

Sermon Notes
Christmas Eve - Isa 9:2-7
December 24, 2020

I. Introduction

- a. after preaching an especially long and confusing sermon... where he rambled on and on and on... a woman approached her pastor and said, *your sermon reminded me of God's peace and love...* he was flattered and said, *how so...* she replied, *well, it reminded me of God's peace in the way that it was beyond my understanding and it reminded me of God's love because it endured forever...*
- b. try not to do that to you tonight...
Isa 9:2-7... "the people who walk in darkness will see a great light... they will rejoice before you... you will break the yoke of their slavery and lift the heavy burden from their shoulders... you will break the oppressor's rod... for a Child is born to us... the government will rest on His shoulders... He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace... His authority shall grow and there shall be endless peace, fairness, and justice..."
- c. as much as this night brings celebration and joy... as much as the music warms our hearts... many of them are still filled with heaviness... this year has taken a toll on us... isolation, sickness, regulations, shutdowns, and even death have caused us to grieve in ways we have not before...
- d. today is a complicated day... tomorrow even more so... it will be filled with laughter and joy and memories... but for many, there will also be a deep longing for those who no longer sit at our dinner table... or light candles with us and sing in church...
- e. even though we hide it pretty well... I can see the pain in your hearts... I will see the tears on your cheeks and the words catch in your throats as we sing Silent Night... a night that will be more silent than ever for many families in our world... you are not alone...
- f. you are not only surrounded by others who know those same emotions... but you are loved by a God who cares deeply for broken hearts and broken people... Jesus came into a world of darkness... full of sadness, longing, and hopelessness... but He is Immanuel, God with us... in a concrete, tangible way that not even Isaiah could have dreamed of...
Psa 34:18... "God is near to the brokenhearted... saves those crushed in spirit..."
Isa 57:15... "I live with the oppressed... I revive the spirit of the lowly..."
Matt 1:23... "give birth to son... call Him Immanuel... which means *God with us...*"

- g. in my favorite Christmas Song... O Holy Night... there is a line that speaks to my soul... *a thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices...* we are weary... but there is a hope coming that will bring rest to our weary souls...
Matt 11:28-30... "come to Me all who are weary and burdened... I will give you rest..."
- h. we all know those who are weary... we all know those who are burdened... we all know a family who will have an empty seat at the table tonight... an empty place in the living room when gifts are opened tomorrow... but we are not without hope... a hope of eternal life that this Child brings us... a hope that allows us to live until He returns and takes us all to His eternal home...
Psa 43:5... "why am I discouraged and sad... I will put my hope in My Savior..."
Psa 71:5... "you are my hope, Lord God... my confidence from my youth..."
Prov 10:28... "the hope of the righteous is joy..."
Rom 12:12... "rejoice in hope... be patient in affliction... be persistent in prayer..."
Rom 15:13... "may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe..."
elpis... *confident expectation of good...*
- i. this night offers us the thrill of hope... hope in that whatever the darkness brings... the light of Christ is more than enough to dispel it...
John 1:5... "the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it..."
John 8:12... "anyone who follows me will never walk in darkness... will have light..."
John 12:46... "I've come as light... everyone who believes... not remain in darkness..."
- j. so tonight... remember that God entered the world as we did... the helpless child of a woman... remember that gifts and decorations didn't change the world... it was changed in a dirty stable thru a poor, unwed couple who followed the voice of God in a difficult time...
- k. and, if you are one of those that has trouble celebrating this year... if grief has overtaken you... if tears are nearby... remember this Child knows and has experienced those same sorrows and those same tears... and wants to bring you the comfort that only He can bring...
Isa 53:3-5... "He was despised and rejected... a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief... we turned our backs on Him and looked the other way... we did not care... yet, it was our weaknesses He carried... our sorrows that weighed Him down... He was pierced for our rebellion... crushed for our sins... He was beaten so we could be whole... whipped so we could be healed..."
Isa 57:18... "I have seen what they do, but I will heal them anyway... I will lead them... I will comfort those who mourn..."

Instructions for Candle Lighting / Glow Sticks
Start *Silent Night*
Light Candles from Front