

Advent: The Names Say it All

Isaiah 9:1-7

There are plenty of things that can deplete our joy, and we would all say that we could do with more joy in our lives. The problem is, where do you get that joy? We will see why Christ's coming can be the source of joy we are looking for.

Darkened Hearts

Isaiah warns that the people of God will be plunged into darkness by invasion. Whilst we may not experience the invasion of foreign powers, our own hearts can be darkened by sin, by the struggles of life, by the sin of others against us. It is into such darkness that Christ's light can shine.

Overflowing Joy

Isaiah makes it clear that joy – lasting joy- is God's gift to us. He gives us two pictures of the measure of joy God has in store for his people: the joy of harvest, and the joy of victory. It is overflowing joy for those who are going through darkness. But how do you get it? Isaiah gives 3 reasons. Each begin with 'For...'

For The Burden is Lifted

Verse 4 says that God is going to break the oppressive hold of darkness on his people, 'as on the day of Midian.' Just as God did something against all the odds in using Gideon and his men to defeat an army, so God is going to do something equally crazy again to break the oppressive power of darkness in our lives. But how is God going to do that?

For The Enemy is Defeated

Verse 5 tells us that God is going to lift the burden off his people by finally defeating their enemy. But how is that victory going to happen? Through the birth of a baby boy.

For the Son has Come

Verse 6 tells us that light and joy will come to those in darkness, the burden of oppression can be lifted, the enemy that robs us of joy defeated, because of the birth of a baby. All that can be true because of who this baby is.

Wonderful Counsellor: The beliefs of many can be summarised as 'do good, and God is there, should you need him, as your therapist.' That is not what Isaiah means. Christ will lead, guide and instruct you. He will bring freedom, deliverance and joy by his counsel. He speaks the truth to that sets you free.

Mighty God: In this newborn baby dwells the one for whom nothing is impossible. He is the almighty saviour. There is nothing in your past that he cannot forgive, nothing in your present or your future that can stand in the way of his love for you. True joy comes as we live for his glory.

Everlasting Father: Christ is *the* benevolent protector, the ultimate leader, who will lay down his life to rescue you, who will work everything for your good. He will bear the full weight of rule and responsibility upon his shoulders.

Prince of Peace: Look for personal fulfilment in the wrong places and your heart will be robbed of peace. But the coming of Christ into the world offers a deep sense of acceptance by God that is not dependent on our performance. That brings real peace; peace within our own hearts and with God.