

Christmas Eve, December 24, 2023
Text: Isaiah 9:2-7
Theme: Our King Reigns

Tonight is a refuge of peace and holiness for most of us. We strive to make this evening full of joy for our families. We bake and cook, sew, and decorate for days, maybe even weeks before this evening all in an attempt to make everyone happy. Sometimes, children in the family do not even know the extent of the sacrifice that we make to ensure their joy. When I was in middle school, I had no idea what my father was doing on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. It was only much later that I learned. He worked in the laboratory for the copper mines of Arizona and the labs of copper mines never shut down because it takes too much to restart them. My dad made double time working holidays so he would work the day shift on Christmas Eve, come home for church and dinner and then go back to work the midnight shift that night. He would come home, open presents, have breakfast, go to church, and go back to work the swing shift on Christmas afternoon all to make enough money to pay for Christmas. He was always around when we were celebrating, so it never occurred to me that he was going without sleep for 48 hours to make sure that we had a great Christmas.

What we do for our families is a microcosm of what God did for us. Tonight, we celebrate the coming of Christ into our flesh. The

Almighty God deigned to take on human flesh expressly so that he could die for us and be damned for us to pay for all our sins. That is amazing! As much as I appreciate what my dad did for us working extra shifts, and as much as I appreciate all the baking and sewing my mom did for us, that all pales in comparison to dying on the cross and suffering Hell for me. The reason we do all the things we do for others during this season is because of what God first did for us.

The prophet Isaiah said it all in our Old Testament reading for tonight.

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.”

We once walked in darkness. Maybe you remember a time in your life before the Holy Spirit created faith in you or perhaps you, like me, were baptized as an infant and do not remember a time before we had faith. But there was once a time when we all walked in darkness and that gives us compassion for those who still do. What an amazing joy it is to know that no matter what political forces are impacting our world, our king reigns over the whole universe. Sometimes we become distracted and catch ourselves worrying over some petty dictator in another country or even

worrying over our own politicians who sometimes seem to have forgotten that this nation is one nation under God. But this night reminds us that our God, over the course of thousands of years, brought His promise to us to fruition. Jesus was born this night.

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 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.”

Jesus is our King. He reigns now forever, and on the last day, He will come and take us all to the paradise He has promised to us. Until that day, we worship Him, receive strength for our faith and believe that no matter what occurs on this earth, we are His brothers and sisters and He walks with us every moment of every day, not has a baby in the manger, but as the Victorious King who has accomplished everything He promised to accomplish for us. All the presents and great food and fun family times are micro-mirrors of what awaits us in paradise. What joy. What peace to be God’s child.

