

Congratulations! It's a Boy!

Isaiah 9:6

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6 (KJV)

A little boy asked his mother where he came from, and also where she had come from as a baby. His mother gave him a tall tale about a beautiful white-feathered bird. The boy asked his grandmother the same question and received a variation on the bird story. Outside to his playmate he said, "You know, there hasn't been a normal birth in our family for three generations." (Source: Howard Hendricks, quoted in *Homemade*, September, 1989).

Tonight the words of Isaiah tell us of another non-normal birth also. It's a non-normal birth never before seen or experienced. It's the birth of Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Man. A birth spoken of by Isaiah when he said,

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6 (KJV)

The birth of course was an answer to prayer. The prayers of people for generations. From generation to generation they waited for the words of Isaiah to finally come true.

Of course, Mary knew it was no normal birth. Unlike birth today, she knew it would be a boy before it was conceived. Unlike today, she'd need no ultrasound, no gender tests, no stork, no old-wives tales or homeopathic remedies to figure out it would be a boy. All she needed was the word of God.

The days, weeks and months leading up to the birth of Jesus were a trying time for Mary and Joseph. Amid all the trials, the hopes and the anticipation of waiting for the time of Jesus' birth, all they had to go on was God's Word, God's promise, God's guarantee that she would give birth to a child. And, not only would it be a boy. It would be the Messiah, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lord.

Mary and Joseph hoped, waited and trusted in the Lord. And when the child was finally born, they could say "Congratulations! It's a boy!"

But they knew this Child was much more than a boy. He was the King of King. He was Lord of Lords. He was the hope of the Nations. He was the Key of David. He was Emmanuel. He was God with us.

Most importantly, this Child was their Savior and the Savior of all mankind. He was the Savior they needed. He was also the new-born Savior we need, too...every day of our lives!

And how our lives have changed since 911.

1. Last Christmas we were placing wreaths on the doors of our homes; this Christmas we are placing wreaths on the graves of our heroes.
2. Last Christmas we were letting our sons play with toy guns; this Christmas we are seeing our sons and daughters oversees protecting our country with

real weapons.

3. Last Christmas we were lighting candles to decorate; this Christmas we are lighting candles to commemorate how God has been with us and our country.

4. Last Christmas we were digging deep into our bank accounts to find the money to fly home for the holiday; this Christmas we are digging deep into our souls to find the courage to do so.

5. Last Christmas we thought a man who could rush down a football field was hero; this Christmas we know a man who rushes into a burning building is the real one.

6. Last Christmas we were getting on one another's nerves; this Christmas we are getting on our knees.

7. Last Christmas we were wondering how to give our children all the things that money can buy--the hottest toys, the latest fashions, the newest gadgets; this Christmas we are wondering how to give them all the things it can't--a sense of security, safety, peace.

8. Last Christmas we were thinking about all the pressure we are under at the office; this Christmas, we are thinking about all the people who no longer have an office to go to.

9. Last Christmas we believed in the power of the pocketbook; this Christmas we believe in the power of prayer.

10. Last Christmas "peace on earth" is something we prayed for on Sunday mornings; now it is something we pray for every day.

In this world of sin, evil and darkness, it is "Peace on Earth" for which we pray for most this evening. But this peace which we seek goes beyond military peace. For peace cannot begin unless it has come into our hearts first. It is Jesus' birth which brings us that peace and puts it into our hearts.

That peace is the peace of grace, forgiveness, hope and a future....Much the same things Mary and Joseph prayed for. And tonight, the birth of the newborn King means that God, in Christ, gives us a new beginning, new hope, new birth for our lives.

That new birth is celebrated tonight in the lighting of the candles. It is a reminder that Christ is the light of the world. A confession of faith before the whole world that Jesus Christ's birth shatters the darkness...and has brought us into His marvelous light.

It is also a call to Him. Someone once said,

"Some people change their ways when they see the light, others only when they feel the heat."

This little boy has come that we might not feel the heat. He invites us to Himself....and when we find Him, we can exclaim with Mary and Joseph, "Congratulations! It's a boy!"