

## **“He Will Be Called—Mighty God”**

Today we’re continuing in the series we started last week that’s entitled, “He Will Be Called.” And the theme verse for this series comes from the Old Testament book of Isaiah. Isaiah was a prophet and this book is a collection of sayings, stories and interactions that Isaiah the prophet had. The primary job of prophets in the Old Testament was to be God’s mouthpiece. Their job was primarily to hold the people of God accountable for their actions. To point out if they were wandering away from God, rebelling against God, heading toward the brink of disaster. The prophets primary job was to tell people, “Hey, God sees what you’re doing, he knows what’s going on behind closed doors, that you’re worshipping idols, stop it. That path will only lead to destruction. Get back on track.” That was the primary job of the prophet. Sometimes people listened, but lots of times they didn’t and they suffered the consequences.

But another big role of a prophet was to instill hope in the people of God. God would use prophets to tell people in the midst of hard times, that hope was still alive, that God was working in the present and the future to bring good news. The key scripture in this series is one of those passages of hope that pointed to the arrival of God on planet earth. Words from God through the prophet that pointed to the future where God would reside here and now. Words that pointed to Jesus Christ. Words that were prophesied 700 before Jesus was born.

**“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” (Isaiah 9:6, NIV).**

Last week Mark focused on the prophetic description of Jesus as the Wonderful Counselor. Today we look at the name of Jesus, Mighty God. I love it when I have a “Mighty God” experience. They seem to sneak up on me, but a lot of the time they happen when I’m outside, when I’m seeing something truly amazing. The last time I was in Nicaragua I stood at the edge of an active volcano. In terms of volcanoes, this is pretty small one, but it’s huge, when I stood there it was a God moment, God created this, Mighty God! Or seeing a sunset that just takes your breath away. This was in the Bahamas. Unbelievable! Mighty God! I was watching a special on the universe last week, astronomers and astrophysicists are still thinking that the universe is endless, infinite, but they have these theories now that there might be more than one universe, that there are multiverses that may occupy the same time and space and I can’t get my brain around all that, but it makes me go, wow! Mighty God!

I see the things that I’ve seen and watch things like that and I can’t help but see God’s fingerprints all over the place. Maybe you’ve done the same thing. Those times when you feel like you get an insight, or a glimpse of the Creator of the universe. Our Mighty God.

Jeremiah is another prophet in the Old Testament and he penned these beautiful words: **“Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you” (Jeremiah 32:17, NIV).** Nothing is too hard for you.

You came to church today and maybe you’ve got problems. Maybe your marriage is a mess. Nothing is too hard for God. Maybe you lost your job or your business is going under and you don’t know where to turn. No matter how bad it looks, listen, nothing is too hard for God. Maybe the doctor has given you a bad report, listen, nothing, nothing, nothing is too hard for God. The Mighty God.

In fact let’s take a few minutes and look at some characteristics of God. The Latin word for “all” is “omni”. And omni describes some of the characteristics of God. God is omniscient. That means God is all knowing. In fact the Bible says that God knows your thoughts. And some of you are in trouble right now! Because you’re thinking about lunch and not what I’m talking about!

Actually, every once in a while I think I have this power. Like this fall when I’m out in the driveway with my daughters. We’re playing, we’re riding bikes. And our youngest, Abby, says, “Daddy I ride with you.” I don’t see any trouble with that. I balance her on my knee, push off with one foot. Hold her with one hand, steer with the other. I’m riding around with her like this and Janet comes out of the house and sees this and she’s got her hands on her hips and I can tell exactly what she’s thinking: “What a great daddy he is!” Any of you other dads know what I’m talking about? She rolls the eyes and you know what she’s thinking. Omniscient.

God is also omnipresent. God is everywhere. There is no place that God is not. I've tried to become more aware of this and more aware of my language about this. When I pray I try to be more aware of this, rather than saying, "God we invite you to be with us as we gather here..." as if God is somewhere else unaware of what we're doing here. Instead I try to be more aware that God is already here. I pray, "God help us to be more aware of your presence with us in these moments." God is everywhere, all at once. No matter where you are, God is there.

A third characteristic of God is that he is omnipotent. God is all powerful. God can do anything. The Bible, the Living Word, is full of signs and wonders and miracles that God has done. There is nothing that is too hard for God. God is almighty. God is all powerful. He can do anything.

But here's the snag, I can know that in my heart, I can read it, but honestly, sometimes I just don't see it. I look at the world and it's full of pain and suffering. Wars and famine and terrorist attacks like what we've just seen in India. I hear and see on the news what people are going through and I think, "God where is your power?" As a pastor people come to me looking for answers, looking for God's power. In the face of a terminal illness, or tragedy. Two weeks ago I had two mothers come to me after worship. One here, one at the salvage yard. They were both torn apart. Both had had children removed from their homes, both had struggled with substance abuse, one had experienced the death of both parents and a sibling recently. Both trying to figure out how to just stay engaged in life. I've had friends who have miscarried multiple times. Friends whose businesses have failed. I have to ask, "God where is your power?"

Years ago a very good friend of mine was diagnosed with cancer. A father of two, a great family man, a strong man of faith. We prayed, and prayed and prayed and prayed. And he died. God, where is your power?

Maybe you're asking the same thing in your life today. God, where is your power? Maybe you're at a tough spot in a relationship and Christmas is just making it worse because you can't seem to make things work and you want to have a warm fuzzy Christmas. You're thinking, "God where are you?"

Maybe you've had a dream for something to happen, a mission, a purpose, and it hasn't happened and you say, "God, where's your power?"

Let's figure this out. If Jesus is the Mighty God, if God is all-powerful, where is that power? How do we find it? How do we see it? Let's look at God's word and see about this power, because Jesus' power is real. We just may not see it the way we want to see it.

The first thing we need to know is that **Jesus' power is at work in you**. The apostle Paul wrote this to the people in the city of Philippi: "**For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him**" (Philippians 2:13, NLT). God is working where? In you. Giving you the power to do what? What pleases him.

At one point in my Christian life I thought it was all about me. That following Jesus was about taking all my problems away, making my life easy, give me all the answers to the questions I faced. But over time I've realized that God's power is not to make my life easy, God's power is to work in me to change me, to take me from being selfish and self-centered into someone who is Christ-like. Someone who lives out love; someone who lives out compassion, someone who lives out peace and patience, and gentleness and self-control. God's power is real, but sometimes we don't see it. It's working in you.

God's power is in you creating that desire to grow, to mature in your faith, to be more Christ-like. God's power is in you creating the desire within to be a more Christ-like dad or mom, son or daughter. Jesus power is in you creating the desire to be a more Christ-like employer, or employee, husband, wife. At heart, don't you want to be better, to be more than you are right now? Don't you? Where do you think that desire comes from? It comes from the power of Jesus at work in you, creating a desire to become more like him. Now, of course, it's entirely up to you, what you do with that desire. You can follow it, or reject it.

So, Jesus, the Mighty God, his power is at work in you, and **Jesus' power is working for you**. In Isaiah chapter 40, the prophet writes this about God, "**He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength**" (Isaiah 40:29-31, NIV).

Maybe this hits home. You're weary, you're worn out. Maybe it took everything in you just to get to church today. You've got Christmas ahead and you're just fried. The good news is that God gives strength and power to the weary.

Here's my experience with this. I've found through my adult life that when I've been at my weakest that's when God's power infuses me. Those times when family stuff has gotten so hard to handle, or the health situations of people I love, or when ministry stuff has gotten to the place where I just want to walk away, or those times when I've despaired of life itself. Those times when I've got to the end of my ability to do anything and cried out to God and trusted in God's power, that power has always come through. The problem is that when you're in the thick of the problem, or in the thick of the despair, no matter how many times God has come through, you wonder, "Maybe this time he won't." But God always does in one way or another.

It's in looking back that you see the power of Christ at work. That's my experience. Sometimes you see that power at work for you in the midst of a situation, but most of the time it's as you look back.

If you struggle with this, just know that the Apostle Paul struggled with stuff too. He had a weakness, a handicap, something he really, really struggled with. He asked God to take it from him over and over, God responds to him saying this **"My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong"** (2 Corinthians 12:9-10, NLT). Paul says, "When I am weak, then I am strong."

We allow God's power to work for us when we admit just how weak we are. "God I can't do this on my own. I can't figure this out. I can't pull myself up. I need you." When we are weak, then we're strong, then we allow God's power to work for us to bring healing, to open doors, to help us see what we could not see before.

This year I walked with a man through the lowest point in his life. Business came crashing down, he'd gotten crushed between customers and creditors. It was taking its toll on his kids, his wife, and he was ready to end it all. But he opened the door. He called out for help and that help came, life has started over for him. God's power was there for him.

Jesus' power is working in you to help you to become more like him. Jesus' power is working for you so that when you are weak, you are strong. And finally **Jesus' power is at work through you**. Remember, ultimately it's not about me or you. God has a purpose for our lives that goes beyond us. We are called to the very personal side of faith, to make a personal decision to follow Jesus but that personal side must be lived out in the world. Look at this from the book of Acts. **"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."** (Acts 1:8, NLT)

Jesus power is meant to work through you in the lives of others so they may know the God who loves them, who created them.

He will be called Mighty God, and people will see his power lived out through you. Sometimes we look for these big disembodied miracles, but almost always God makes miracles happen through ordinary people who live out their faith, not in here, but out there. What we do in here prepares us to live out our faith out there, and to live it out with power.

God became one of us in Jesus Christ, Mighty God, to put his power to work in us, and for us, and through us in the world. What an amazing Christmas gift from the Mighty God. And for today that is the Good News. In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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