

Our Father, Our Protector

Week 2 of a 3 week series which is meant to equip the saints for the work of having godly and meaningful conversations both about the play itself and about the Christmas season in general.

Ephesians 4:8-12 "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men."
 ...And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ...

- **Spiritual leaders**, church leaders, shepherds/teachers, are "to **equip the saints for the work of ministry.**" This short sermon series is a specific case in point:
- **This year the topic is fatherhood.** So our desire is to talk to you about things you can say on the subject of fatherhood that will get people thinking about the true object of praise this season, that is Christ, Immanuel.
- **The focus of this study: the implications of the fatherhood of God** to all of us, who do, or *who should begin to*, look at God as our father who is in heaven.
- **Today specifically we will discuss God as our Father and Protector:** and I want to show you how to have conversations about God's fatherly protection that will glorify him, stir people's hearts and ultimately how these conversations can lead to sharing the gospel.

-THIS WEEK-

ISAIAH 9:6

For to us a child is born,
 to 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, Prince of Peace.

AT THE CORE (Today's 'Big Idea'):

1. As the perfect Father, God is able to protect us from anything he determines.

PSALM 91:14-16

¹⁴"Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him;

I will protect him, because he knows my name.

¹⁵When he calls to me, I will answer him;

I will be with him in trouble;

I will rescue him and honor him.

¹⁶With long life I will satisfy him

and show him my salvation."

- One thing to note in this passage is that the definitive tense of the verbs. I “**will**” deliver/protect/rescue etc.
- When God determines to do something, it is done, that’s what it means to serve and believe in a Sovereign God.
- He has the ability to protect and deliver and rescue us from everything that He intends to protect us from.
- A question that ought to arise in your minds then is “well, what about when I endure pain, suffering and loss?”

Digging In (What does this mean for me today?):

2. This means if you endure hardship it is by the design of God.

- if God has the ability to protect us from anything he decides to protect us from, then it logically follows that anything we endure is also the causation of a wilful decision by God.

HEBREWS 12:5-11

⁵And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

"My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.

⁶For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives."

⁷It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live?

¹⁰For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. ¹¹For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

- This text simply does not allow us the position that good things come from God and bad things come from elsewhere.
- If he were not the architect of our pain and suffering, how could he guarantee that He is working all things together for our good?
- God is not an ER doctor who only repairs our hurts; he is a master surgeon who **plans** our hurts in order that he might do us greater good.
- So even the designed suffering of God’s people is a form of his protection.

The Fatherhood of God is a great and glorious thing, and in the Christmas season it is an appropriate time for us to reflect on the greatest way in which he has protected us. **He provides us what we need most: Christ, whose work and life protect us from things we aren’t even aware we need protection from.**

Back to our verse: **ISAIAH 9:6**

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As **Wonderful Counsellor**, he protects us from purposelessness.

- As a wonderful counsellor, he is a guide and a master that instructs us, teaches us the way and leads us down it.

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶For by^[1] him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

Colossians 1:16-18

- Christ is the point of the universe. All things were created and designed to point us to Christ and to get us into a relationship with Him.
- If ALL THINGS were created by him, through him and for him, then if we don't GET him, understand him, discover a relationship with him... we miss EVERYTHING.
- God gave us Christ to protect us from living mundane, meaningless lives chasing after the wind.

As **Mighty God**, he protects us from physical, emotional and spiritual harm.

- He is Mighty (implying strength and power and capability) and he is God (implying Sovereignty and Omnipotence)

¹⁴Fear not, you worm Jacob,
you men of Israel!

I am the one who helps you, declares the LORD;
your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.

Isaiah 41:14

- this exclaims his ABILITY to do anything, and in the context of protection it means that he is bigger and more powerful than any danger we could ever face.
- It is a sensitive thing to contemplate that God has the ability to save you from anything if you have endured abuse, or disease, or broken relationships or depression – but let me simply say this if that's you, FAR worse than whatever you have had to endure would be to come and go from this life without experiencing Christ.
- So God does not protect us from everything, he does whatever he can to destroy barriers between you and Him.

As **Everlasting Father**, he protects us from the finality of death.

- This is better rendered : “Father of Eternity”, meaning that eternal life comes through Christ alone. He is the one who has the power to defeat death.

"Death is swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵ "O death, where is your victory?"

O death, where is your sting?"

1 Cor. 15:55-56

- Death is a certainty. But realizing that death is a part of mortal life, God sent his Son Christ into the world as the father of eternity, capable of bringing the gift of immortality to mortal humans.

As **Prince of Peace**, he protects us from the wrath of God.

- Christ is the prince of peace in that it is only by Him, peace with God becomes possible.

²¹But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— ²²the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.

Romans 3:21-25

- *We all sin and fall short of the glory of God—but praise our heavenly father that he has conceived a way to bring sinful humans and Himself, a Holy God, together:*
- *Gospel.*