

**"NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES: WONDERFUL COUNSELOR."**

**Rev. Robert T. Woodyard**

**First Christian Reformed Church, Lynden**

**December 2, 2012, 10:30am**

**Text for the Sermon: Isaiah 9:6-7; Romans 11:33-36**

**Introduction.**

If you are a parent you have experienced that strange and wonderful privilege of giving a human being a name, a name they will be called and remembered by all their days on earth and beyond.

We wrestled with finding the right name. Some names struck us as funny, some sounded weird to us, some evoked very positive memories of people we liked and others not so much, some belonged to famous people, some had stereotypes attached to them, but in the end it's often a very subjective kind of choice.

If you have five boys and have to come up with 10 names that can be even more challenging. And some of your parents had to come up with way more than that.

As much thought as we put into names, it seems the people of the Bible gave it much more. There we see all kinds of names with much meaning, some of them very symbolic like the names of Joseph's children or Hosea's children.

Abraham means "Father of a multitude." Jacob means "Trickster." Goliath means "Splendor." David means "Beloved." Peter means "Rock." All of these people proved true to their names!

Isaiah 9:6 says His name (not names) shall be called, *Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

This is one long name or title. This is like a royal name or throne name, a name given at coronation.

The Queen of England's full title is "Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland" to which is added "Head of the Commonwealth, Supreme Governor of the Church of England, Duke of Normandy, Duke of Lancaster (yes, Duke, not Duchess), Lord of Mann and Paramount Chief of Fiji."

Prince Charles' titles are His Royal Highness The Prince Charles Philip Arthur George, Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester, Duke of Cornwall, Duke of Rothesay, Earl of Carrick, Baron of Renfrew, Lord of the Isles, Prince and Great Steward of Scotland.

It speaks of the greatness of a person that they have multiple names and titles. I have here a little booklet on 220 names of Jesus in the Bible, another book has 250. These names and titles speak of His greatness and of His character and nature. He has the name that is above all names.

During this season of Advent we are going to explore the meaning behind the four titles the prophet Isaiah reveals in Isaiah 9:6.

While many in the world celebrate Christmas, far fewer celebrate the Christ of Christmas. While the world has their winter holiday, we will strive to worship Jesus who is worthy of all our worship and adoration. In order to worship Him we need to know Him and we begin to know Him by knowing His name. We begin with *Wonderful Counselor*.

## **Wonderful.**

In the book of Judges Chapter 13 there is the story of an angel of the Lord appearing to Manoah and his barren wife who promised them that a son would be born to them; that son would be Samson.

**Judges 13:17-18** And Manoah said to the angel of the Lord, “What is your name, so that, when your words come true, we may honor you?” 18 And the angel of the Lord said to him, “Why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful?”

That word the angel of the Lord uses means His name is too wonderful to be comprehended by mortal man. This angel of the Lord is saying that His name is too superb and magnificent, too incomprehensible to be understood. That right there is a clue to the deity of the angel. What we know about the appearances of the angel of the Lord in the OT is that often they are a pre-incarnation of Jesus.

With Isaiah’s prophecy and revelation about Jesus something wonderful beyond words is about to happen. As Paul says,

**I Corinthians 2:9** As it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”

The very first name used of this child who is born to us tells us He is utterly different and set apart. There is nothing common about Jesus.

Jesus is a true wonder far beyond all the wonders of the world, ancient or modern. He surpasses human categories, He surpasses human thought and human understanding and human power. He is God Himself, both God and man. What is more wonderful?

Christ is more excellent, greater than all the other works of God. Indeed, Christ surpasses even the creation of the world. Nothing can compare to the incomparable Christ.

The grace of God revealed in Christ is greater than all the grace revealed in all the miracles of God ever wrought. He is more wonderful than the most wonderful thing you can think of.

*Is He wonderful to you?* Is He the most wonderful thing in the world to you right now?

He’s not just wonderful, but “wonderful in counsel and excellent in wisdom” (Isaiah 28:29).

## **Counselor.**

We know that the earthly son of David, King Solomon, was a man of incomparable wisdom, wiser than the wisest person ever to life. To be a good king requires unbelievable wisdom.

The spiritual Son of David who forever sits on the throne of David, is wise beyond all human comprehension.

**Isaiah 11:2** The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, *the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel* and might, *the Spirit of knowledge* and the fear of the Lord.

**Colossians 2:2-3** "... Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

In this child born to be king are the treasures of wisdom, understanding, knowledge and counsel.

He has no need to surround Himself with counselors or advisors. There is no cabinet or executive counsel in heaven. Jesus never once gathered the disciples together and asked, "Guys, what do you think we should do now?" or "How do you think I should handle this situation?"

**What does a good counselor do?** If you were looking for a really good counselor what traits or characteristics would you expect to find?

**First,** He identifies with the one in need. Jesus became one of us.

**Hebrews 2:17-18** For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

**Hebrews 4:15** For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.

**Isaiah 53:3** He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.

He knows us because He is like us yet with much more wisdom, age and experience.

**Second,** He is always available and is always with in us.

Emmanuel means just that, God with us. And His promise is to be with us always even to the end of the age (Hebrews 13:5).

**John 14:16** And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, ... You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

**Third,** He makes an accurate diagnosis and prescribes the right remedy. He tells us the truth.

He knows all His Father's secrets. He is intimately acquainted with all the counsels of God. His advice is always perfect.

**Psalms 19:7** The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul;  
the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;  
8 the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;  
the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;  
9 the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;  
the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.

If you want to “be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God (Colossians 1:9-10) this is the path, this is the prescription.

This is the book of His wisdom. This book and the Gospel it proclaims is the perfect wisdom of God. You cannot be wiser than this.

All that is necessary for our salvation, for life, health and strength is contained here.

**Fourth**, He has good fruit. You can tell from His client references (quoted from several sources on the internet).

Mary Magdalene (Luke 8:2) who was delivered from seven demons

The Gadarene Demoniac (Matthew 8:28ff) was delivered from a violent spirit and made normal.

The Samaritan woman (John 4) who had been married and divorced five times and was currently living with a man became a missionary.

The woman caught in the act of adultery (John 8) was saved from death and sent on her way transformed.

Zacchaeus was a despised tax-collector (Luke 19) and after meeting with Jesus vowed to repay anyone he cheated with interest.

The religious leader, Nicodemus became a Christian even though it was very unpopular to do so.

And it is not just those who were in the Bible. Jesus is still changing lives.

Augustine was a womanizer who ran with a wild crowd before becoming one of the greatest leaders of the church.

John Newton was a drunken slave trader before he became a pastor and wrote “Amazing Grace.”

Johnny Cash was a hard living Country Singer before coming to Christ

Chuck Colson was a convicted Watergate Conspirator before he met Christ. The Lord led him to begin Prison Fellowship.

### **Application and conclusion.**

What is God’s counsel like?

**Romans 11:33-34** Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

34 “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?”

**Colossians 2:2-3** ... Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

God’s counsel is higher than ours, His thoughts higher than ours, His ways are higher than ours.

Everything about Christmas proves God’s ways are way above our ways. If you were going to set in motion a plan to save the world from sin, what would you do? How would you go about it?

Would you come down to earth as a king in a palace in Athens or Rome, rich and powerful, highly educated in rhetoric and philosophy, wielding great power and influence?

Would you send your only Son, would you make Him condescend to the level of become a man, would you send Him to be born in poverty to a poor couple in a poor town in a cattle stall? Would you have Him be a carpenter and make Him suffer and die a terrible death on a cross? Would you leave His message in the hands of some uneducated Galilean fishermen? And would you decide that the message should continue through the foolishness of preaching.

Add to this that God in His perfect creation has allowed things like evil and Satan and sin to exist and that He often uses His enemies to accomplish His purposes and terrible tragedies to bring good ends and that those He loves He disciplines and allows to suffer.

With all of this evidence why do we get upset when God does things in our lives that don't make sense to us, don't seem logical to our human way of reasoning, that don't fit our categories for how God should do things.

God is infinite, all knowing, all wise, knowing the beginning from the end. God's ways are unsearchable, they are beyond finding out until He reveals them and makes them known. And when He does, the world rebels.

God's way is the way of salvation. Man's way is not the way of salvation. God's counsel is the way of truth, man's counsel is not.

Was it not the counsel of a counselor who brought our world and our lives into complete ruin? Did not Satan give counsel to Eve and entice her with deception? Was it not counsel that brought sin and death into this world and into our hearts?

Dear friends, is not the greatest need of our world a wise and wonderful counselor who will speak the truth to us, who will expose the lie and deception of sin and who will restore what another counselor destroyed?

We should be rejoicing this morning and thanking God that the gospel of salvation that we hear in preaching and that we see visually on this table is nothing like anything man would ever have thought of. It is beyond our wildest imaginations and our most philosophical ponderings.

The message of Christmas seems so normal and routine to us now, but it's nothing of the sort. It shocked and amazed everyone the first time and it still should. This gospel turned the world upside-down and it still does wherever it's preached and proclaimed, whether Africa, Asia or America.

Don't just *accept* the counsel of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ, but *rejoice* in the counsel of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Do you boast in His ways?

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God who has hidden in Christ all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge and then given Him to us, wonderful counselor.

**Philippians 2:9-11** Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.