

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday December 19, 2021. "Advent (Love). "What's in a Name: Everlasting Father"

I Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message this Sunday. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. This Sunday was the last Sunday service of 2021. We will be having our Christmas Eve service Friday the 24th, but no service on the 26th. We hope you will join us in person for the Christmas Eve service. A great group of familiar and new faces join us each Sunday. Our children's, youth areas and coffee spot have been fully open also, and we're seeing a good response. We're so encouraged by your love and presence when you gather with us. If you're still joining us online, we love and so appreciate your presence also. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family, and if there is ANYTHING you need, prayer, ideas or suggestions, please pass them our way. We know the future is still uncertain, but we are committed to making our virtual congregation as central to NCC as our in person group.

II Recap.

This was our fourth and final Sunday in our Advent series; ***"What a Name"***, looking at the names given to the coming light, the messiah, from Isaiah 9. The first week we looked at; ***"Wonderful Counselor"***. When you attach Wonderful to Counselor- a source of wisdom, insight, and truths that are helpful in everyday life, you then have incomparable truths to help you out in your daily life. The second week we talked about ***"Mighty God"***. Through deeper study we came to see that Mighty means greatest when compared to others considered the same. And then God is a human attempt to 'name' what Moses discovered is actually unnamable. Moses was told God will be whomever God chooses to be. So, a Mighty God would be an incomparable, matchless, unnamable above all. Then last week we talked about the ***"Prince of Peace"***. Again breaking the phrase down into the two words, we discovered that 'prince' is not an actual heir to the throne, political position, but rather one who 'holds power'. Coupled with peace, this title means using that power to actively work to destroy the things that destroy peace, and do the work of bringing what was torn apart back together. Of course there was much more said about each, and you can find those in the past messages.

III Sunday.

This Sunday we finished the series with the name ***"Everlasting Father"***. Let's reread the same passage we've used the entire series and then drill down into that name. If you're up for it, reread **Isaiah 9:2-6**, and answer the following questions.

What jumped out to you from this passage?

Did this passage affect your understanding of "Everlasting Father"? Why or why not?

For the past three names we broke it down to each word, built an understanding from each word, and then added those two understandings together to gain a bigger picture of that name. What's interesting about this name is that **"Everlasting Father"** in Hebrew is just one word- *'abiad'*. So we cannot create a greater understanding by dividing and defining the two different words. We have to dive deep into this one word description of the coming light, and discover the depths of it.

There are two basic truths found in this word.

1. This name gives us a picture of the coming one as the one who *'was always is'*, (I know that's so confusing). This is how we understand The Trinity. The one who is coming is the one who has always been, and always is. The name **"Everlasting Father"** conveys the truth that the coming light promised in Isaiah would be a new expression of a timeless truth. This God that would now come into the world, would be the same God that has pursued his children for thousands of years.

What helps you wrap your mind around a God who is coming, always was?

2. This *'was always is'* one who is coming, is also is the eternally loving parent whom we are never not their child...no matter what. I know that's such a cumbersome sentence also. But it not only is true, but also shows the difficulty of talking about God. We are not only always a child of God, we can never not be a child of God. This understanding of God as *'was always is'* now coming incarnate, (becoming one of us), is the God who loved us before we were, and that love will never end.

What does it mean to you that this "Everlasting Father" is a God who never gives up on us?

How does this truth affect the way you understand God, and how to live?

IV Challenge.

So, as we wrap up this Advent season, and celebrate Christmas this Saturday, we recognize that this journey actually never ends. This process of understanding these attributes of the coming one; **"Wonderful Counselor"**, **"Mighty God"**, **"Everlasting Father"**, and **"Prince of Peace"**, all are not just statements about who this God is, but connecting points for us to grow towards God. These are not just things to sing about, and know. They are calls to movement recognizing we need these things in our life, and God is the one who can meet those needs.

And it is through these 'names' of the promised one we find:

Hope. Confident expectation of the goodness of God our **"Wonderful Counselor"**.

Joy. The overflow of receiving love and peace from a **"Mighty God"**.

Peace. Bringing light to a dark and broken world doing the work with the **"Prince of Peace"**.

Love. The ultimate gift. And the name above all names. The **"Everlasting Father"**.

Join us **Christmas Eve @ 6:30** for our in-person service, as we gather and celebrate the final name of the coming one, and communion. It's the best way to move into Christmas Day..