

“Wonderful Counselor” // *Hope Has a Name*, Message #1 // Isa 9:6–7

Christmas at DPAC

Every year, around this time, there are two groups of people at the Summit—those of you who have never been to **Christmas at DPAC**, and those who saw that video and are **already on their phones** checking to see if tickets are available (they’re not—Monday afternoon).

But let me talk for just a minute to that group of you that’s never been. **Christmas at DPAC is probably our most popular event** of the year, and one of our greatest outreaches—it is a chance for us to take a celebration of Jesus into the heart of the Triangle, and gives us a free pass to invite people to a worship service that may never otherwise come.

Tickets go live on Monday at noon. They are free but you have to have one for admission. **And listen to me:** they will go fast.

Let me **say that in another way: If don't listen** to me and you don't get your tickets asap they will be gone **and next weekend I'll be explaining to you** what to do if you need tickets to sold out shows. **Because I promise** you those are my talking points for next weekend: I’ve already written them, and I’m going to deliver them **in that** Cranky Uncle J.D. “I told you so voice.” Understand?

Works Consulted:

“Wonderful Counselor,” Craig Groeschel
“Unto Us a Child Is Born,” James MacDonald
“The Birth of Jesus,” Tim Keller
“Responding to Jesus’ Birth,” Tim Keller
“Luke 2,” Andreas Kostenberger
“God of Wonders—Isaiah 9,” Tim Keller

Service Time Change

One other thing, before we get rolling. **Next week**, at all of our campuses, we’re moving our Sunday morning times, at all campuses, to **9 and 10:45**. We’ve made this decision for a number of reasons: It will give us more time to incorporate prayer into our services; second, it’s going to allow us to feel a little bit more like a community because we’re not trying to turn around the building so fast.

Some of you are thinking, “**Oh, I HATE change**, and I’m going to be all confused on Sunday morning, and it is going to be crowded.” I get it. You can **fix that by just coming on Saturday night** because those times stay the same.

Saturday night is the greatest of all of our service times—people who come on Sat night are the most spiritual because they just love Jesus so much they can’t wait to get to church; plus, you get to sleep late on Sundays AND you can go to Chick-Fil-A right after church. That’s a **triple-win**, AMEN?

Introduction

Well, we have officially entered the Christmas season. I have found when it’s actually ok to say that is a strangely controversial topic in our society that brings out strong emotions. Some feel like it can be declared right after Thanksgiving. Others say, “Nope. Not a day before December 1.” Some of you are like, “Immediately after Labor Day.”

But I think it’s safe to say we are all in it now.

And **with the Christmas season** comes a **Christmas message series** which we begin today. So, let me start it with a little **Christmas survey**:

- **How many of you are done with Christmas shopping already?**
 - (And... how many of you hate the people with their hands raised?)
- **How many of you have ever re-gifted a gift at Christmas?** How many of you it was within the same Christmas season? I had a friend who did this with a book and got a call from the person he gave it to saying, “Hey, this book you gave me was personalized to you...” **True story.** I won’t tell you the initials of who it was, but his name was Chris Gaynor. So, be suspect of gifts from Chris Gaynor at Christmas.
- **How many of you are nervous about seeing family over the holidays?**
 - How **many of you get reminded every Christmas** that your family could really be a good candidate for the **Jerry Springer** show?
 - (You know, **here’s a thought**: Maybe they are nervous about seeing you, too?)
- How many of you will **spend more online this year** than you will in physical stores?
 - How many of you started shopping on **Black Friday** and ended up buying a bunch of stuff for yourself as well? **GUILTY.**
 - How many of you bought more stuff for yourself on Black Friday than you did for others?
- **How many of you have a gift** you’re really excited about giving to somebody this Christmas?

Christmas is a time where we think about gifts, and the series we are going into is called **Hope Has a Name** and it’s about God’s great gift to us.

It comes from **one of the most famous prophecies about the Messiah in the Bible, Isa 9**, made 7 centuries before Jesus. We’ll be doing this series all the way up to our **Christmas at DPAC**...

Here is the prophecy (It actually starts back in chapter 7)¹⁴ *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

^{9:2} *The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. ³ You have multiplied our nation; you have increased its joy. ⁴ For the yoke of his burden, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken. ⁶ For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder,*

...and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of his government and of his peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.”

The first thing I want you to realize is that this prophecy was not first made at Christmastime. It was spoken into a **real, troublesome situation.**

The year was 730 B.C. and King Ahaz was nervous because Assyria was forming an army to attack Jerusalem and he was wondering the best way to defend themselves—who he should form an alliance with and so forth.

And so God sends the prophet Isaiah to him and tells him, “**Don’t worry about alliances.** I will protect you.”

- **Which should be reassuring**, but evidently Isaiah could tell from Ahaz’s expression that he was still worried, so he said to Ahaz, “**Don’t worry, Ahaz, God will give you a miraculous sign** to prove he’ll protect you if you trust him.”

Now, you'd think Ahaz would be excited about getting a sign from God proving that God is with him. But instead he's like, "No, don't do that!" Because evidently, he thinks, "If God gives me a sign, then I'll have to obey him."

So, Isaiah says, "You don't want a sign because then you'll be obligated to obey? Well, **God will give you one anyway: Here's your sign...** ^{7:14} Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

(Now, here's where it gets tricky—big boy theological pants. There was a partial fulfillment of this prophecy in Isaiah's day: some kind of notable child was born. You see this child referred to in chapter 8. But it **quickly becomes apparent that Isaiah is referring** to a child much greater than the one born during that day. You **can see that in the names** he is called in chapter 9: names like "Mighty God" and "Everlasting Father;" names inappropriate for a merely human child.

There was a temporary fulfillment in Isaiah's day, but ultimately, you see, this prophecy would be fulfilled in Jesus. Jesus was the Son born of a virgin who would be the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and the Prince of peace.

A lot of biblical prophecy is this way, btw. There is an immediate fulfillment in the prophet's day, and an ultimate fulfillment in the future. **I've heard it described like this:** If you have ever looked out over a mountain range, sometimes you see mountain peaks that look like they are connected. One range seems to go right into the other. But if you were to actually go to them, you'd see there is actually quite a bit of distance, sometimes several miles, between them. **That's how biblical prophecy often works**—it looks like one promise, but there's actually a gap of time between the first fulfillment and the ultimate fulfillment. **Does that make sense?**

Now, you may ask: How would a prophecy about the birth of a Messiah that wouldn't come for 700 years ultimately answer the problem Ahaz has in Isaiah 9—namely, that there's an army outside of Jerusalem that wants to destroy it? Into a **very real, dire, felt-need situation** (an impending attack), God gives a promise about a Messiah who won't be born for 700 years!

Some people say, "See? This is the problem with the Bible. It doesn't address real people in real situations. It's all sentimentality and pie in the sky."

- **People especially feel like this at Christmas time.** They are like, "You know, I like all the quaint stories about Jesus and the manger and peace on earth and good will toward men, but I'm in a situation with **real problems**—I don't have a job; my marriage is falling apart; I can't get rid of this chronic pain, and while these quaint stories about Jesus are heartwarming, they don't do anything practically for me. The Hallmark movie version of life is nice, but it's not realistic."
- **Is that you? Do you feel that way?** Turn to your neighbor and say, "I HATE Christmas." Just kidding. But some of you feel that way.

These stories are quaint, but they don't really deal with my problems.

That was the same question that they would have been asking in Ahaz's day. "We got a real army sitting out there who really wants to destroy us. What does the promise of a future Messiah do for us?"

The birth of Jesus addressed their problem in 2 ways.

First, in sending Jesus, God was dealing with our problem at its roots. Our **problems are much deeper than merely an enemy army** arrayed against us, or health issues, or relational conflicts, or economic needs.

The root of all our problems is a separation from God. All of our earthly problems ultimately stem back to that one. I don't mean that the problem you are experiencing now is God's punishment for some specific sin, **just that if God were to take away** all our problems without fixing our real problem, separation from God, we'd just create new problems!

In one of his writings, **J.R.R. Tolkien, author of the Lord of the Rings, said that evil was a shape-shifter.** It's like a shadow—after you defeat it, it ***takes another shape and grows again.***"

- **Think about technological advances** in the past few years... We're doing things with this (phone) that we couldn't have dreamed of 10 years ago.
- **Technology has solved a lot of problems.** But it has created a bunch of new ones, too.
- **In many ways, they made us a lot more secure.** I can go on anywhere and check my **bank account** or monitor **my house**. But now we're vulnerable to cyber-attacks or identity theft.
- **I can stay better connected** to my family. And my smart phone can also keep me totally disconnected from my family when they need me?
- **Most of us would say** that we're not sure smart phones have been a net positive for our society?
- **Why, despite all the improvements,** have they still not helped us? It's because **the source of darkness lies within our hearts.** Better technology cannot change the human heart. **All better technology does** is create new shapes for the shadow of darkness.¹
- **Martin Luther said that the problem with the human heart** is that it is *curved in on itself.*² We're radically self-absorbed, so much so that we can barely even grasp it! It creates a darkness in us gives birth to the whole spectrum of evil—from the horrific

crimes we see on the news to our problems with our smartphones and the reasons for your broken marriage.³

Therefore, sin had to be dealt with at the roots. And so, **God, in the midst of his offer to help** Ahaz, promised a Messiah that would ultimately ***save us from our sins*** and ***transform our hearts.***

We **cry out to be delivered from bad health**; God wants to deliver us from the curse of death that causes bad health. We cry out to be delivered from **injustice and broken relationships**; God wants to deliver us from the sin and selfishness that breaks those relationships. We **cry out for victory in battle**, God promised a Messiah who takes away the hatred that drives us into battle.

You say, "Well, that's all well and good, but I wish he'd have gone ahead and destroyed all evil, too."

- **Really?**
- **It's like I've asked you before:** If the 1st time Jesus came he destroyed all evil, would any of us be here? **If God said,** "That's it! I'm wiping out all evil at 11 p.m., who, apart from Christ, would be here at 11:01?"
- We want to **go to heaven** where there are no more tears...

Thus, ultimate salvation could not come from a warrior who would ride in on a horse and defeat our problems, but from a baby who would be born like us, grow up to live the life we were supposed to live and die the death we were condemned to die, and thereby release us from the curse of sin that is at work inside of us and break its power over our lives.

That's the 1st way this promise of the Messiah addresses their problem.

¹ Tim Keller, The Birth of Jesus, Luke 2

² *Incurvatus in se.*

³ Ibid.

But the second way this promise spoke to their situation was in the **4 relational names** that God gave to them in the Messiah: **4 things God would become to them**, and to us, in Jesus. Here they are again:

“...and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” (V. 6)

Today, we’re going to use our remaining time to look at only one of them: **“Wonderful Counselor”**

“Wonderful Counselor” is two words in Hebrew: **“PEH-leh” and “Yow-ETS.”**

- **“PEH-leh”** means beyond understanding. It’s a word you used when something was too wonderful for words.
 - Isaiah said that when he comes, this Messiah would be beyond our words to describe him.
 - He is **wonderful, glorious, magnificent, awesome**—awesomer than all the words we use to say awesome.
- **“Yow-ETS”** translates as Counselor, and it means one who **advises or instructs or guides**, but (and here’s the key) from a position of authority.
 - **Think King Solomon.** That word “Counselor” is used of him. People brought their problems to him, and he had the wisdom to know the solution and the power to enact the solution.
 - **Don’t think of “counselor” like the friend** whom you call late at night and you pour out problems to them and they say, “Oh yeah, I bet that hurt. That stinks. Yeah, I hate her, too.”
 - This is **someone to whom you bring your worst** problems and he shows you the way out.
- **One day, Isaiah says, a son will be born**, a child will be given to you, and his name will be **“PEH-leh yow-ETS.”** He will be your Wonderful Counselor.

The **writer of Hebrews explains why it is that Jesus can be** such a help to us in the midst of our problems (This description has brought so much comfort to me throughout my Christian life)

¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who *in every respect* has been tempted as we are, *yet without sin*. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

He’s not just a king who rules over us; he’s a brother who lived among us, who has walked through everything we have walked through. **There is nothing you experience that he has not also experienced.**

- **When you walk through the Christmas story**, one of the things you’ll see is that Jesus was born into the worst kind of poverty. He was born among a poor and oppressed people as it was; but Mary and Joseph appear to be the poorest of the poor.
- **Several things indicate that:**⁴
 - For example, **Jesus was born in a stable**, which means Joseph lacked the money to secure proper lodging for his pregnant wife. (I know you’ve got your little manger scenes and they look so precious and quaint, but it’s hard to sentimentalize the actual scene—**no woman wants to give birth** outside in the cold, amidst the wonderful smell of cows and animals. That manger didn’t smell like cinnamon and nutmeg, I assure you.
 - **Here’s another thing:** When Jesus was dedicated at the temple, his parents presented a pigeon as a sacrifice instead of a lamb. This was a provision made for the poorest of the poor who couldn’t afford the Lamb. Jesus’s family was so poor he couldn’t fulfill the requirements he himself had proscribed years before.

⁴ From Tim Keller, The Birth of Jesus, Luke 2

At his birth, Jesus was **laying down a pattern** that he would repeat throughout his whole life.

- He was born in a manger and would die on a cross.
- At his birth, the innkeeper said, “No room!” At his death, the crowd cried out, “Give us Barabbas instead!”
- At his birth, he was wrapped in rags; at his death, he’ll be stripped naked in shame.
- At his birth, he’s ignored by the world; in his death, he’ll be rejected by his Father.

Why? He was bearing the rejection and poverty **I deserved**, so that when I come to him I can do so with confidence, knowing that God will not judge me, because all the judgment for my sin was laid upon him.

- Isaiah said, “**Surely, he has borne our griefs** and our sorrows, yet we esteemed him smitten by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions...”
- When I come to him, I don’t get the poverty and judgment I deserve because it was poured out on him.

James shows us what this looks like when it comes to praying for wisdom: **James 1:5**, If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all *without reproach*, and it will be given him.

- **My favorite part of this verse: *Without reproach***. A lot of times when I need wisdom, I feel like it’s because I’ve gotten myself into a situation where I need wisdom through my own sinfulness and stupidity.
- **And so, I assume when I pray God is like**, “Oh, I see, NOW you want my help? Hey, angels, look—it’s Greear again. He has really made a real mess this time, and now he has the AUDACITY to come and ask me for help.”
- **Without reproach**. God promises never to do that. He gives wisdom without judging me or criticizing me for being in such a predicament where I need such wisdom.

- And that’s **because Jesus has born all my condemnation**. So, when my marriage is messed up, or I’ve caused pain in my children or messed up things at work, if I sincerely say to God, “Give me wisdom for how to follow you here,” he will give it!
- The wisdom I am asking for is not the wisdom I deserve, but the wisdom Christ purchased for me!

(PUT BACK UP HEBREWS VERSE) **The other thing this verse in Hebrews promises me is that when I am in pain, or I’m tempted**, Jesus listens sympathetically because there is no suffering or pain or confusion I go through that he himself has not gone through, and he can guide me with expert advice (crossing border into former Soviet Republic... overwhelmed, people with machine guns) – ¹⁵ **For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who *in every respect* has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.** ¹⁶ **Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**

He is the WC. Some of you right now—if you were honest you would say, “I’m in a real time of need.” The good news is there is one who is here to help. He is the **PEH-leh Yow-ETS**. He is the most Wonderful Counselor.

What I love about the name, WONDERFUL COUNSELOR: It means that Jesus came for people with problems.

- I haven’t had many brilliant, original insights into the Bible. Let me give you one of my few brilliant original ones. Ready? **Every miracle that Jesus ever did started with a problem**. Every single one.
- Jesus’s miracles weren’t mere magic tricks. “And now, for my text trick to prove I’m the Messiah, I will elevate... Watch!”
- His miracles engaged hunger and poverty and disease and brokenness and death.
- **The good news** in that is that if you have a problem this weekend, **you are a candidate for a miracle!**

- **No problems, no miracles.**
- Some of you came in this weekend care-free, no problems. **No miracle for you this weekend.** You ought to come up here for prayer after the service, and one of our trained prayer counselors will lay their hands on you and pray that God will give you some problems before you get home. Because then you will be eligible for a miracle.

Jesus is the Wonderful Counselor. He came for people with problems. He said he came not for the healthy, but for the sick. He came not to reward the righteous, but save the sinner.

Some of you have problems this weekend. So, let me give you some ground rules for how you have to come to him if you are going to get his help. (*We get these from watching Jesus interact with people in the Gospels who needed his help.*)

How We Must Approach the Wonderful Counselor

1. We have to be completely honest with him

- **Every counselor will tell you** that until you are completely honest about your problems, you can't really get help with them.
- There's a tendency to want to keep the real truth about our problems concealed. Maybe that's because you feel shame admitting the full extent of the issue; you don't like to even acknowledge it yourself.
- But until you are fully open and honest about the problem, you can't get help.
- **And here's why that is true:** Being changed by Jesus is not like passing the keys of your car to some kid at a car wash and saying, "Clean her up," then you go out and do some errands and come back 30 minutes later and it's all done.
- **No, when God changes your life**, you have to be very active in the details. And if you aren't honest about them, you can't really fix them.

- For example, **I knew a guy who was seeing a counselor** because he was really stressed out at his work, his relationships at home were strained, he was having trouble sleeping, his health was suffering. He was an **extremely driven man**, and he'd just work, work, work, work. Well, the **counselor was asking all these probing questions**, and he'd say, "I'm doing this for my family." "This is the only time of life I can get ahead." Or, "the work I do is really important and affects other people's lives."
 - **The counselor finally told him**, "You need to **stop making excuses** and just admit to yourself that you are an **addict**. Some people are addicted to drugs or porn; you are addicted to adrenaline, and the praise of others, and the pride that success brings. And you are willing to sacrifice whatever you must to get those feelings—be that your family, your health, your integrity, whatever. And **until you admit that**, you're never going to change."
 - **You've got to be honest.** God's not going to change your life without changing you.
 - Of course, our fear in being honest is that when the full extent of our problems is revealed, what if God and everyone else just walks away from you? That's where you are **just going to have to trust the promises** of the Wonderful Counselor.
 - Jesus was once **talking with a woman, John 4**, who was really messed up – she had had a string of broken marriages and was in the midst of an adulterous relationship at the time and was deeply unhappy.
 - She kept trying to hide all that from Jesus because surely, she thought, if he found all that out about her, he'd walk away. So, Jesus finally said, "**Look, I know you have had 5 husbands and are currently living in adultery now.** I knew that when I started this conversation, and still I came after you."
 - It reminds me of **what my daughter Allie** said one night when we were talking about grace. We had been watching the show, "The Voice," and...
 - **Yes, he knew all about you when he came to you.**

- And the **Wonderful Counselor** has promised that **his power** is so great that there is no problem you have that he can't deal with, and **his love** for you is so great he'll never turn you away.
- **There is nothing about you** that could already be revealed that will surprise him; nothing that is not already covered by his blood and that his blood cannot transform and heal.
- **Which leads to #2...**

2. We have to want to be healed

- In John (5), **Jesus comes upon a lame man** who had been paralyzed for 38 years and he asks him, "Do you want to be healed?" It's an odd question, and it's puzzled students of the Bible for centuries. **Who wouldn't want to be healed?**
- **But here's what Jesus was getting at:** While many people want to experience the benefits of healing, they don't want to go through the painful choices that must accompany healing.
 - We want God to clean up the mess of our lives without dealing with the choices and patterns that got us into that mess.
- In fact, **we have mixed feelings** about the changes we are asking God to make...
 - We **like the concept of change**, but not really sure we want to do the hard work of change.
 - I think of **Augustine**, who in his *Confessions* described himself as praying, "God make me pure... just not yet."
- **Do you really want God to change your life?** Are you willing to deal with the things Jesus tells you that you must deal with?
- **Jesus says, I can heal you!** Do you *really* want it?

Which leads me to #3...

3. We have to do whatever he says

- **As you read the Gospels**, one of the things that stands out is how often Jesus asked people to do crazy things...
 - Once, in healing a blind man (John 9:6), **Jesus spits on the ground** and makes mud-pies to cake on the blind man's eyes,

and then tells him to go wash off in a specific pool across town. **Why not just snap his fingers** and heal him?

- **Peter needs money to pay a bill** and Jesus says, "Go catch a fish, and in the fish's mouth will be a gold coin with the exact amount to pay the bill." (Matthew 17:27). Why not just **pull the money** out of a hat?
- **Jesus is demonstrating that sometimes obedience doesn't make sense to us. Let that sink in...**
 - He tells you to extend the forgiveness and it doesn't make sense because who will avenge you? End the relationship but you are scared of being alone; give sacrificially—but how will you afford it?; make the move but you are comfortable here...
- **And in that moment**, you have to decide: Do you really trust him enough to do what he says?
- **Here's a question I often feel confronted with** when I come to God to ask for help: **Do I really trust he can handle this?**
 - The **verse I referred** to earlier, from James, where God promises to give us wisdom when we ask, contains a stipulation: ⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. **LOOK AT WHAT HE SAYS NEXT** ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.⁷ For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord... (James 1:5–7)
- **You've got to be ready to do what he says** when you ask him for the wisdom, otherwise you'll never get the wisdom.
- **In order to get help from the Wonderful Counselor you have to put your yes on the table before you even ask the question.**
- **This is hard because in no other area of life do we operate this way.** We don't say, "First, I'll sign the contract and then you show me the terms." But in this area, we have to.
 - I've compared it to giving God a **blank check**. (literally giving them open access to your bank account). We prefer a gift

card. It may be a generous gift card, but we are still ultimately in control of how much we give away.

Are you ready to lay down all your prerogative to choose, and say, “Jesus, I’m ready to follow you anywhere!”

- **Because that moment is your moment of truth.**
- I’ll tell you **one more story** on this. The Gospel of Matthew describes a **RYR** who comes to Jesus seeking the way of salvation. Jesus says something that sounds crazy to him, “Go, sell all your possessions, leave it all and follow me...” **The guy won’t do it**—it’s too crazy, and he walks away. **Think about what he lost!**
- **The text says that Jesus loved him...** he wanted him to have eternal life. But he wouldn’t lay it all down to follow Jesus.
 - We have people here who are very interested in Jesus. But there are certain convictions you won’t surrender, no matter what Jesus says. Certain areas of your life you won’t let him touch.

You’ll never experience the help of the WC until you do. The only deal that Jesus makes is he will give you all of himself, all of heaven, all of eternity, all of God, for **surrender** of you.

These are the 3 questions that are being asked of you as you approach the Wonderful Counselor:

- Are you willing to be completely honest with him?
- Do you really want to be healed?
- Are you ready to do whatever he says?

Let me close this weekend with one final thought. Maybe the most important thing to notice about this name is that Isaiah uses the word **“wonderful” to describe** Jesus, not the solutions he gives us to our problems. What is most wonderful are not the way he fixes our problems, but his presence with us in those problems.

Sometimes, you see, the way that God helps us in our problems is simply by allowing us to see how wonderful he is.

He doesn’t always immediately take away our problems, but he reveals to us his wonderful **promise that he is weaving** all things together for good in our lives in his wonderful way, and that **his WONDERFUL presence will never leave** us, even in the worst days of suffering. And **THAT WONDERFUL PRESENCE** is more valuable than any solution to our problems.

You see, a lot of times people come to church wondering if God can make our lives better.

- **Something happened in your life** and that has driven you to come back to church and you are here this weekend wondering, “Can God help my family? Can God fix my marriage? Can a relationship with God help focus my career?”
- That’s a little like a little kid saying **“if a nuclear bomb goes off next to me, will I get hot?”** “Yes... you’ll get hot.” But that’s kind of missing the point. If a nuclear bomb goes off next to you, your personal temperature becomes irrelevant.
- Yes, God, **can help you with your problems**, but he gives you something far greater than the answers to those problems. **He gives you himself.**
- **Life’s greatest discovery** is knowing him; knowing he loves you and promises to be ever-present in your life.⁵
- **That’s what is too wonderful for words**

That doesn’t take away your problems; but it completely changes how you go through them.

- **I may not be wealthy, but in Christ** I have a promise I’ll always be taken care of and an eternal inheritance that goes beyond what eye has seen or ear has heard.

⁵ Tim Keller, Isaiah 9

- **I may not experience immediate victory** over every temptation, but in Christ I have the **righteousness of Christ** and the promise that one day I'll be as pure as he is.
- In Christ, I may be... *"hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed."*

I can live every day with the assurance that the Wonderful Counselor is my Shepherd, I shall never be in want, he leads me besides still waters, makes me to lie down in green pastures, he restores my soul. Yes, even when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for he is with me. His rod and staff, they comfort me, my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever!"

Do you know the Wonderful Counselor?

- HE CAN SOLVE YOUR PROBLEMS.
 - Guilt? *He can fix that...*
 - Unsure of eternity?
 - Broken marriage?
 - Wandering child?
 - Health?
- He can bring light to your darkness.
- Do you trust him? Are you ready to walk with him, doing whatever he says?

PRAYER COUNSELORS

