

Christmas In One Verse

ClearView Christmas- Part 2

December 11, 2011

Andy Wirt (andy@clearviewgrace.com)

Illustration:

Imagine if you heard your doorbell ring last night. You groggily woke up, put on a robe and went to the front door. As you peered through the glass nobody was there, but as you glanced down to the ground you noticed something. It was a little basket with a blanket over it. What could it be? Cautiously, you opened the door, brought the basket inside and lifted off the blanket. What do you find, but a beautiful and healthy baby boy with a note attached to him! The note says, "Merry Christmas. This baby boy is for you. No strings attached." How would you respond? Just what I've always wanted? Maybe some of you would. Or maybe you'd wonder WHY they picked you. You would say things like, "I'm too old," or "I don't have time," or "I don't have room," or I'm sure you'd come up with about a hundred other excuses.

This morning, Isaiah does the same thing to us spiritually. He lays a baby at the door of our heart and says, "here you go! To US a child is born. To US a son is given." You see, Christmas isn't just a story about a baby being born. It's about a baby being for FOR US and GIVEN to us. This is a gift that God is laying on your doorstep. How are you going to respond?

Today we are going to look at descriptions of the baby boy put at our doorstep, and hopefully these descriptions will open the door to your heart and make you welcome the true meaning of Christmas which is – **Jesus...born for us.**

Here are 6 ways to remember Jesus Christ this Christmas.

Isaiah 9:6

For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

1. We Are Given A Child

For a child is born to us...

It is interesting and important to note that Jesus came as a baby...grew up as a child. His entrance into the world was common. He didn't come as a King...He didn't come in grandeur...He didn't come in power. He came as a baby...crying...needing diapered...helpless...hungry...

Why was "a child" born to us?

I think there are many reasons. As we notice these truths, the Christmas message comes alive. Even though Jesus came as a helpless baby...notice the incredible power as these truths unfold.

- He came as a child first and foremost **to authenticate His humanity.** Everything in Jesus' story—his birth, his life, his death for our sins, his resurrection hinges on the fact that He was a human being—just like you and me. He was fully, 100%, human. Those we read about last week in Luke 2—came to see...they witnessed a baby!

Jesus had to be human to be an adequate Savior. When you and I sinned, we violated God. The only way this separation...the only way God's anger against us...could be healed was the blood of a perfect human. Jesus was that sacrifice. His humanity was necessary for redemption. We see that He was human...those that live around Him observed Him grow up because...He came as a child.

Hebrews 2

¹⁴ *Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death.* ¹⁵ *Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying.*

¹⁶ *We also know that the Son did not come to help angels; he came to help the descendants of Abraham.* ¹⁷ *Therefore, it was necessary for him to be made in every respect like us, his brothers and sisters, so that he could be our merciful and faithful High Priest before God. Then he could offer a sacrifice that would take away the sins of the people.* ¹⁸ *Since he himself has gone through suffering and testing, he is able to help us when we are being tested.*

- I believe He came as a child also **to show humility**. God didn't invade society with an army to accomplish His eternal will and plan. He could have sent Jesus down in power and made people submit to Him. Instead, He sent a humble servant, Jesus. Jesus invites us to follow Him but gives us the choice to also reject Him.

Jesus taught the value of humility. For Jesus to teach humility, He had to model humility. He did that throughout His life—and started with His birth.

Application:

- Thank God for sending a worthy savior...
- *it was necessary for him to be made in every respect like us* -- **Jesus understands you!** He understands fear. He understands rejection. He understands grief. He understands things not working out like you had hoped. He understands how it feels when you believe in someone and they let you down. He understands physical pain.

This Christmas I need Jesus to understand...

2. We Are Given A Son

a son is given to us

We have to remember that Jesus was a son. Jesus was God's son- given to us. *Can you imagine what it was like for God to give His son...to us?*

I was thinking yesterday... about how God must feel as He looks down on earth. I can't imagine that He is real happy. As immorality abounds, tensions over nuclear weapons are on the rise, selfishness and materialism are at an all time high...*why would He give His son to us?*

The truth is pretty simple—He gave His son to us for two reasons—He loves us...and we needed Him.

John 3:16

¹⁶ "For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

A child/son is born/given **TO US...** He was sent to us, for us, because we needed Him!

I want to just talk for a moment about Jesus being God's son. When Jesus was ministering on earth as man, He referred to Himself as the Son of God. If we were to read John 10:22-42, we would see Jesus in a verbal tussle with the religious leaders of His day. They were appalled that He was referring to Himself as "The Son Of God". See, In Jesus' culture, when someone claimed to be the "Son of God" ...they were equating themselves with God.

It is important for us to understand that the result of the virgin birth—Jesus was not only fully human, but He was also fully God.

John 1:1, 14, 18

¹ In the beginning the Word already existed.

*The Word was with God,
and the **Word was God.***

*¹⁴ So the **Word became human** and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.*

*¹⁸ No one has ever seen God. **But the unique One, who is himself God,** is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.*

This is an amazing truth- one that can't get lost in the all the hustle and bustle of Christmas—**God came to earth!**

What should that mean for us?

- A little fear...reverence...

Deitrich Bonhoeffer:

We have become so accustomed to the idea of divine love and of God's coming at Christmas that we no longer feel the shiver of fear that God's coming should arouse in us. We are indifferent to the message, taking only the pleasant and agreeable out of it and forgetting the serious aspect, that the God of the world draws near to the people of our little earth and lays claim to us.

Illustration: This week there was a funeral for a former Buckeye assistant coach held right here in New Albany at Resurrection Church. Word around town was that famous Buckeye coaches and former players would be on hand. As I had meetings at Starbucks that morning, I found myself looking for a glimpse of these famous people. All of us are wowed by celebrity and like to get a look at larger than life figures.

God came to earth. God was sighted here. We should be wowed!

- A lot of celebration!
Luke 2

“I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people.”¹¹ The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!

- A reminder of our need for a Savior.

Illustration: This week Samson had tubes put in his ears. I was with him as they prepped him for this surgical procedure. I remember holding him after they had given him the medicine to make him woozy and prepare for the anesthesia. I remember how I felt when I handed him to the nurse and followed her down the hallway to where there was a separation; I was going to the waiting room and she was taking him to the operating room. It was such a weird feeling—giving my son to someone else.

For a child is born to us, a son is given to us.

This Christmas I need to worship Jesus for...

3. We are Given A Wonderful Counselor

I love this description of Jesus. We could spend a lot of time talking about this. “Wonderful” can be translated as “exceptional” or “distinguished”. Jesus was the exceptional counselor. He was the distinguished teacher. He was an amazing teacher... those who heard him were moved...*shouldn't we also be?*

Mark 1

²¹ Jesus and his companions went to the town of Capernaum. When the Sabbath day came, he went into the synagogue and began to teach. ²² The people were amazed at his teaching, for he taught with real authority—quite unlike the teachers of religious law.

As I look at this description of Jesus...my Savior Who, as we've just learned, was 100% like me but also 100% like God, I realize that Jesus has all the answers we need to life's questions. He is the *Wonderful Counselor*.

So, I have to ask myself—am I going to Him with my deepest questions? I am spending time with Him and allowing Him to sift through the issues of my heart. Am I going to Him for understanding, for comfort, for direction, for counsel...

I believe you have issues this morning. You have a decision to make. You have a relationship that you want to improve. You have a question you've been unable to answer. *You need a counselor.* The best is available. Are you spending time with Him? Are you reading your Bible. Are you spending time on your knees in prayer?

Illustration: I think it is great for everyone to have a relationship with a counselor so that when they have a time of need, they know who to call. I always tell people this- so recently I thought, I'd better follow my own advise. So, I started looking for a counselor. I have a short list of criteria for who I am looking for. I tracked down this one counselor that fit the criteria and called to make an appointment. I was told she wasn't available. A few months later her secretary called back and said she was now taking new appointments. I didn't call back right away and when I called this week—guess what—she is booked again!

Good news this morning: ***The Wonderful Counselor*** is always on call!

This Christmas I need wisdom for...

4. We Are Given A Mighty God

I think sometimes there is a tendency on our part to get lulled to sleep by the manger. We're singing Silent Night and swaying with candles and thinking of cozy fires and hot chocolate and pretty Christmas trees and getting caught up in all the nice traditions of the season.

But, one of the things we should see when we look at a manger scene is power. Raw power. Uninhibited power. Power without limits. Power that can blow our imaginations. Power that we can tap into.

See...when Jesus is in the manger—it means that hundreds of prophecies have been fulfilled. Hundreds of time in the Old Testament...hundreds of years before Jesus was born—men foretold of God coming to earth. Isaiah foretold of Jesus' coming 700 years before He was born. Also, Jesus was born to a virgin. To top it off- we've already said that Jesus was God with skin on. He was 100% God and 100% man wrapped in the same being.

The point is this: *if God can pull off the incarnation...the virgin birth...hundreds of prophecies over centuries of time...* **He can solve my problems. He can answer my prayers. I can trust Him.**

There's power in the manger!

Matthew 8

²⁶ *Jesus responded, "Why are you afraid? You have so little faith!" Then he got up and rebuked the wind and waves, and suddenly there was a great calm.*

²⁷ **The disciples were amazed.** *"Who is this man?" they asked. "Even the winds and waves obey him!"*

Matthew 9

³² *When they left, a demon-possessed man who couldn't speak was brought to Jesus. ³³ So Jesus cast out the demon, and then the man began to speak. **The crowds were amazed.** "Nothing like this has ever happened in Israel!" they exclaimed.*

Mark 2

¹² *And the man jumped up, grabbed his mat, and **walked out through the stunned onlookers. They were** all amazed and praised God, exclaiming, "We've never seen anything like this before!"*

I love these passages because they show God's power...and they show the proper response! **Here's the best part about God's power. It's in the manger...but it is also in you.** If you know Jesus—*God's power is at work in you and through you.*

Ephesians 3:20

²⁰ *Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.*

God's power is working in you to accomplish more than you think possible- and God's power is in you to help you face life's battles.

Colossians 1:11

¹¹ We also pray that you will be strengthened with all his glorious power so you will have all the endurance and patience you need. May you be filled with joy...

The greatest power that's ever come into this world is in that manger. He is the mighty God. A new strength was born into this world at Christmas. A new strength for your life. A new strength to win in the toughest of battles.

So here's the question. *What's the toughest battle you're facing right now?*

- Is it in some relationship that's not going like you want it to go? God says I want to give my power to your life to make a difference at that point in your life.
- Is it in some circumstance that's not turning out like you want it to turn out?
- Is it in some temptation that keeps getting the best of you? You want to say no but you keep saying yes.
- Is it in some great opportunity that you're not sure you're up to that opportunity?

Where is the greatest battle that you're facing right now? Right there, at that point, God says, *I want to make my power available to you.* The manger is not some sentimental story. It's all about God's power in our lives.

This Christmas I need strength to...

5. We Are Given An Everlasting Father

This is an intriguing title given to Jesus. Wonderful Counselor. Mighty God. Everlasting Father... We could discuss a lot about this. One question to you can rack your brain about: *How can Jesus be God's Son and "Everlasting Father"?* Good theology question to wrestle with. You can do that as homework... or we could extend our service another hour or two and we could talk about it here. ☺

But, I do want to hone in on one part of this title real quick. Jesus is the "everlasting" father. When I see this, I think of time. Jesus in control of time. He is eternal. He is forever. He is everlasting.

What does this mean for us? **It means that Jesus' timing is always perfect.** Look at:

Romans 5:6

*When we were utterly helpless, **Christ came at just the right time** and died for us sinners.*

1 Timothy 2:5-6

⁵ *For there is only one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus.* ⁶ *He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone. This is the message God gave to the world **at just the right time.***

Christ died at just the right time. God gave Christ to the world at just the right time. Look at what else He promises at just the right time...

Galatians 6:9

*⁹ So let's not get tired of doing what is good. **At just the right time** we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up.*

When I see Jesus is the “everlasting father”, I’m reminded that God controls time. God controls what happens in time. And, because God is perfect, His timing is perfect.

I don't know about you—but the timing of some of the things in my life doesn't always seem perfect. I shared with you earlier that Samson had tubes put in his ears this week. That's going to hurt the wallet a bit. A few weeks ago the mini-van that I drive broke down for a final time. This was in the same time frame as our dryer breaking which was in the same time frame as the furnace in our house needing repaired. I'm guessing I'm like you—the timing of life's trials doesn't seem perfect.

But, when I look in the manger, I am comforted...I am reminded at the fact that if God can time sending His Son into a needy world at *just the right time*, He is certainly capable of working out His perfect plan in my life in His perfect timing.

This Christmas I need to trust God's timing in...

6. We Are Given The Prince Of Peace

Jesus is the Prince Of Peace. Jesus came to make peace between us and God.

Romans 5:1

Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.

When we have peace with God- we have the tools to be at peace with those around us as well.

Ephesians 4:31-32

³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. ³² Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

This Christmas I need to make peace with...

Conclusion:

As you look at your manger scene this Christmas, remember that Christmas isn't just a story about a baby being born. It's about a baby being for FOR US and GIVEN to us. This is a gift that God is laying on your doorstep. *How are you going to respond?*