Unto Us He Is

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[0:00] If you have your Bibles, I want you to turn to Isaiah chapter 9.! Isaiah chapter 9. That's so good, I wouldn't even need to preach. We could just go home, but we're not.

When I was a kid, I didn't get a whole lot in the mail. But there were two exciting things that came in the mail every year.
The most exciting thing that came in the mail was a department store catalog. Now, I'm not sure about part of this, but I think that Alexander's on Pleasantburg Drive used to have one.
I think we got one. I'm seeing some shagings of their heads. And man, they had a killer toy section. And I loved it. But I know that we got a Sears and Roebuck catalog. Now, let me explain.
If you call it Sears and Roebuck, you're old, okay? The time I came around, it was Sears on Stone Avenue. And they had dropped the Roebuck.
[1:08] But I always knew when I was talking to old people, they'd say, we're going to Sears and Roebuck. And I'm like, who's Roebuck? But Sears was the place. And man, they had a catalog. And I would get that catalog and turn to the back of it that came close to Christmas time.

And I'd get that catalog and circle all the toys. I mean, if you wanted to know what I needed for Christmas, just go check out the Sears catalog, you know? Because you knew what that was.
It was fabulous. And the second most exciting thing that ever came, and I don't know if it came in the mail or they left it on the doorstep, but that was the phone book.
And every year we'd get a phone book. And I loved the phone book because it proved I existed. We were real. And when you've got a name like I've got, you wonder if it's even going to be in there. And if you are, can you even find it? Will they spell it right? Well, they send you a bill. Old Mama Bell sends you a bill every month. They knew how to spell your name. They got it right every time. But you get the phone book.
[2:07] Now, since I've been back in Pickens, I think I've got one phone book. And I don't know if that was because the people before me had a home phone, and I just stayed on the line. And I don't know if they just every now and then go, hey, I think we'll send out some phone books.

And that thing was minuscule. I mean, it was tiny because it has home phone numbers in it, and nobody has home phones anymore. Now, if you do, you're not a nobody. I don't mean that. But I'm just saying, not many people have a home phone anymore at all.
And so the reality is we don't get them. But listen, there were no cell phones. Now, some of you are shocked. There were no cell phones in those days, okay? So if you had a phone, it was either sitting on a table or it was sitting on a wall, one or the other, and your number was in the phone book.
That is unless you paid to have it unlisted. And if you paid to have it unlisted, you were either very important or you just didn't like people, one or the other.
I mean, just one way or the other. But on the front page of that phone book was the number for the police, the number for the fire, the number for the ambulance, medical treatment.
[3:18] And in case of emergency, you either had to go find that book or a lot of people, they didn't have Post-its in those days, but a lot of people would make them a Post-it.

They'd take a piece of paper, write down the police number, write down the fire number. You got to have the city police, the county police, fire, write all that down and tape it on a wall beside their phone.
There was a lot of that going on in people's homes, you know? But if you didn't know, you better know where the phone book was because if you had emergency, you had to go look up that number.

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Now, some of you all are looking at me like, he's lost it. It's a different world. And the rest of you know exactly what I'm talking about. Today, if you need anything, just call 911.
They started trying to create that number before I was even born, but it didn't come around until after I was grown. But now all calls to 911 go to the same dispatch service that then sends it where it needs to go.
[4:25] And the needs that come in are interesting, to say the least. But someone has summarized those calls into four different type of calls that they get.

Some call for guidance. They just don't know what to do. There's a situation. They just don't know what to do, and they won't guide it. So they call 911.
Other people call because they can't help themselves. They're in a situation where they need somebody with greater power than they have to take care of something, and so they call 911. Then there are calls of, for lack of a better term, relational collapse.
I mean, it may be a domestic disturbance. It may be a child worried about a child, or maybe somebody's ran away and they've been gone too long, or walked away and been gone too long, or we're concerned about somebody's safety, and so we call, or custody crisis, and those types, all those things.
They get those kind of calls, ugly calls, okay? And then other calls come because of chaos. There's just confusion and panic, and they just need peace.
[5:38] Now, we hadn't been here long when we woke up one morning, I mean, woke up one evening after we went to bed, to carbon monoxide detectors going off, okay?

We had two of them, and both of them were going off, and they were going off in stereo, so it was like it was reverberating. And the first thought that I have, if a fire alarm goes off, is just wave at it a little while, and it'll go off, you know?
It's kind of what my thought is. What do you do with a carbon monoxide detector? How do you handle that? And so, what do you wave? And you can't see it, and you can't taste it, and you don't know, and you just grow real tired thinking about what it is.
You know, that's what carbon monoxide does to you. So I couldn't ignore it, even though I wanted to go to bed. I had to do something. So what did I do? I called 911, and I called them apologetically, you know?
I'm sorry to bother you, but we got carbon monoxide detectors going off, and if it was one of them, if my family would have let me, which they probably wouldn't have, I probably would have unplugged it and went back to bed, but it was two of them, and so it was a different matter.
[6:52] So they said, no, we'll come, you know? It was about this time of year, and so they, and it was cold outside, and so they came, and they had a detector. The firemen came, and they had a detector, and they walked in the house, and yeah, so you got some things going on.

It's not bad, but you got some things going on. They went down in our basement, our utility basement, and they walked around, and they went, oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, you got a problem. You need to go outside, and I said, it's cold outside. They said, no, you need to go outside.
You need to get out of here. So I said, Lord, I hope I filled up the car. So we went out and sat in the car for a little while, and they brought in a fan, a big fan, and he told the guy with the fan, he said, don't put it in front of that Christmas tree.
You'll blow it out the door. Thank God they didn't do that. That would have been interesting, but anyway, they put that fan down and blew that through the house. I don't know, for quite a while. They hung out a long time, and then they said, all right, yeah, all right, and we figured out what was the problem, and we had to get some things worked on and all that stuff, but we worked out all that stuff, and they said, I think you'll be all right.
Crack a window, and so we cracked some windows and went to bed freezing, but it was scary. I mean, it was just, it was kind of chaotic. We just didn't know.
[8:06] Didn't know what the deal was, and didn't know how to handle it. That's a 911 call. They're used to that kind of stuff, so it seems like that every emergency call that is made is a search for someone who knows, someone who's able, someone who cares, or someone who can bring order.

Well, I know somebody who can handle all that, and the prophet Isaiah spoke of him 700 years before he came as a babe in a manger.
Jesus came to us, and what a blessing we have, and it's worth celebrating this Christmas. Isaiah chapter 9, verse 6 says, For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be

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upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, I pray this morning that you'll help us not only to enjoy the babe in a manger and what all that Christmas means, but God, I also hope that you'll allow us to see the Savior and how you're involved in our lives and what you are for us and help us to respond in obedience as you speak to us.
In Jesus' name, amen. If you are in search of one who knows, we have in Christ a wonder of a counselor.
[10:03] That is literally what it says. And when it's translated wonderful, what does it mean by wonderful? Well, the word there for wonderful in Hebrew is Pele.

Much like the soccer star of, I guess, the 70s, one of the great ones, is pronounced and transliterated in the same way as that old soccer star, but it means marvelous beyond human expectation, something that only God can do, something we can't explain.
It is a word that is used in the Hebrew. It is reserved for the holy things that God can do. And he is truly wonderful.
I mean, everything about him is full of wonder. He was born like no other from a virgin. He lived like no other. He was sinless. He knows like no other.
He's all-knowing. He is able like no other. He has all power. He loves like no other. He actually is love. He died like no other.
[11:13] He is he was innocent. He rose again like no other, unprompted, unassisted, independently. He rose.

And he gave victory like no other because his victory is consuming and eternal. It is the wonder of the God-man.
Not 50% God, 50% man, but 100% God and 100% man. He is beyond our understanding, beyond our comprehension, more than we can imagine.
He was brought into the world by a woman, yet he formed her in her mother's womb. He was laid in a manger, yet the tree that made the manger came from wood that existed because he spoke it into being.
a star marked his arrival, yet he's the one that flung the stars into their places.
[12:22] And we're not even out of the manger yet, folks. I'm telling you, our God is amazing. Yet it says he came to the earth as to be our counselor.

Wouldn't it be nice to be able to go to a counselor that knew all things? I know one.
I mean, wouldn't it be great to go to a counselor that knew our problems before we even spoke them? I know one.
One that would, we could hide nothing from, and yet still accepts us as we are? I know one.
One who would be thorough, and one who would be just, and one who would be honest, and one who would be loving. Thank God I know one. And scripture tells us how he can understand us.
[13:30] It reassures us again and again all over scripture. Isaiah chapter 53 verse 3 says, he was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief as one from whom men hid their faces and hide their faces and he was despised and we esteemed him not.

You go to the New Testament and the Hebrew writer in Hebrew 4 verse 15 says, for we don't have a high priest who's unable to sympathize with our weaknesses but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are yet without sin.
I understand something about that friend. The reality is he understands our circumstances.
promises. I love what 1 John 1 9 says that if we confess our sins he's faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness and what that passage means is so powerful because I'm thankful if he was able but not willing we'd be in a mess.
and if he was willing but not able we'd be in the same mess. But scripture says that he's faithful and just.
That means he's willing and able to forgive us of our sins and then to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And I'll tell you we get so good at sinning that if we go home and try to write down every sin that is in our life and every sin that we commit we're going to miss some.
[15:09] And that's why I like the last phrase in that passage. Cleanses us from all unrighteousness. You see that's the high priest that goes on our behalf understands our circumstances and has been there.

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Don't ever think well I'm in sin but my sin's different. It's justified. Somehow nobody else has ever experienced this and mine's a unique case and somehow it's okay.
All of that is of the evil one. There's a Greek word for that. Baloney. It's a bunch of baloney. It ain't true.
And the reality is a sin's a sin and thank God we serve a savior that understands us better than we understand ourselves and can sympathize with our weaknesses and in every respect understands what we're going through.
It don't stop there. Psalm 34 verse 18 says the Lord is near to the broken hearted and he saves the crushed in spirit. And then Jesus said in Matthew 11, 28, 29 come to me all who labor and are heavy laden and I'll give you rest.
[16:33] Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls. You know what a yoke is.

You put a pair of oxen in a yoke and they will pull the burden whatever it may be. And what he says is you get yoked up with me.
My yoke is easy. I'll take the weight. I'll take the burden. That term also is used of those who sat under a rabbi and took upon his teaching and his instruction and did what he told them to do.
He took on the yoke of the rabbi. In the same way, if you'll dedicate yourselves to follow what the word of God says, he'll guide you all the way.
He'll make it easy along the way. We serve a wonderful God, a wonder of a counselor in Christ.
When we're in crisis or the weight of life itself comes upon us, we need somebody who's able.
[17:44] We need a mighty God. I call it the God of all. He is a mighty God. The passage we looked at last week in the first part of this verse talks about a royal son that would be given and he'd take charge of the government and he'd be not only that but a wonderful advisor and as we just talked about, a counselor.

Now how do we know that he was talking about Christ and not some earthly king? Because you've got to be careful with prophecy. A lot of people are not careful with prophecy and it sells to write books about prophecy.
People are enamored with knowing what's going to happen around the corner of tomorrow because we don't know what's going to happen tomorrow. So man, if somebody can tell us and they can base it on scripture, we'll buy it up and eat it up, okay?
But we need to be careful with prophecy because the reality is when Isaiah spoke, he was speaking to people that were sitting before him when he spoke. And God gave him a message for those people.
When Paul wrote the book of Ephesians, you know who he wrote it to? He wrote it to the church of Ephesus. He didn't write it to us directly. He wrote it to the church of Ephesus.
[18:58] It helped us a lot to understand what was going on in Ephesus and understand how they heard it. And then as the seminary professor told me years ago, filter it through the first audience and then understand how it relates to you.

Now, through the power and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and through the perfection of scripture, it does relate to us. And there is a message there, but we need to understand that when folks spoke hundreds of years ago about what was to come, are they talking about what was coming in their day?
Are they talking about what was coming in the next generation? That's been many generations ago. Or were they talking about our future? It's fascinating how people deal with that. So it's very easy to look at this passage and think, Isaiah must be talking about a king that's coming soon, you know. Well, this passage, this phrase gives it away. He's not talking about an earthly king. He's talking about a mighty God.
It exposes the real issue. It's not just a promise that a king is coming, but that God himself is incarnate. The mighty God.
[20:14] That word might is often used when speaking of a fierce warrior, unbeatable, one that wins the battles. We should never believe that we can win our own battles on our own.

The spiritual battles that we face are beyond our strength and beyond our ability. The apostle Paul put it this way in Ephesians 6 verse 12.
He said, For we don't wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the

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heavenly places.
Folks, this is beyond us. This is not a battle for us to fight on our own. And I'm thankful today that we have a mighty God who's taken upon our battles.
He's taken them upon himself and won them. And the question is, do we rely upon him to have victory in our lives?
[21:20] Because some of us are fighting the same battles that we've been fighting since before we knew Christ. On January the 8th, 1815, there were many skirmishes and smaller territorial battles that the Americans profoundly defeated the British in the Battle of New Orleans.

And it was the last chapter in the war of 1812, or so it seemed. What a chapter it was. The British suffered 2,000 casualties in that battle.
The Americans suffered 71. Thank you very much. It seemed to be the tell-all. But what those soldiers did not know on that battlefield was that the war was already over.
The treaty of Ghent had been signed on Christmas Eve two weeks before that ended the war. And due to a lack of communication in those days, the message did not get out.
And hundreds died fighting a battle that they didn't have to fight because the war was already over.
Folks, when I read about that, I think, how many Christians do the same thing?
[22:45] How many of us are fighting battles that we don't have to fight? We're continuing in hand-to-spirit combat, trying to win battles. When the war's over, we serve a mighty God.

A mighty God that came to this earth to live, to die, to rise again, to claim us victory. So fight no more. Your mighty God has already run. Just surrender to your mighty God.
He's claimed your victory. When we're in a crisis or the weight of life itself is upon us, we need somebody to not only be mighty and win the battles, but we also need somebody who's able and somebody who cares.
We need the Father of time, the everlasting Father. With the promise of Jesus came the promise of the revelation of God the Father, the Trinity of the Godhead.
It's hard for the finite man to grasp. However, it is well worth pondering. God in one being in three distinct persons. The Father gives all authority to the Son and bears witness to Him, as does Jesus to Himself.
[24:02] Yet the Son claims nothing for Himself. He gives all glory to the Father who has sent Him. The Father glorifies the Son. The Son glorifies the Father. The Father and the Son defer to the Holy Spirit, who in turn glorifies and defers to the Father and the Son in the oneness that is eternally dynamic and inexhaustible.

It is an amazing wonder. And if you tell me that you understand all of that, you're lying. Because it is beyond us.
We believe it by faith. As the Word of God teaches us. But the question is, if they're distinct, why is Christ called the everlasting Father here?
Well, let the Word speak for itself. Colossians 2 verse 9 and 10 says this, For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.
In Him is Christ, by the way. And you've been filled in Him who is the head of all rule and authority.
Jesus Himself put it this way in John 14, 9.
[25:19] He said, whoever has seen me has seen the Father. In John chapter 10 verse 30, He says, I and the Father are one. The title Father means originator.

It means the source. In other words, God is the source of all of eternity. He's the Father of all time. The origin of all existence. If you look at the front of your Bible, you'll notice in the beginning it says that God said, let us make man in our own image.
In our own image. Who's He talking to? He's not speaking to the angels. We're not made into the image of angels.
And I don't want to go down this rabbit hole, but we don't become angels when we die. So don't say God needed another angel when somebody that you love dies.
Because you don't become angels. You weren't an angel on earth. You ain't going to be an angel in glory, you know. He wasn't talking to the angels.
[26:30] Was He speaking to the animals? We're not made in the image of animals. Some folks act like it, but we're not. We're not made in the image of animals. We're not made in the image of trees.

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Now what we see there in the very beginning of the book is we see the Godhead. That Christ was in the beginning.
As John chapter 1 tells us, the Word was with God. The Word was God. He's always been. I mean, it may look like a manger born boy died on the cross and is gone, but don't be deceived.
He died, but He rose again. And He rules and He reigns as the everlasting Father. He is forever God. Forever present.
Forever sovereign. And He'll never leave us. He'll never forsake us. He'll never let us down. He'll never die. He'll never disappear. He is forever.
[27:31] Forever. And the promise of the manger is this, that the eternal Father is so personal, so loving, so caring for you and for me that He stepped down onto our level, into our time, through our world, and in our flesh to make us eternally His.

And when you need someone who knows, you may say, nobody gets me. You're wrong. You're wrong. When you need somebody that knows He's a wonder of a counselor.
Literally what it says, a wonder of a counselor. When you need somebody who's able, He's a mighty God. And when you need somebody who will never leave you, people will let you down. Even when they try their best, they'll let you down. He'll never let you down. He's an everlasting Father.
All we need is found in the hope of Christ. I heard about a hiker who was hiking in the mountains.
[28:57] And he had a good map, and he had what he thought was a reliable compass. But the compass apparently had been put in his pocket with other things, and it had something else metal or magnetized, had magnetized the needle in the wrong direction.

Just a little bit, but in the wrong direction on that compass. And so every time he checked it, it looked right. It didn't act chaotic. It looked right.
But every time he checked it, it looked right. But it felt right. The needle settled just like it was supposed to. But it was always pointing in the wrong direction a little bit, just a little bit.
Now, I want you to understand something. If a compass is supposed to point this way and instead points this way, the average hiker in the mountains after an hour will be 1,000 feet from where he's supposed to be.
And this fellow had been doing it for hours and hours. And thankfully, a ranger found him.
[30:19] And when the ranger found him, he explained to him. He said, your compass did not fail dramatically. It was just off enough to take you far from where you needed to be.

And that's the way life is. We follow our feelings. We follow our instincts.
We follow our best guesses. And sometimes they look right. And sometimes they feel right.
And sometimes they seem right. But they can lead us where we never intended to go.
And it does not have to be that way. Because Jesus is a wonder of a counselor.
[31:32] He knows the right path. He is the mighty God. He has the strength to rescue us. He is the everlasting Father.

He walks with us and guides us all the way home. And I can't wait next week to tell you for Christmas about the Prince of Peace.
He is our Christmas hope. He is our life hope. The gift of Christmas is Jesus. And the hope that we have in this life is Jesus.
Unto us, he is exactly what we need. And I'm thankful today that he's here for us.
If you've never surrendered your life to the Lord Jesus Christ. You've never confessed your sins to him as I mentioned a little while ago.
[32:37] You've never asked him to forgive you, to come into your life and to save you and to change you. I want you to know, he'll meet you where you are if you'll surrender your life to him today.

He hears your prayer. Lord, I need you to forgive me, to cleanse me, to change my life.
And from this day forward, I'll live my life to please you in all I do. I won't do it perfectly. But your word tells me that the Spirit of God will empower me to be what you would have me to be.
If you've never done that, I encourage you in a minute, we're going to stand and we're going to sing.
And you come and say, Pastor, I need to give my life to Christ. Maybe you have done that, but you've never acknowledged it publicly.
You've never told him about it. And Jesus, by his commission and by his example, tells us that the way that we tell other people to do it is through baptism. If you've never been baptized as a

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believer, as we stand and sing in just a moment, you come and say, Pastor, I'd love to join this church by baptism.
[33:51] I want to publicly profess my faith as Scripture dictates for me to do. We won't do that today. We'll line it up later. But you come today. Maybe you're like the Stale family that went on earlier worship today that God drew to this church.

Maybe you say, I've been visiting here and I feel like God would have me to be a part of this church. You come. As we stand and say, you come and obey God in that.
Or maybe you're here today. And you know you're a Christian. And you know you've been baptized. And you know you're where you're supposed to be. But yet there's something in your life that ain't where it's supposed to be.
Whatever it is, he can handle it. You may not be able to handle it.
I may not be able to handle it. We may not be able to handle it. He can handle it. So give it to him. Where you stand at this altar with a pastor praying for you. However, give it to him today.
[35:07] Lord Jesus, I love you. Thank you for your word. Thank you for the gift of Christ. Help us to respond in obedience, God. In Jesus' name, amen.

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