

**"NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES: MIGHTY GOD."**

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**First Christian Reformed Church, Lynden**

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**Texts for the Sermon: Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 32:17-20**

### **Introduction.**

Here is a thought experiment for you. How would you describe color to a man born blind?

You could try to use other senses like smell and touch. Red is like fire or a hot stove. Green is like freshly cut grass. But if you tell a blind person that the sky is blue and the ocean is blue and ice is blue, how confusing would that be, since they are all totally different? You could try to use emotions and feelings, blue can be calmness or sadness, yellow is soft, grey is gloomy. You could try to use symbolism, green is for growth and healing. Red and blue and green would be hard enough but how would you describe indigo or chartreuse?

How do you describe God whom no man has seen? How does the finite explain the infinite? How does the sinful describe the sinless? My attempts to describe God to you are like one blind man trying to describe color which he has heard about but never seen to another blind man.

We are all blind to God unless God Himself makes Himself known to us. God has very graciously condescended to speak to us not in unintelligible divine language but in human words. He has spoken to us in terms we can understand and He uses what we can see, hear and touch to give us a glimpse of things that are invisible and eternal.

God stoops down to help us. Consider this. All the names that God calls Himself and that He tells us to call Him come from earthly and human relationships and experiences.

King, Lord, Ruler, Master, Good Shepherd, Faithful Leader, Wise Teacher, Law Giver, Guide, Father, Friend, Savior, Redeemer, wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. All these help us "see" the God we can't see.

But even all these words taken together don't fully reveal the incomprehensible God. We are still like blind men trying to understand color.

Whatever we say about God through these four titles, please understand we have just scratched the surface of infinite majesty. And as I have said on several occasions, this is why heaven will never be boring even after a trillion years. God is infinite, it will take an infinite amount of time to fathom the heights and depths of an infinitely glorious God.

Next time you think God or things in His Word don't make sense, remember who you are and who God is and in this life we only see through a glass darkly, like a partially blind man at best.

Let's take another step toward understanding God by looking at this next title that the prophet Isaiah reveals concerning this child who is born, this Son who is given.

### **And He shall be called Mighty God.**

In Hebrew this title is *El Gibbor*. Gibbor means to prevail, be mighty, have strength, be great or powerful. It's commonly associated with warfare and used of mighty men, warriors and soldiers.

When gibbor is combined with El, El Gibbor means Mighty God or God of Might. God uses this title to describe Himself as a mighty warrior, strong to save and defend and protect.

Last week's title of a wonderful counselor was no great offense or surprise. That could be said of many humans. But here the prophet attributes divinity to this child.

The prophet attributes to this child a title that is blasphemy if He is only a human child, only a creature. If Jesus is only human, this title promotes a damnable heresy, that must not be believed and must be condemned.

*If Jesus is not God* then we are idolaters for worshipping Him and praying to Him. If Jesus is not God then we would be better off being Muslims. They keep their god and their prophet very clearly separated. They say, "There is no god but Allah, and Mohammad is His prophet." If Jesus is not God, then as a mere prophet He said things about Himself that aren't true, things Mohammad never said about himself.

Jesus claimed for Himself mighty power when He was on trial before the High Priest:

**Matthew 26:63b-66** The high priest said to him, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." 64 Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of *Power* and coming on the clouds of heaven." 65 Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. 66 What is your judgment?" They answered, "He deserves death."

Jesus was comparing Himself with God saying that He shared God's power. The term power especially conveyed divinity and brought the charge of blasphemy.

If Jesus is not God then He deserved everything that happened to Him on the cross. He was charged for blasphemy and if He wasn't God then He should have been killed for blasphemy.

If Jesus is not God then the NT is a joke, in fact it isn't worth the paper it's written on. It's just a bit of history about a man who deserved to be executed for the things He said.

**I Corinthians 15:14-19** If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. 15 We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. ... 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ... 19 If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

If Jesus is only flesh and blood then our hope is in vain, our worship is a sacrilege, and our future uncertain and insecure.

If Christ is not God then all of this is an illusion, a horrible deception and we are poor pitiable fools. But the God-revealed truth tells us that the greatest folly in all the world is the folly of denying the eternal divinity of Jesus, in denying that He is God, very God of very God.

You can imagine this title of the four has caused the most controversy and debate over the centuries. The Jews deny it. Many scholars translate it as Hero of Strength or one who fights and conquers like a god. He has the strength of God. Some just say this is hyperbole, exaggeration.

But the problem is that the term “El” in the Hebrew OT is always used of God. It means God. This term is reserved for God and God alone. Isaiah says the child is God.

Why does Isaiah say this? How does he know this? Was it a product of his own imagination? Did it come about by some private interpretation? Did he dream this?

**II Peter 1:20-21** [know] this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

God by His Holy Spirit revealed this to Isaiah and directed him to write it down. This is the revelation of God concerning Himself. We don't know how much of this Isaiah understood.

Isaiah may be speaking as a blind man. He is speaking words God has given him, words that reveal “that in the fullness of the Godhead there is a plurality of Persons” (Edward Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, Vol. 1, p. 338).

This child is God who has come and clothed Himself with the human flesh of a baby. This is no common event. In fact this is an event without parallel in all of human history.

The Coming King who will sit on David's throne will have all the fullness of power and strength. He will govern and rule with righteousness and justice in an everlasting kingdom of peace.

**Isaiah 9:6-7** .. the government shall be upon his shoulder, ...  
7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end,  
on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.

Only when Jesus comes in the NT is the veil finally fully pulled back. We have seen this clearly as I have been preaching through Mark's Gospel. Jesus is revealed as Mighty God having power over nature, diseases, sin and death. Who is this that even the wind and waves obey Him?

Who else but a mighty Messiah could lead the true Israel of God to victory in a hostile world?

***We who have so great an enemy need so mighty a God.***

Our enemy is the world, the flesh, sin, death and the devil. Without a strong defender we would be conquered in a moment.

**Hebrews 6:12** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

**John 16:33** I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

**I John 5:4-5** For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

**I John 3:8** ... The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

**Revelation 17:14** They [the beast and the enemies of God] will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings.”

### **Application and Conclusion.**

He shall be called Mighty God. Those are good words, but actions speak louder than words. How do we act to show that Jesus is Mighty God? How do we move beyond the words to practical application?

Let me start with the practical application that Jeremiah makes in the text I read at the beginning.

### ***Jeremiah 32:17-20***

These words of Jeremiah are taken from a longer prayer where Jeremiah is seeking wisdom and counsel from God. Things are going on that don't make sense so he is praying and asking God to explain some things.

What is pertinent to our topic this morning is how carefully Jeremiah approaches God. He starts out by acknowledging that God is great in counsel and powerful in deed, that nothing is too hard for God and that nothing is hidden from His eyes. He has all power and all knowledge.

In other words, Jeremiah is humbly hedging himself in and putting a bridle on his heart and his tongue. He is restraining himself and not taking God on. He is surrendering his finite understanding to a God who is incomprehensibly great and strong and wise.

This is the opposite of us when we rush into prayer and demand that God give us an accounting of His ways and why He is doing what He is doing, or why He isn't answering us or at least not in the way we want.

Do you have things you want to inquire of God about? Do so, but do so with a sober humility and meekness that shows you understand who you are talking to, the Mighty God of creation.

“You are the God who made the heavens and the earth and all that is in them. And not only did you create all things, but you govern and control all things. You see and know all things.”

The rich must not boast in his riches, the wise must not boast in his wisdom, and the strong must not boast in his power.

We must learn not to trust our own strength and might and ability, but to trust only in God's might and strength. The man who distrusts his own might is actually the man who is mighty in the Lord. To boast in our own weakness and to boast in the strength of the Lord is to be truly wise.

There are many other applications we can make putting Mighty God into action.

We show He is Mighty God when we *believe* in our hearts that Jesus is Lord and confess with our lips that God raised Him from the dead.

We show He is Mighty God when we *trust Him for our salvation*, when we trust His blood to cleanse and forgive our sins, when we trust His death and resurrection to secure for us eternal life.

We show He is Mighty God when we *pray* to Him, thus showing our dependence on Him and our trust in Him for our needs and concerns.

We show He is Mighty God when we *order our lives* and our priorities around Him and His will rather than around our will.

We show He is Mighty God when we *keep His commandments* and love His commandments.

We show He is Mighty God when we gather in public places to give Him the *worship* due His name.

God's mighty deeds compare to no one. It is only fitting and right that those who have benefited from His saving strength and protecting power should express their deep gratitude in praise and worship and trust and obedience.

Do you know the Mighty God, who is Jesus Christ? Have you surrendered and submitted your life to Him in total trust? Have you asked Him to fight the battle against the sin in your life that you can't fight? Have you cast all your burdens on Him because He is strong and because He cares? Have you made His strength your strength by relying not on yourself but on Him? By faith and by prayer have you claimed Him as your Mighty God? Do your rest in His will and in His purposes and plans for you and your life?

Christians, trust Him now more than ever.

Sinners, call on Him now more than ever.

Unbelievers, believe in Him now more than ever.

Be of good cheer, I bring you good news of great joy, unto us a child is born, a Son is given, who is Christ the Lord, who is Mighty God, who is strong to save and to deliver us from all our enemies and from all our fears and able to redeem and forgive all those who put their trust in Him.

**Prayer:**

Jesus, you are the true God and the true Man, you are Lord of Lord and King of Kings, you live and rule and reign, world without end. To you we give all honor, glory, and praise. Help us to know you and love you and walk in your ways and will for your glory. Amen and amen.