

Wonderful Counselor

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[0:00] I'm going to ask you to take your Bibles and turn to Isaiah chapter 8. Isaiah chapter 8.

We're going to begin reading in verse 19 and read into chapter 9, verse 7. So Isaiah chapter 8, verse 19.

When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God?

Why consult the dead on behalf of the living, to the law and to the testimony? If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn.

Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land. When they are famished, they will become enraged, and looking upward will curse their king and their God.

[1:05] Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness. Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress, in the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali.

But in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles by the way of the sea along the Jordan. The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.

On those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned. You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy. They rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as men rejoice when dividing the plunder.

For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. Every warrior's boot used in battle, and every garment rolled in blood, will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire.

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.

[2:33] Of the increase of his government and peace, there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. Pregnancy announcements. They're different today than they used to be.

I was speaking with one of you last week about this very thing, how traditions have changed in the way that we announce the upcoming birth of a baby. You now have couples sending out messages saying, we're pregnant.

Oh, are we? I'm sure there's some of you men that would never let such an announcement go out. But there it is. And next may come a party and the announcement of the gender of the baby.

The cake is cut and there's something blue or pink inside. And now you know. And in a day of gender confusion, I thank the Lord for gender parties, that it's still blue or pink.

[3:46] That's all there is. God's way is simplest. And then some now are even using pre-announcement of the name of the baby. I'm wondering if there's going to be no more surprises at the birth.

Oh, that's old news. Yeah, we knew he was coming and his name and all the rest. And then there's the question of when to announce the pregnancy and the arrival date.

How early do you go public with it? How long can you keep it hidden? All these questions, these traditions change. And I'm not sure what will be next.

But this morning we've got a pre-birth announcement that breaks the mold of any of our traditions on birth announcements. 2,700 years ago, God's prophet Isaiah made this upcoming birth announcement.

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.

[4:52] Now how early should we send out the announcement? Two to three months into the pregnancy? This announcement was given 700 years before the baby was even conceived.

That means the announcement was sent to people who would never live long enough to see the baby that was to be born. And then, yes, it did include the gender of the baby, didn't it?

Long before ultrasound, we read, To us a son is given. And it included the very occupation of this boy. He's going to be a king for the government will rest upon his shoulders.

And he will sit and reign on David's throne from that time on and forever. Oh, it even announces the length of his days. And then it tells us what he will be called, revealing who he is and what he would do.

He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. And in that we learn who he is and what he does.

[6:02] Now it doesn't say we're pregnant. But it does say to us a child is born. To us a son is given.

Isn't that interesting? This is not just a child born just to Mary. This is not a son given just to Joseph. But to us.

Not just to the two of them. But to us. Because you see, the truth is, we all need this child. And therefore, what a wonderful thing to read that this God has given him to us.

He's for us. He's for us. What an announcement. Unlike any other. For a baby unlike any other. A child born. And therefore, as human as every one of us who have been born.

But a son given. Given from the Father. His unique, eternal son. Given to us. So he's God. Indeed, the next term is Mighty God.

[7:06] And with a mission unlike any other. To bring everlasting peace. Between sinners and God. And man and man. Man and his environment.

And best of all. To read that he's born to us. He's given to us. I wonder if you have prepared him room in your heart.

Have you received this child given to us? Now last year we looked at his last title. The Prince of Peace.

And this year we'll look at his first title. He will be called Wonderful Counselor. Wonderful Counselor. Now what is a counselor? Well, someone who gives guidance.

Direction. Insight. Needed information. To help us in the many areas of life that we face. We have guidance counselors in the high schools, don't we?

[8:06] To help make educational and career choices. We have financial counselors. Marriage counselors. Legal counselors. Grief counselors.

Emotional and mental health counselors. There's spiritual, biblical counselors. Counselors to help us with all kinds of problems and decision making that faces us in life.

Well, who needs a counselor? Well, the short answer of the Bible is everyone. We all do. Jeremiah puts it this way in Jeremiah 10, 23.

Oh Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself. It is not in man who walks to direct his steps. It's just not there.

Man doesn't have what it takes to find the right way through life. No, we need direction. We need counsel from outside of ourselves. And this is not due to our sinfulness.

[9:06] But to our creatureliness. From creation, man was made dependent upon his creator.

Even sinless Adam needed God for guidance and counsel in the right way. To rightly interpret the world and the things happening around him.

He was made to hear the voice of God and to believe it and to obey it. Just like a car comes off the assembly line needing a driver.

So man comes off of the hand of the creator needing counsel from him. So we were never meant or made to be self-sufficient.

We were never meant to be self-governing, self-directing. Not at all. We were never meant to live without the counsel of our God. Even in this sinless state, man was not fit to lean on his own understanding.

[10:07] But needed to trust in the Lord with all of his heart. To lean on him. To direct their paths. So from the creation, what do we find?

Well, we find God walking and talking with man. Counseling and directing him. Telling him what he's to do and what he's not to do. You're to work the garden. You're to rest the seventh day. You're to eat these things. Any of these things. But not to eat from this tree. Man needed this information about his place in the world.

To know God's purpose and plan for him. That I'm here to subdue the earth and to rule over it. To fill it with the offspring of those who bear the very image of God.

How would Adam and Eve have known this? They wouldn't have without the counsel of God. He learned of his need for a wife. And how marriage was meant to be. One man with one woman.

[11:03] For life. And all this information you see was God counseling his man and his woman in the garden. Right from the start. Man needs counsel.

And we have God himself as our counselor. Lord. But in the fall we see God's counsel rejected. Don't we? That's one way to look at the fall.

It's God counseling them. But they're rejecting it. Just turning their back on God's counsel. In Genesis 3. Eve hears another voice. In the garden beside God's.

First time. She ever heard this other voice. Counseling her. It's the voice of the liar Satan. Coming through the serpent in the garden.

And he challenges the counsel of God. Doesn't he? He challenges God's counsel with a whole new interpretation on reality. He puts a different slant on everything.

[12:00] On God. On his commands. On his motives. On Eve. Herself. On the forbidden fruit. And he gives a whole different counsel about.

The things that. Adam and Eve have seen. And heard. And it all sounded so reasonable and true to her. Even desirable. So what would.

She decide to do. What will Eve decide to do? Well she was never meant to decide for herself.

That's leaning on her own understanding. That's being wise in her own eyes.

She's not fit to make this decision. So she should run to her counselor. For counsel. But rather than bow to God's counsel.

She sets herself up as the judge. I wonder if you can see how proud and self-sufficient. Her sin is at the very root of it. What is Eve saying?

[13:00] I'm capable of living. Without the guidance and counsel of God. I'm a big girl now. I don't need God to tell me what to do.

I can figure it out for myself. What is best for me? What's the right way for me to live? In this world in which I find myself. And with that she chose Satan's lie.

And she ate the forbidden fruit. And instead of being holy and happy. She became sinful and miserable. And she gave some of the fruit to her husband Adam. And he ate and joined her in her sin and misery.

Now. If even perfect unfallen people need the counsel of God. How much more do we after the fall? Because you see now. There are a host of other voices that have been let loose in the world.

Besides the voice of God. Yes there are the devil's lies.

[14:03] There's his counsel. And it fills the earth. He's only gotten better at lying with 6,000 years of practice. And this deceiver knows how to make a lie sound like it's true.

He knows the lies that we like to hear. Let me tell you some of the lies that I've heard him telling.

Well you can get to heaven if you're basically a good person.

I heard a man last week. Repeat that lie of the devil to me. You can get to heaven if you're basically a kind person.

Good to your neighbor. Or the lie that God's love would never allow him to send people to hell forever. Or if there is a hell. It's only for the very worst of people in society.

Maybe the terrorists. Or that salvation is found in doing whatever you want. Or there's no hurry with this gospel thing.

[15:05] You've got plenty of time to repent and get right with God. You see by these lies he's holding people captive. And he's blinding them to the truth.

But the truth of the matter is. Is that if you are not this morning. Surrendering in faith. Walking in surrender of faith. To this Jesus. And trusting him.

Then you are believing one. Or several of his lies. Yes we live in this world. Filled with the devil's life. And there's the unbelieving world itself.

Who is bought into the lies. And repeats them as sure facts. And so the crowd fills our ears with what? With worldly wisdom. With the counsel of the ungodly.

Psalms 1. Calling evil good. And good evil. And putting bitter for sweet. And sweet for bitter. And since it's the majority opinion. And the masses around us are walking in lockstep to such counsel. [16:07] We're easily sucked in. To the world. Repeating the devil's lie. Because you see. The worst thing of all. Is that our fallen parents have given birth to children.

Who are spiritually deaf. And blind. You see the fall affected our faculties. Our faculties for guidance. Our guidance system. Our discernment.

Has been severely twisted and damaged by the fall. No one comes into the world anymore. Like Adam and Eve. From the hand of God. We come in fallen.

And that means that our hearts are now prone. To deception. They're prone to deception. They prefer self-serving lies.

To God honoring truth. Jeremiah said it in chapter 17. In verse 9. Saying that the heart is deceitful. And desperately wicked. Who can understand it?

[17:03] And now the heart of the sinner. The heart you were born with. And I was born with. Comes into the world. With a preference for the lie. Over the truth. We would rather believe.

That we can have our sin in heaven too. That we can have friendship with the world. And friendship with Jesus. Jesus. And what happens then. When fallen men and women.

Boys and girls like you and me. Try to make our way through this world. With faulty and unreliable minds. Well Proverbs tells us.

What happens. 14.12. There is a way. That seems right. To a man. Seems right. Thinking about it. Mulling it over. Seems like the right way.

But in the end. It leads to death. That's what happens. To men with fallen minds. And understandings. It seems right. Just as Eve. Said it.

[18:00] It seems like this would be the way to life. But in the end. It leads only. To misery. And death. And so with our fallen hearts. There's many things in this world.

That allure us. And promise. Life. And they look so promising. They seem like they surely will lead to pleasure and happiness. But of course they lead to death and misery.

Well that was the situation in Isaiah 8. That was read for us. That's the situation. Let me back up. This is the situation then.

After the fall. Where the worst judges. Of finding the right way. There's none who understands. Romans 3 says. And therefore. To lean on our own understanding.

Is to choose. The way that seems right. But is wrong. Fallen man is darkened. In his understanding. Ephesians 4 says.

[18:59] Darkened. In his understanding. That means that apart from God. The God. Whose counsel we've rejected. We're now walking. In the dark.

And that. Is the phrase. That Isaiah chapter 8 and 9. Picks up on. I should say. Is the foundation. Perhaps for Paul's. Statement later. In Ephesians 4. Men and women.

Boys and girls. Walking. In darkness. Trying to find. Our way. Through life. Israel had rejected. God's counsel. That came to them.

Through his prophets. They came and said. The Lord says. Do this. Don't do that. Believe this. Don't believe. And they rejected. God's counsel.

Instead. Instead. They preferred. Other counsel. Even consulting. Mediums. And spiritist. Who mutter. And whisper.

[19:54] Seeking counsel. From the dead. For them. The living. They would rather. Seek their counsel. From such. Than from the living God. And so.

Forsaking the light. They were left. In distress. And darkness. And fearful gloom. And it is to such people. Groping in darkness. Living in the land.

Of the shadow of death. That this. Glorious light. Dawns. This message. To us. A child. Is born.

To us. A son is given. And he is the wonderful. Counselor. Such a savior. That meets our needs. A counselor.

For people. Walking in the dark. A counselor. To guide our feet. It was some. 700 years later. That Zechariah. Is told. That his own son.

[20:48] John the Baptist. Will be the forerunner. Of this Messiah. This wonderful counselor. And he breaks out. Into prophecy. By the Holy Spirit. And he says this.

Because of the tender. Mercy. Of God. The rising. Son. Will come to us. From heaven. Do you get the image. Of light. The rising. Son.

Will come to us. From heaven. To shine. On those. Living. In darkness. And in the shadow. Of death. Echoing.

Isaiah's words. To guide our feet. In the path. Of peace. That's it. This great. Rising.

Son. To guide our feet. Into the right path. The path. The path. Of peace. Three months later. While in Bethlehem. For the census. Mary felt. A sharp.

[21 : 42] Birth. Pang. And she says. Joseph. I think this is it. And it was it. And the virgin. Brought forth. Her firstborn son. And laid him in a manger. The very child.

Which to us. Was born. And to us. Was given. The wonderful. Counselor. Was now. On earth. Right. In the midst. Of the darkness. Is this rising sun.

To shine. On those living. In darkness. And the shadow. Of death. To guide. Our feet. Into the. Path of peace. What's the.

Position. Of man. Strayed. From God. We're living. In the darkness. Of sin. And in the very. Shadow. Of death. There's a bit.

Of a shadow. Cast here. From this pulpit. You have the light. You have the pulpit. And then you have. The shadow. And if I'm standing. In the shadow.

[22 : 41] Then I can be sure. That the object. Casting the shadow. Is very close to me. Isn't it? It's right here. I'm standing. In the shadow. And the position. Of man.

Is that we live. In the shadow. Of death. And if I'm standing. In the shadow. Of death. How far away. Is death?

Oh. It's very near. I am only. One breath. Away. From this death. That leads. To eternal death. Which is the lake. Of fire. Everlasting.

Hell. That's the position. Of man. Straight from God. We're living. In the shadow. Of death. That leads. To this terrible. Eternal. Suffering.

And it's into that. Darkness. That the sun. Of righteousness. Dawns. With light. To shine. On our way. To direct us. John. It's not here.

[23 : 36] It's there. There's the life. Seek the life. Seek the light. Get to Christ. Christ. Well. This is our condition. Walking in darkness.

Let me paint the picture for you. We're. We're. Trying to make our way through this world. Aren't we? Every one of us. We're born into it. And we're heading out of it. Into what? Into an eternal destination.

We're heading to an eternal. And we're trying to make our way through life. And there's only one narrow path. That makes it to life. To heaven. And every other path.

In this world. Leads to everlasting. Suffering in hell. And there are thousands. Of. Of dangers. Designed to keep us. From ever getting to heaven.

In this world. There are landmines. There's booby traps. There's pits to fall into. That have been covered over. And when you fall through. There's the bamboo. Sharpened stakes. To fall in. There's poisonous berries.

[24 : 36] In this wilderness. There's wild animals. There's hostile enemies. And there's many false guides. Saying this is the way. To heaven. And furthermore.

It's pitch dark. And you can't see the hand. In front of your face. So you're walking in darkness. Just one step away. From outer darkness.

Forever and ever. Forever. What is it worth to you. To have a guide. To counsel you then. To have a guide. Who will shine his light on you.

And guide you. Into the way. Of peace. Well even at age 12. When visiting the temple. And talking with the teachers. Of the law.

Listening to them. Asking questions. They saw that this was. No usual. Boy. Of 12. Everyone.

[25 : 28] Everyone. Who heard him. Was amazed. At his understanding. And his answers. And then we're told. That he grew in wisdom. He got wiser still.

And we're told. In Isaiah 11. That the spirit of wisdom. And understanding. Was upon him. And the spirit of counsel. And of power. Was on him. The spirit of knowledge. And of the fear.

Of the Lord. Was on him. And this wonderful counselor. Tells us. Where he gets his wise counsel. As the perfect man. He says in Isaiah. Chapter 50.

Verse 4. The sovereign Lord. Has given me. An instructed tongue. To know the word. That sustains the weary. Jesus. Wonderful counselor.

Where do you get that. Instructed tongue. The sovereign Lord. Has given me. An instructed tongue. He wakens my ear. To listen. Morning by morning.

[26 : 25] Wakens me. To listen. Like one being taught. That's the perfect man. That's how he grows. In his wisdom. And understanding. And in his counsel. He's listening.

To God. And God the father. Is pouring. Wisdom. Into his son. His perfect son. As he walks the earth. This wonderful counselor. He's the perfect man.

Instructed by God. The father himself. But this wonderful counselor. Is also God. The Hebrew. For wonderful counselor. Could just as well be.

Translated. Supernatural counselor. Divine counselor. There's something. Out of the ordinary. Supernatural. About this counsel. That he gives. And we don't have to.

Think. Long before we. Understand why that is. The very next. Title given to him. Is not. He will be called. Wonderful counselor. Mighty God. No wonder. He is.

[27 : 20] Wonderful. In his counsel. No wonder. That there's no counsel. Like this. At anywhere. I mean. He's telling us. About things. Where no man. Has ever been. And how to get to places.

No man has ever seen. He's telling us. Things we would otherwise. Never know. He is wonderful. In counsel. Because he is. The mighty God. He's the perfect man.

He's the mighty God. Joined in the God man. Jesus. Jesus. And he's counseling us. With perfect wisdom. Now the most. That most counselors can do.

Is bring the truth. Up to your ear gate. And dump it there. That's as far as he can get. Is to your ear gate. He just has to leave it there. And he walks away. And that's as far as he gets with you.

But not this counselor. This wonderful counselor. Is able to get past the ear gate. Get right into the heart. And to put his counsel. In the heart. And to make men.

[28 : 18] See. To give them sight. So that they actually see the world. Through his counsel. And they embrace it. And they want it. He writes his law. In their inner being.

He puts his word. In their hearts. What a wonderful counselor. This is. Indeed he is God. In the past. God spoke to our forefathers. Through the prophets.

At many times. And in various ways. But in these last days. He has spoken to us. To us. By his son. For to us. A child is born.

To us. A son is given. You see. He is God. Speaking the very words of God. This was the true light. That gives light to every man. This is wisdom incarnate.

This is the word. The eternal. Everlasting word. Made flesh. Bringing. Divine wisdom. Counsel. Into this dark world. Remember that woman.

[29 : 15] At the well. She was a Samaritan. So she had the first five books. Of Moses. The prophesied. Of a. Of a great prophet. Like unto Moses. Who will speak. The very words of God.

But will be greater than Moses. And she says to Jesus. Not knowing who he is. I know that when Messiah comes. He will teach us all things. Well how did you know that Miss Samaritan woman. I knew it because. Back in Deuteronomy 18. The Bible. Told us to be waiting for this great prophet. Who would. Be speaking to us. And would teach us all things.

The things of God. And Jesus says. I who am speaking to you. Am he. The wonderful counselor has come. He comes with God's light. Into this dark world.

So at the age of 30. He begins his public ministry. Preaching and teaching. And what a wonderful counselor he is. Whether talking to the masses. Or one on one with people. The crowds were amazed at his teaching.

[30 : 15] Because he taught as one who had authority. And not as their teachers of the law. He teaches as one who knows the truth. And who believes the truth. And in listening to Jesus.

You had the sense that this man. Whoever he is. He fully believes. What he is saying to us. Some said he's demon possessed. Others said.

These are not the words of a demon possessed man. Not this counsel. The temple guards were sent to arrest him. While teaching at the temple.

Came back empty handed. And they got scolded by the chief priests and Pharisees. Why didn't you bring him in? No one ever spoke like this man speaks. This is wonderful counsel.

Indeed it was the wonderful counselor. And he stood among them and said. I am the light of the world. He who believes in me.

[31:16] He who follows me. Whoever follows me. Will never walk in darkness. But will have the light of life. Here's the end of all this walking in darkness.

It's to come to Jesus. It's to trust in Jesus. And then to walk with him. And follow him. Who is the light of the world. And you know he's.

He's never led anyone astray. Not one who has followed this wonderful. Light of the world. Has ever been disappointed for doing so. For listening to his counsel.

You know I know plenty of young people. Young adults. Who are in the workforce now. And they regret the counsel they got from their guidance counselor in high school. They got left with a debt and a major that can't earn you a wage.

And they're very sad that they followed that counsel. And I know plenty of people who have. Have regrets for having followed some financial counsel.

[32:18] That oh come on this is the hot stock to buy now. Quick quick buy. And they did. Only to their great loss. I know. That there will be plenty in the day of judgment.

Who will stand. And hear his depart from me. I never knew you. And regret. The way that they followed. The voice.

Of the world. And the voice within their own heart. That's what the world's telling you. Follow your heart. And they will regret for eternity.

That they followed their heart. The way that seemed right. But in my 33 years of ministry. I've never stood by the bedside of a dying man or woman.

And heard them say. You know pastor. I really regret. Following the counsel of Jesus Christ. What my life could have been.

[33:18] If I just wouldn't have followed his counsel. Rather I met a lot of people. Both living and dying.

Who are kicking themselves. That they didn't follow the wonderful counselor. Sooner. Why did I waste so many years of my life?

He came with light. And life. I should have embraced him. The first time I heard him. And I hear them saying with Asaph.

As they rejoice in the Lord. Saying Lord. Lord you guide me with your counsel. And afterwards you receive me into glory. This wonderful counsel. All through life. Is guiding us with his counsel.

And then this wonderful counselor. Is at the end of the road. To receive us into glory. Because he always gets them home to glory. Everyone who follows his counsel.

[34:15] They always arrive. And Asaph says. This is goodness. This is the great life. To have him as my counselor. Who will receive me in the end.

Oh but there have been many. Who rejected this wonderful counsel. The Israelites of old. Were told in Psalm 107. They rebelled against the words of God. And despised the counsel of the Most High. The very Most High God. Is speaking to them. From the mountain. Audibly in a voice. Giving ten commands. And they despised. The counsel of the Most High.

His words were light. They shed light. On those in darkness. But not everyone enjoyed.

Having the light shine on them. The Bible says. Jesus says. That men love darkness. Rather than light. Because their deeds were evil. And they feel comfortable.

[35:13] In the darkness. Not in the light. The light of the Most High God. I feel exposed. I feel naked. Exactly. That's the way you'll be.

On the day of judgment. Better to be exposed now. By this glorious tender God. Who's sending his son. To shine his light on you.

Living in darkness. That he might guide your feet. In the path of peace. Jesus in John chapter 9. Spoke some difficult words to accept. And the greater part of the crowd.

Followed him no more. They were listening to divine counsel. And they did the 180. And walked away. And Jesus turned to the 12. And says. You don't want to leave also.

Do you? And Peter speaks for the group. Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. You alone have the words of eternal life.

[36:10] So there we were wandering. Lost in the dark. Heading for destruction. This wonderful counselor. Spoke words of light and life. He showed us our sin. He opened our eyes. To see that we were on the wrong road.

As good as it felt. And as good as it looked. It was winding straight to destruction. And our eyes were open to it. And we saw. That we had strayed from God. And our biggest problem.

Is we'd sinned against God. And then he opened our eyes. To the way of peace. The path of peace. It's Jesus himself. This wonderful counselor. He's saying. Come to me.

I'm the way. I'm the truth. I'm the life. No man comes to the father. But by me. And we came. And we trusted him.

We took him. As the truth. We took him. As the way. The way. The pathway. To peace. And we found that he forgave. All of our sins. He made us wise. For salvation.

[37:05] Through faith. In himself. How sad. That most go on. This Christmas morning. Rejecting. This wonderful counselor. And you see.

The reason is. Is because it takes faith. Doesn't it? Faith is needed. To follow him. And his counsel. He's laying out.

The very way. Of salvation. Through himself. The way. To peace. To shalom. The way it used to be. The way it's supposed to be. Without any curse. Just pure blessing.

The way of shalom. There it is. He's saying. But you wonder. Can I trust him? Can I trust him? Can I trust him?

With my life. With all my aspirations. And goals. And dreams. And things that I've wanted to do.

With my life. Will he disappoint? Will he fail me? Let me tell you. How wonderful this counselor is.

[38:01] As man. He's been here before us. And that simply means. He's made his way. Through this very same. Mine field. Of temptations.

Unscathed. By sin. So he knows. Every temptation. That we face. He knows. Every allurements. Of the world. Every lie. Of the devil. Every pitfall. And trap. And wrong road.

He knows. The one way. Of salvation. Himself. Our peace. And all his promises. Have been thoroughly tested.

Psalms 119. 140. And millions. Literally millions. Of travelers. Have gone before us. And have sought this wonderful counselor. And have taken him at his word.

And they found that his counsel. Guided them. Yes. Right straight home. To heaven. And now they are shouting. Their encouragements. In Hebrews 11. And throughout the Bible.

[38:55] We took him at his word. And it all happened. Just as he said it would. Trust him. He can be trusted. He's the faithful. And true witness. He laid down his life.

For his people. So great. Is his love for them. Would he then lead them astray? Never. So this Christmas season.

As we celebrate. The birth of this wonderful counselor. Will you put your hand into his. And let him lead you. Lead you straight home to heaven.

By way of the cross. By way of himself. Who suffers for sinners. The damnation that we deserve. Would you come to him. And trust him.

Put your hand in his hand. Let him lead you. Let him guide you with his counsel. He will do that. And let me remind you of the only options.

[39:52] Other options that there are. There's the counsel of your own deceitful heart. And the counsel of this world.

And both of those. Are shot through. With the lies. Of the evil one. Who wants. To see you damned. With him. Forever. Now there are your options. What has the world ever given you. What has its counsel. Ever given to you.

Indeed that's the question. Isaiah asks. All the counsel you have received. Has only worn you out. It's only left you spent. And empty. And unsatisfied. But here. Here's the counsel.

That will lead you. To God. Jesus Christ. You know David got it. Didn't he? Let me. Let me. Listen as he talks to his wonderful counselor. In Psalm 119.

[40:47] 19 and 24. He says. I'm a stranger. On earth. Do not hide your commands from me. Your statutes are my delight.

They are my counselors. I wonder if you've ever been in a foreign land. A strange place. And all the signs. They're in different languages.

A different language. And unfamiliar symbols. And there's no familiar landmarks. And it's so easy to get lost. Isn't it? To make a wrong turn.

What would you give for a guy. To counsel you. To direct you. In this strange land. David is saying. That's me here on earth. The whole earth is a strange place to me. I only arrived yesterday.

And I'm leaving tomorrow. And how I make my way through this earth. Depends where I am in the great tomorrow. Oh God. Do not hide your commands from me.

[41:42] They're my counselors. Your word is a lamp to my feet. And a light to my path. Oh give me your word. That it might counsel me.

Don't leave me to myself. To find my way home. Your word. Warns me of ways of wickedness. Your word points me. To the one. Who can get me safely home.

Through his atoning blood. He's a man who understands the dangers of this world. His own proneness to go astray. And is therefore desperate for the counsel of God.

He runs to the wonderful counselor. And his book of counsel. John Wesley. Said I'm a creature of the day. Passing through life as an arrow through the air.

That's my life. It's done. I'm a spirit. Come from God. And returning to God. Just hovering. Over the great gulf. Till a few moments hence.

[42:43] I am. No more seeing. I drop into an unchangeable eternity. I want to know one thing. The way to heaven. For this very end.

He came from heaven. He has written it down. In a book. God himself has come. Descended. To teach us. The way. He's written it in a book.

Oh give me that book. Let me be a man of one book. Jesus. The wonderful counselor. Has come. He comes with this wonderful counsel.

The light of the world. Has come. Glorious light. See the dawn of salvation. That was the angel's song. He's come. He's come.

Walk in darkness. No more. Come. Follow him. Trust in him. He's born to us. He's born to us. Is he yours?

[43:44] Have you received this wonderful counsel? Counselor. To be yours. Yours. Personally. Yours. Are you making good use of this counselor? Or have you rejected him?

And continue to reach. Or do you run to him first in your time of need? And in your time of sorrow? Your need for guidance. Is he the one you run to? Is it his counsels you seek? Are you waiting daily at his doors?

Desperate. For his counsel in the scriptures. Let's do that more and more. As people who are profoundly thankful. That when we were walking in darkness. God sent the great light.

To shine on those. Sitting. Living in darkness. And in the shadow of death. To guide our feet into the way. Of peace. Precious Jesus.

Put your hand into his. Trust him. His words of spirit. And their life. And blessed. Happy. Blessed. Happy.

[44:43] Is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. But his delight. Is in the law. Of the Lord.

The wonderful counselor. Take him. Take him today. And he'll lead you all the way to heaven. Let's pray. Amen. This wonderful counselor has spoken to us.

He's setting himself before you as that way to peace. I'm going to give a moment of silence for you to deal with this wonderful counselor.

And urge you to receive him. And everything in him. Eternal life itself. Let's all pray. Have dealings with this great.

Counselor. Glorious Lord. We. We grow weary with people who do not accept our counsel. And yet that's exactly what every one of us did to you.

[45:52] Thank you that when we were walking in darkness and in the shadow of death. You brought your truth to our hearts. And thank you that you weren't put off by our many rejections.

Thank you that you were far more patient than we. And that you pursued us. And here we are today. I don't know where all of these people have come from in their lives. And how many times they've met with this wonderful counselor.

And what they've done with him. But you do. And here they are again. And here you are again. offering yourself to them. As the path of peace. The counsel.

That will take them to heaven. Bring. Bring them today. To see the darkness. As the lie that it is. That it leads only straight to hell.

And bring them to see the wonderful light and life. Offered in Jesus Christ. And help us. Who are your people then? To go from this place. As those who are delighting. That we have a wonderful counselor.

[46:53] We're making our way to heaven. And Jesus is leading us there. By his wonderful word. Oh thank you then. For the forgiveness of sins.

Thank you. For your promise. To lead us. And to guide us. With your counsel. And then to receive us into glory. We pray in the wonderful name of our Savior.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.