **That made angels sing, shepherds wonder and wise men worship,**

Was God's Son, given of infinite love to make it possible for us to receive His love!

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that WHOSESOEVER believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life" John 3:16

It's Christmas!

Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without gifts/presents under the tree!
(We'll cover that next week!)

What are some of those presents just waiting for us to unwrap and experience?

"the government shall be upon his shoulder"

Jesus, the Messiah, would be **the ultimate King**, bearing the complete weight and authority of ruling God's eternal kingdom, bringing perfect justice, peace, and righteous administration, contrasting with flawed human governments.

“His name”: (His essence)

- **Wonderful Counselor:**

- “Wonderful” – Hebrew - pele’, “peh'-leh”; a miracle:—marvellous thing, To “wonder, marvel”
- “Counselor”: ONE WHO “advises”; One who can connect and lead, provide answers, wisdom. **Not just how, but WHO!**
- **“Wisdom + Wonder!**

- **Mighty God** - *authority + sufficiency*

- *He is greater than our wants – He knows and can provide for our greatest needs*
- *He is greater than even our dreams – He has bigger dreams for each and every one of us.*
- *He- Jesus- Savior -Redeemer – Is THE MIGHTY GOD for each and every one of us who trust Him!*

- **Everlasting Father**

- **Father?**
- **Father forever?**
- **Some of us didn’t have a father who stayed. Some had one who tried but couldn’t save us from the world. Christmas whispers: This Father never leaves.**

- **Prince of Peace: Reigning Reconciliation!**

You might be thinking, **“But, it sounds to good to be true... Promise?!”**

Oh yeah! These Christmas Promises are God’s promises,

- **Promises already experienced by everyone who has received** God’s Gift: Jesus!
“the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
- **Promises waiting to be experienced as we experience Him!**

But, there’s one more thing Isaiah revealed. One more promise – staggering, almost unbelievable, seemingly impossible – **that is just waiting to be fulfilled:**

III. The Promise Of A Coming Savior and King.

“The Rest Of The Story!” Vs. 7!

Luke 1:33. “And He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end!”

The Christ of Christmas is coming again- Maybe today!!

What difference does that make?

How should that reality impact the way we think and act?

Howard Thurman, in his The Work of Christmas, framed it well:

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,

The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers,
To make music in the heart.

Christmas is not the end of the story: It's validation. It's now!

Promises made. Promises Kept.

The Spotlight on the Savior. On the God you can trust.

Someone you can believe in!

The assurance that the King is coming back.

Promises. Promises. Promises....

A Mighty, Merry Christmas is one full of Christmas promises. God's promises...

- All true.
- For all people. For you. For me.
- All waiting to be believed... and then unleashed.
- All guaranteed by a God who has never lied.

Artie's season ended. Ours hasn't. Heaven is still offering Christmas to the heart.

Will you...

1. Accept the "gift of God which is eternal life in Jesus"?
2. Live fully. Live in the abundance of ***Who He is*** and ***What's He's done?***

One of my new favorite songs- "If I Got Jesus!"

3. Live looking for a coming King and Kingdom?