

# A SAVIOR IS BORN

## Surprised by Hope

### Part 1

I was thinking about how easily  
Christmas seems to sneak up on us.  
I don't know if you are ready for it.  
I am!!!

Christmas is the time for trimming trees and stringing lights  
and drinking hot chocolate  
and setting up the nativity scene.  
It's a time when we sing "Joy to the world"  
and we pray for peace on earth and good will towards men.

Christmas is *supposed* to be the most wonderful time of the year.  
Yet we know that people struggle  
more with discouragement and depression during the holidays  
than at any other time of the year.

One survey reported that forty five percent of all Americans  
dread the Christmas season because it's just another reminder of  
an absent loved one, a lost job, a painful divorce, or unrealized  
dreams as just one more year passes us by.

So, what can we do to get through these holiday blues?

That's what I want to talk to you about this morning.  
I think you can sum the answer up in one word.  
It's the word *hope*.  
Hope is the essential ingredient for an abundant life.  
The kind of life that Jesus wants for us.  
It's essential.

The Bible says in Proverbs 13:12

*“Hope deferred makes the heart sick . . .”* We need hope.

Dr. Viktor Frankl was in the Auschwitz prison camp during World War II.

As a psychiatrist he was interested in what it was that enabled some people to survive the rigors and the cruelty while others did not.

He wrote down his findings in a book called Man’s Search for Meaning.

Listen to what he says about the power of hope:

*“The prisoner who had lost faith in the future, his future was doomed. With his loss of belief in the future he also lost his spiritual hold. He let himself decline and became subject to mental and physical decay.”*

Hope is a powerful force in the human heart.

But it can dissipate so quickly especially during the Christmas season. But, there is hope.

I’m not talking about a feeling of optimism where you’re kind of trying to pump yourself up about the future.

Because for some of you .....things aren’t okay right now. So, I don’t want to sound disingenuous

But I believe that true and lasting hope is available to everyone and is the direct result of a personal, intimate relationship with Jesus Christ.

See, Jesus was so much more  
than a baby born two thousand years ago  
to a poor family on the outskirts of nowhere.  
There's something very different about the Christ child.  
When you discover those differences  
you'll be surprised by hope.

Seven hundred years before Jesus was born,  
a prophet declared the qualities of the coming Savior.  
Look at what he said in

**Isaiah 9:6**

*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.*

These four qualities describe the coming Savior  
who we know to be none other than Jesus Christ.  
Jesus was the child who was born over 2,000 years ago.  
Jesus was the Son that was given.  
And when you put your faith in him,  
believing these qualities, you'll be surprised by hope.  
So, let's take a look at them.

The first quality that Isaiah used to describe the coming Savior  
is wonderful counselor.

Jesus as my counselor reveals God's love for me.  
I want you to write that down.

**QUALITY 1:**

**Jesus as my counselor reveals God's love for me.**

He reveals God's love for me and for me and for you.

Jesus has no need for counselors or advisors.  
Being God, he's omniscient.  
In fact, the Bible says in him  
is hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.  
So, we know that whatever Jesus says is true.

That phrase "wonderful counselor"  
could literally be translated "wonder of a counselor."  
The Hebrew word there for "wonder"  
often refers to the impact that is created  
by a supernatural act of God.

There may be no greater supernatural act of God  
than when he sent his Son to be born as a human being  
to live the perfect life as only he could live  
and then to pay the price for sin by dying on the cross.  
The greatest act of love ever demonstrated.

The Bible says in

**Romans 5:8,**

*"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*

Jesus came as the embodiment of God's unconditional love.  
And he died on the cross  
to pay the price for your sin and mine  
and everyone who puts their faith in him.

**John 3:16**

*For God so greatly loved and dearly prized the world that He [even] gave up His only begotten (unique) Son, so that whoever believes in (trusts in, clings to, relies on) Him shall not perish (come to destruction, be lost) but have eternal (everlasting) life. For God did not send the Son into the world in order to judge (to reject, to condemn, to pass sentence*

*on) the world, but that the world might find salvation and be made safe and sound through him.”*

But Jesus didn't just die so that you and I could get to heaven.  
Jesus died so we could get to God.  
Do you realize... that the God of the universe  
wants to be with you?

I was trying to think of a way  
that I could visualize the enormity of God's love.  
This is kind of what I came up with.

God's love for you is so enormous and more amazing  
than the largest stars or planets in the universe.  
PICTURE

This is a picture of the planets in our solar system.  
Just as a comparison  
look at the size of the earth compared to Jupiter.  
It's a pretty significant difference.  
PICTURE

The next picture, now look at the size of Jupiter  
in comparison to our sun. Pretty dramatic.  
PICTURE

Then look at the earth.  
The earth just looks like a little dot.  
Comparatively you can take a hundred planets  
the size of the earth and string them across the sun.  
That's how massive the sun is.  
It's almost incomprehensible isn't it?

Or you can look at it this way.  
You can fit nine hundred sixty thousand planets  
the size of the earth into our sun.  
Amazing – isn't it?

But it gets better.  
It's like a Ginsu knife commercial!

## PICTURE

Now look at the size of the sun  
compared to the size of the star Arcturus.  
Unbelievable.

you could fit 17,500 of our suns into Arcturus.  
That's how massive Arcturus is.

But it gets better than that!

Look at Arcturus – in comparison to Antares.  
It's mind blowing.

So, I took a shot...  
I'm not an artist but I took a shot at drawing  
what I think it would look like  
for a human being to be compared to the immensity  
of God's love.  
This is what I came up with.

## PICTURE

God loves you more than the largest star  
or the largest planet.  
His love for you is more vast

than the two hundred and twenty five billion galaxies.  
His love is so vast it's almost incomprehensible

So, when you believe in the enormity of God's love for you  
and the intensity of his wanting to be with you,  
to be your friend, you'll be surprised by hope.

The second quality Isaiah uses to describe the coming Savior is  
Mighty God.

## **QUALITY 2:**

**Jesus as the mighty God is in control of all things.**

Jesus as the mighty God is in control. Write that down!  
In control of all things.

One of the attributes of God that is most comforting to me  
is his sovereignty.

Just knowing that nothing happens in my life  
that is outside of his knowing or outside of his control.

That the good, the bad, and the ugly things  
that happened in my life he's aware of.

And he's working behind the scenes.

Don't misunderstand me.

Jesus doesn't cause the bad and ugly things in life.

But he allows them

in order to grow our faith and mature our character  
more and more into the image of Christ.

Remember there can be no transformation without tribulation.

The Bible says in

**James 1:2-4**

*“Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don’t try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way”*

Peter alludes to the same idea in 1 Peter 1:6-7.

*“There is wonderful joy ahead,*  
you’ve got to understand who Peter’s talking to here.  
He’s talking to Christians  
that were under the persecution of Nero –  
some of the most sadistic, intense,  
cruel persecution that Christians have ever experienced.

It’s almost crazy  
for Peter to say these things from a natural perspective  
He says that there’s hope that’s coming.  
It’s not here right now but it’s coming.  
So live your life with one eye on eternity –  
that’s what he’s saying.

**1 Peter 1:6-7.**

*There is wonderful joy ahead even though you have to endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So, when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.”*

Friends, don’t forget  
that God accomplishes his purposes through my problems.  
That he has a reason, that he’s working, that he’s in control.  
So, no matter what is happening in your life  
you can be confident



that Jesus as the mighty God is in complete control.  
He has all authority and all power  
and is quite literally holding your life together.

The Bible tells us in Colossians 1:17,  
*...in him (Jesus) all things hold together.*”

Those words there “hold together”  
means to cohere to be constituted with.  
In other words according to the Bible  
Jesus is literally holding everything together.

John MacArthur in his commentary on Colossians says this:  
“Not only did Jesus create the universe; he also sustains it.

Do you really think that if Jesus  
can hold the entire universe together on a sub atomic level  
that your problems are too difficult for him?  
There is nothing that can happen in your life  
that is outside the power of Jesus.

That’s why the Bible tells us in  
**1 Peter 5:7**  
*Cast all your cares upon the lord*

So many times when the bottom falls out of life  
or when reality kicks down the door  
we think that God is mad at us.  
We think that God is punishing us.  
We’re just confused and we want to know why.

But God is there. He’s there in the moment.  
He’s there in the feelings. And he’s taking care of you.

Will you let him? Or will you resist him?

When you believe that Jesus' love for you  
is greater than the largest stars and planets of the universe  
and as the mighty God he has everything under control.  
That he's working behind the scenes  
doing things, you have no idea that he's doing.  
Then you'll be surprised by hope.

The third quality Isaiah used to describe  
the coming Savior is **Everlasting Father**.

Jesus as the everlasting Father keeps his promises.  
I want you to write that down – he keeps his promises.

### **QUALITY 3:**

**Jesus as the everlasting Father keeps His promises.**

I tried to be very careful  
about the promises that I made to my son growing up  
because I never wanted to break a promise.  
I wanted him to know that I'm dependable.  
That when I make a promise it's as good as done  
as far as it's in my ability to do.

There were some times of course  
when I wouldn't make a promise  
and I'd say something like, we'll see, or maybe.  
But those are okay. Those aren't statements that are binding.  
But a promise is a promise.  
And broken promises break hearts.  
And no father wants to do that to his children.

Jesus, as God the Son  
has all the divine attributes of our heavenly Father.  
Hebrews 1:3 from the Amplified Bible says, "...  
*He is the perfect imprint and very image of [God].*

Therefore Jesus has the same heart for us as the Father,  
and as the Living Word he always keeps his promises.

So, when the Bible says that  
*"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in  
trouble"*, you can believe it.

When the Bible says that  
*"The Lord God is a sun and a shield; and he gives grace and  
glory; no good thing does he withhold from those who walk  
uprightly"*, you can believe it.

When the Bible says that  
*"The righteous man will flourish like a palm tree, he will grow  
like a cedar in Lebanon. Planted in the house of the Lord, they  
will flourish in the courts of our God"*, you can believe it.

When God says,  
*"Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look around  
you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help  
you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."*

When you believe that Jesus' love for you  
is greater than the largest stars or planets in our universe,  
that he as the mighty God  
has everything in your life under control

and as the everlasting Father  
he always keeps his promises you'll be surprised by hope.

The fourth quality that Isaiah used  
to describe the coming Savior is the Prince of Peace.

#### **QUALITY 4:**

**Jesus as the Prince of Peace has made peace between God  
and me.**

He has made peace between us.  
When Isaiah refers to the Savior as the Prince of Peace  
he's referring specifically to the fact  
that Jesus has made peace between you and God.

Before a person trusts Christ with their life  
they as a sinner are separated from a holy and righteous God.  
So, there's a barrier between us.

And there is a price that needed to be paid  
for that sin to be forgiven.  
Because God is righteous.  
So, God has to punish sin. That's the bad news.

The good news is that Jesus  
took that punishment on himself on the cross.

Before Christ,  
all we can expect to receive from the Father is his wrath.  
But Jesus took upon himself  
all the wrath of God for your sin and for mine.  
The Father poured out the entire cup of his wrath upon his Son.

And you know what that means?  
That means there's no wrath left  
for those who put their faith in Christ.

You never have to worry about the wrath of God  
because Jesus took all of his wrath upon himself.  
He shed his blood to pay the penalty that we deserve.  
He took our place under the wrath of God.

So, once you put your faith in Jesus as your Savior  
trusting in his sacrifice  
as payment for your sin  
you're reconciled with God.  
So, God's not angry with you because of your sin.  
Jesus has literally made peace between you and the Father.

Look at what the Bible says in

**Colossians 1:19-20.**

*"For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him [referring to Jesus], and through him to reconcile to himself all things [all things!] whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross."*

Don Richardson was a missionary  
to a tribe called the Sawi in Irian Jaya in Indonesia.  
The Sawi were a ruthless people,  
constantly at war with the neighboring villages.  
Being that they valued treachery and deceit and murder,  
Richardson thought there was no hope  
to win these people to Christ  
and get to a place where they were at peace with other people.

However, there was a custom

that was legendary with the Sawi called the peace child.  
This child was the baby in one village  
that was given to another village.  
As long as that child was alive  
there would be peace between those two villages.

So, Don Richardson used this custom  
as an analogy for the reconciling work of Christ.  
He told them that Jesus Christ was God's peace child to all men.  
And because Christ lives eternally through him  
there would always be peace between God  
and those who put their faith in his Son.  
As a result many of the Sawi came to know Christ  
as their Savior and a large evangelical church flourished.

Jesus as the Prince of Peace  
has made peace between you and the Father.  
When you believe that ..... you'll be surprised by hope.

So, where are you at today?  
Which of these four qualities  
did you need to hear or be reminded of?  
Did you need to be reminded  
of God's immense love for you  
that is greater than the largest stars or planets in the universe?

Or that Jesus as the mighty God  
has all your problems under control?  
That there's never a time where something happens  
and God goes "Oh! Sorry! I missed that! I fell asleep."  
That's never going to happen.

Maybe you resonated with the fact that  
Jesus as the everlasting Father  
always keeps the promises that he makes to you  
through his Word.

Or maybe there's some of you here  
that have finally connected the dots  
and you realize that as a sinner  
I'm separated from a holy and righteous God.  
But he wants to fix that.  
I understand now that Jesus wants to be the peace child for me.

If that's true of you,  
I just want to give you the opportunity  
just to put your trust and your faith in Jesus for your salvation  
and for a new life  
because you become a new creation in Christ Jesus.  
When you give your life to him  
there's no condemnation for anyone who is in Christ Jesus.

Let's Pray

You may not understand everything  
But I'm sure you understand your need for a Savior  
I'm a sinner and I need a Savior. I've messed up my life.  
I've tried to do things and fix things  
that have just made things worse. I get it now.  
I want to invite you to just pray this prayer after me.

“Lord Jesus, I believe that you died to pay the price for my sin.  
And I am sinner who needs a Savior.  
Will you forgive me of my sins?”

Would you come into my life?  
And would you enable me from this point forward  
to follow you and to serve you?  
I pray these things in your name. Amen.”

Altar Call