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Weekly Message from the Pastor and Sermon Notes for November 28, 2021

Scripture: Isaiah 9:6 (NIV)

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

Sermon: “And He Shall be Called, Part 1”

INTRODUCTION

What’s in a name? Last year while working on the Martin Luther King service, it required a great deal of effort and attention to detail. Not only was I learning the names of many new people, but I was learning what organization they represented and what their official titles were. Normally if I was meeting people in person, I would have used some word association tool to help me learn names. But we were using Zoom to meet and whatever the name on the little tile box was on my screen is the name I associated with the person. This is a challenge of modern technology. In a similar way, unless I had a name in my contact list on my cell phone, if I got a text message I wasn’t really sure who was trying to contact me in group threads. And there were so many of you that I called on the phone having no idea what you looked like because I didn’t have a face with the name. Masks only made learning names with facial recognition harder. Names and faces are important for making connections.

PART 1

Here in the book of Isaiah we see a passage that speaks of a coming Messiah, one will be known by many names. And the names he is called are important because they are a sign of how to recognize him when he does come. One day there will be a face that corresponds to the name.

We as Christian correspond these names with Jesus. When Jesus came, those who followed him saw that he was the fulfillment of prophecy, and so his disciples gave him the names that came from the Hebrew Scriptures. As his presence became

more and more known, more and more names were given to him. His teachings and miracles earned him great honor among people for centuries to come.

PART 2

Note in the passage of Isaiah how it says he will be called. This implies that he has not been called it yet. These names have not been given to him yet. Sometime in the future from when Isaiah writes these words, this child to be born will be given these names.

Did God give this child these names, or did God say he will be called by these names some day? Isaiah is a book of prophecy, so this is a prophecy that a child that does not have these names will one day be given these names. People will know him and based on that knowledge of him, they will call him by these names.

PART 3

This raises the question of did God send Jesus to be the Messiah, or did we based on what Jesus said and did proclaim him to be the Messiah. The question goes to who is the one who calls this child by these names. The passage of Isaiah doesn't say who gives him or calls him by these names.

You may remember in the story of when Jesus asks the disciples who do the people say he is? The disciples say that he is Elijah or one of the other prophets. But Jesus asks them directly who they say he is. And Peter responds "you are the Christ". As a matter of fact when Jesus is questioned what titles people are giving him, his response back to the questions usually is to affirm they are right in calling him that without him saying that he calls himself that.

CONCLUSION:

The decision of what we call Jesus is a decision God leaves to us. Jesus did not come and say, here I am the one you have been waiting to call X, Y, and Z. Jesus always left the questions to his followers of who do you say I am. What shall we call him? That all depends upon the relationship we have with him. Is he the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace?

The child who Isaiah prophesied would be the Messiah is the one that the world would give these names too. God would send the child, but we would choose to be in relationship with him by the names we would give him. Part of the prophecy is the Messiah would be known by what we would call him. And in so attaching these names to Jesus, we affirm the prophecy in the names that he has been called. He is the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

We look to Jesus as the fulfillment of the prophecy based on what God shared through Isaiah and also through how God prophesied we would respond when we found this child spoken of in Scripture.