

EVERLASTING FATHER

Isaiah 9:6

It is helpful for me to remember that I have an everlasting Father. That phrase literally means ‘one who cares for his children forever.’ At Christmastime I miss my momma and daddy. They both loved Christmas. What I miss most about my daddy was he was my go-to guy. When I needed some advice, some wisdom, or needed to talk something out, I would always call him. There are times even today when I wish I could pick up the phone and call him and gets his advice. While he was alive there was comfort in knowing he was still the man, the one in charge, the authority figure. But our earthly fathers are not going to be here forever. When my father died it was a stunning realization that now I was in charge, that I had to be the go-to guy for my family. Where do I go now? It was good to remember that in Jesus I have an everlasting father and so do you. We have an everlasting Father who will always be there for us, who will never leave us, who will always love us, provide for us, and take care of us. This life can be scary at times, and we can feel overwhelmed and helpless, but we have an everlasting Father who protects us from evil and provides our every need. He is the go-to guy who will never let you down. Jesus is the everlasting Father who is for you, who is with you, and you are safe in His hands today, tomorrow, and forever. - Dr. Tim Thompson

SLEEP LOOSE

Psalms 121

The psalmist reminds us that God is watching over you and me. He never falls asleep. He never lets His guard down. He never nods off or takes a nap. God never falls asleep at the switch. God is qualified to be our greatest source of help because He has a track record of faithfulness to the faithful. God is faithful and dependable. He is 24 hours a day watching over you and me. When you were children do you remember your bedtime rituals? Do you have bedtime rituals with your children and grandchildren? Sometimes getting children to bed is a chore and requires a few well-spoken threats. For most of us there was usually some last word of the day when we were tucked in and the lights were turned off. Words like “I love you,” “Good night,” “See you tomorrow,” “Sleep tight and don’t let the bedbugs bite,” “Get some sleep,” I love the words that Susan Stiles speaks to her two girls every night. She says to them, “Remember, you are special to God. Remember how much He loves you. Sleep loose.” Isn’t that cool? Sleep loose. She wants her children to sleep loose in the security and protection of God’s love. Many of us adults are tight, tensed up, on the edge, tossing, and turning. Sleeping tight is a hard way to do life. Sleep loose. God knows you, God loves you, and God is watching over you. He is not sleeping. I hope you will sleep loose tonight knowing that God is awake all night watching over you. - Dr. Tim Thompson, Senior Pastor

MARY

Luke 1:26-38

Mary knows that life as she knows it is over. Her world will be turned upside down. Who would ever believe this crazy story? Her parents will be stunned, her reputation ruined, her upcoming marriage to Joseph will be canceled, and everything is going to be one big, hot mess. What would you do? What would you say? Mary says the most amazing thing in Luke 1:38, “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” That is not a statement of passive resignation over circumstances she can’t control. No, that is a heroic offering of her life. It is the sacrifice of her dreams, her plans, her agenda, and her life. “Whatever you want for my life, Lord, I trust you. I want your plan, your will. I don’t want my plan or my will.” She is humbly receiving God’s word and promising to live a God-centered life, not a me-centered life. I trust my life to You. I wonder if you have come to a place where you are ready to resign as general manager of your universe and to live a God-centered, not a me-centered life. Mary reminds us the very best thing you can do for your life, the place where you will find life’s deepest peace and significance and blessings is when you get yourself off your hands and put your hands in God’s hands. Will you do that this Christmas?

- Dr. Tim Thompson

GET NOISY

Luke 2:17 “After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child.”

Did you notice that the first thing the shepherds did with the good news of Christmas was to share it? Good news is for telling. Outside of Atlanta is a growing church. It is always full of activity and noise, lots of cars and music and people. A group of neighborhood folks who lived near the church put together a petition which would require the church to keep quieter. They went door to door to get signatures. They knocked on the door of a Jewish man and asked him to sign their petition. “What’s the problem?” he asked. They said the Christians were too noisy. He said, “I won’t sign it.” They said, “Why? You are Jewish, and you don’t even believe in Jesus.” He said, “I know, but if I believed what those Christians believe, that the Messiah has come, I would be a lot noisier than they are.” The birth of Jesus is for sharing. Be noisy. You don’t have to preach, just look for opportunities that are there every day to share an unpretentious, unrehearsed, simple humble word about the Lord. I promise God’s Holy Spirit will use it. Someone wrote, “Let’s give a little Jesus, a thoughtful word or deed, an act of generosity for someone who is in need. Let’s give a little Jesus to everyone we meet- the sales clerk, the server, or the person on the street. Let’s give a little Jesus. That is what really counts. Not what is bought or whom or what amount. Let’s give a little Jesus to everyone large and small, for Jesus the Messiah is the greatest gift of all.” Share a little Jesus with someone this year.

- Dr. Tim Thompson

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Call to Worship: “He Rules the World” Choir

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Hymn #240: “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” Congregation

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Lighting of Advent Candle

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Announcements & Call for Offering Rev. Rusty Taylor

Offertory: “Joy to the World”(Raney) Fran Wilkinson, Kelley Garrett

Doxology Congregation

Sermon Dr. Neil Epler

Hymn #218: “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear” Congregation

Benediction Dr. Neil Epler

Postlude: “Praise Ye the Lord of Hosts from “Christmas Oratorio”
(Saint-Saens) Kelley Garrett

SERMON NOTES

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

Luke 2:8-17 “⁸And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests. ¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” ¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child,” (NIV)

SERMON NOTES CONTINUED

I. What Were _____ Looking For?

Luke 2:6-7; Matthew 2:1-2; Matthew 11:7-9; John 6:15

II. What Are You Looking for in _____?

Matthew 6:25; Matthew 7:7-8

III. What Are You Looking for at _____?

John 4:22-23; Hebrews 10:23-25

IV. What Are You Looking for at _____?

V. What Are You Looking for from _____?

— Dr. Neil Epler

Watch today’s sermon on WFRZ-TV, online at frazerumc.org/media or download the podcast at frazerumc.org/podcast. You may also order a CD of today’s service at the Connection Point desk.

MONDAY DECEMBER 14, 2015

God with Us

Matthew 1:22-23 - “²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel.”

The first personal ministry that occurred in the Bible was when God talked with Adam. God created Adam and placed him in a garden. And God walked and talked with Adam in the garden. Why? Because without God’s instruction, Adam had no idea who he was. God had to tell him. God knew Adam couldn’t figure it out by himself. The first personal ministry in history is God’s telling Adam who he is and why he was made. It wasn’t because Adam had sinned that God talked with him. It was because he was human. We still need God to tell us who we are and why we are here. We still need God’s personal ministry. At Christmas, we celebrate that Jesus, the Son of God, became fully man and walked among us. The word, *Immanuel* means, “*God with us.*” At salvation, *Immanuel, God with us*, comes into our hearts to stay. God takes up residence in our hearts. God is with us, and we are never alone again. We are never without His love and peace and joy and comfort. And from His guidance, from His revealing, we learn who we are and why we are here.
- Virginia Thompson

TUESDAY DECEMBER 15, 2015

God’s COMPASS

Isaiah 40:8 “The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.”

I think about a story that Chuck Swindoll told. Imagine that you are exploring the jungles of Africa. You get into a deep, dense area of jungle so thick that it is almost dark. It isn’t long before you have lost your way. You can’t tell where you are or what direction you are heading. There is no sun, no stars, no trail, and no river to follow. You are hopelessly lost, lonely, and afraid. Suddenly a twig snaps behind you and you hear footsteps. Someone calls your name and steps into the clearing and says, “I’m glad I found you. I have a map and a compass. I thought you might need them. Would you like to have them? What do you say? “Are you kidding? That map of Africa is old and I’m not sure I can trust it. Look at it. It is wrinkled and worn. And that compass, it may or may not be pointing true north. How can I know for sure? No thanks, I think I will stay on my own and figure it out for myself.” Would you say that? Absolutely not. You would take the help being offered. The Bible is God’s compass and map. He gives it to us. The compass will always point true north. The map will always guide you correctly. But a lot of people reject the Bible, never read it, never look at it, and ignore it. Some people think they don’t need any help and they can figure it out for themselves. That’s crazy. Isaiah 48 says, “The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.” Fads, feelings, kingdoms, cultures, people, ideas, notions, nations they come and they go, but the truth of God’s word is eternal. You can count on God’s word.
- Dr. Tim Thompson, Senior Pastor