

27TH DECEMBER 2020

FERINTOSH PARISH CHURCH

WORSHIP AT HOME



www.ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk

"What we celebrate at Christmas is not so much the birth of a baby, but the incarnation of God Himself." (R.C. Sproul)

HYMN

1 Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child!
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.

2 Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight:
glories stream from heaven afar,
heav'nly hosts sing, "Alleluia!
Christ the Saviour is born,
Christ the Saviour is born!"

3 Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light,
radiant, beams from thy holy face
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth!

4 Silent night, holy night!
Wondrous star, lend thy light.
With the angels let us sing
"Alleluia" to our King,
Christ the Saviour is born,
Christ the Saviour is born.

PRAYER

A prayer from the Puritan Prayers: *Lord God, Your name is excellent, your glory high, your compassions unfailing, your condescension wonderful, your mercy tender. Raise us this day above the smiles and frowns of the world, to the discoveries, invitations, promises of the Gospel. In Jesus name we pray, Amen*

SCRIPTURE READING

ISAIAH 9: 1 - 7 (NKJV)

1 Nevertheless the gloom will not be upon her who is distressed,
As when at first He lightly esteemed
The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
And afterward more heavily oppressed her,
By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,
In Galilee of the Gentiles.



2 The people who walked in darkness
Have seen a great light;
Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death,
Upon them a light has shined.
3 You have multiplied the nation
And increased its joy;
They rejoice before You
According to the joy of harvest,
As men rejoice when they divide the spoil.
4 For You have broken the yoke of his burden
And the staff of his shoulder,
The rod of his oppressor,
As in the day of Midian.
5 For every warrior's sandal from the noisy battle,
And garments rolled in blood,
Will be used for burning and fuel of fire.
6 For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
7 Of the increase of His government and peace
There will be no end,
Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom,
To order it and establish it with judgment and justice
From that time forward, even forever.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

LORD'S PRAYER

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.*

SERMON

Our text this morning is from Isaiah 9:6. *Which reads, 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, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

Seven hundred years before Jesus was born Isaiah saw him coming; saw him coming so clearly, that Augustine said, *"Isaiah is like the fifth gospel, for it is as if Isaiah himself stands beneath the cross."* Isaiah is the sole author of the book of Isaiah and his ministry dates during the administrations of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, a long ministry beginning about 740 BC.

The theme of Isaiah is that judgment for sin and salvation by grace is resting in the coming Messiah for the glory of God, and the purpose that Isaiah has in this book is to comfort those who seek the Lord, to reiterate that the Lord will not renounce His covenant, but He will come, and the Messiah will be born, and Jesus will reign supreme. Isaiah is a book that is filled with warnings on the one hand for the ungodly; and filled with comfort on the other for those who seek and serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now Isaiah makes clear both who the Messiah will be and what He will do, and some of his verses are what Spurgeon would call 'the great text of the Bible' where he just unfurls who Christ is in a marvellous way, and certainly our text this morning is one of those. *"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."* So, the One who is born in a stable in Bethlehem is the One who Isaiah calls Wonderful, because He is incomprehensible. He dwells in light inaccessible, hidden from our eyes in all His glory, but absolutely wonderful.

But what does wonderful mean? The word "wonderful" used here, in Hebrew literally could be translated as "wonder," and usually when the Bible uses this word it's referring to God in His historic saving actions, or His acts that He performs on behalf of His people Israel.

The root of this word refers to things that are unusual, things beyond human capabilities, things that awaken in us a sense of astonishment, literally, a sense of wonder. Something that is wonderful is not just a remarkable happening but it's a miraculous happening that moves us because it shows us God's amazing-loving-care, a divine intervention, His lovingkindness, and His covenant loyalty to His own people.

But here in this case, God is setting before us, through Isaiah, the most wonderful wonder of all time, the greatest miracle of all miracles, because this wonder doesn't just refer to an action of God, but it refers to a person of God, the second person of the Trinity who becomes man. His name shall be called Wonderful. If you like we can say that He is God's lovingkindness personified. He is Wonder with a capital "W." Jesus is eternal Wonder, divine Wonder, glorious Wonder. There's no wonder like this. Samuel Rutherford said, *"My salvation is my Lord's second greatest miracle."* Then he went on to say, *"His first greatest miracle is the Incarnation in Bethlehem."*

This wonderful Saviour is someone that we must know, someone that we must enter into relationship with. That's the point of Paul all throughout his epistles. Philippians 3:7-8, he says, *"But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ."* The Lord Jesus Christ is the most wonderful being that ever lived, and this is the wonder of Wonders, that we may know Him, that we may have a relationship with Him; that's what you call becoming a Christian.

Sometimes people will want to impress you by telling you that they know someone very famous (I think it's called, 'name-dropping'), but really the only thing that's important in life is that you know the most famous person of all, Jesus Christ, and that you know Him savingly. And Paul says that for him, when he looks back to the road to Damascus 30 years earlier than when he wrote to the Philippians, the only thing that mattered to him was that he counted everything in Christ gain to him, but everything outside of Christ he counted loss for him.

Well, why do we need Jesus as Wonderful. Well, I suppose there are lots of reasons and we could easily have a few sermons on all the reasons why we need Jesus to be wonderful but let me just mention two of them to you, two major ones.

One is this, to give meaning and purpose and a sense of wonder to your life. You see, we need Jesus because apart from Him our life really isn't wonderful, is it? One of the terrible effects of the fall is this, that human beings lose their sense of wonder. The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever, and in the fall we've lost that, and if we're not born again, if we're not brought into a relationship with Jesus Christ through saving faith and repentance, to find in Him the wonder, the joy, the beauty, the purpose, the meaning of life, if we don't find that, we lose a sense of wonder. As Spurgeon said, "The believer has joy in this life that no unbeliever could ever pretend to approach, and he's got the best joys yet to come in life eternal."

But secondly, we need Jesus to do two things for us that we can never do for ourselves. The first is, we need his active obedience to obey the law perfectly. We cannot obey the law perfectly so we cannot have a right to eternal life. It's only through His active obedience and grace by faith that we can have eternal life through His perfect obedience. He perfectly loved God above all, He perfectly loved His neighbours as Himself all 33 years of His life, He never sinned.

And secondly, we need Him in His passive obedience, that is, His suffering obedience when He suffered and died and endured the essence of wrath so that all of our sins could be wiped away, washed away, in the blood of the Lamb. As John Calvin put it, "by this double obedience he did everything for us that we need to have done for us so that when we, by the grace of God, may believe in him alone for salvation, we may be genuinely saved, and our sins washed away." What a wonder, that the Son of God became man. The infinite one, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, Son of God becoming Son of man. He who has made the world, is above the world, came into the world, the Almighty, a little child.

His name is Wonderful. He's wonderful in His Incarnation. Friends, come to the Saviour who's Wonderful, who will satisfy your soul and fill you with wonder. Come to Him in His wonderful offices as prophet to teach you, as priest who made sacrifice for you, as king to rule over you. Come to Him in His wonderful names, not just Wonderful, but also Counsellor and Mighty God and Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. Come to Him to receive His wonderful words, words of gospel, words of grace, words of truth. Come to Him in His wonderful actions. He can act to save you, so that you will lose your life and find your life in Him. So, go to Him and bow and confess and believe and embrace the One who alone is, Wonderful.

HYMN

His name is higher than any other
His name is Jesus, His name is Lord
His name is Wonderful
His name is Counsellor
His name is Prince of Peace
The mighty God
His name is higher than any other
His name is Jesus, His name is Lord

PRAYER

Great God of heaven, we thank you so much that you are a God full of wonder and that when we see you with the eye of faith, we are filled with awe. We bow before you in worship, like John in Revelation, or like Isaiah in the throne room, or like Job in the last chapter of his book. Help us to worship you in awe, in wonder, in joy, and may we be enabled to say together, "His name is Wonderful." In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

BENEDICTION

And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all this day and forevermore, Amen.

WORSHIP UPDATE

Depending on demand there will be two Sunday services, at 11am and 12.15pm. The services will run initially on a trial basis, and seating is limited to comply with guidelines. To attend you must contact the Session Clerk, Martin McLauchlan, by Friday at 5pm prior to the service to book a place.

To book, either visit the church website, and complete and submit the online booking form at: ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk/booking or email the

Session Clerk at

SessionClerk@ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk

and he will send you a link to the Booking Form for you to complete and submit. If you do not have access to the Internet, phone him on 01349 830303 and leave your name and phone number and he will get back to you as soon as he can to take your details.

Martin McLauchlan, Session Clerk

NEW YEAR MESSAGE

BBC Scotland channel are broadcasting the Resolutions programme featuring the 'Scented Lament' by the Moderator of the General Assembly which will be shown on BBC1 Scotland at 12:35pm on New Year's Day.