

Jesus the Wonderful Counsellor

So, as we approach Christmas we begin a new sermon series titled – “He will be called”. It is based on Isaiah chapter 9, verse 6: *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 Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Any of you who have had children will know the struggles of picking a name. There are rules for choosing a name: if you or your spouse ever dated anyone with a certain name, that name is off limits. If your parents or your spouses parents ever knew anybody that had this name that they didn't like, thought was slightly odd, weird or different, that name is off limits as well. Some parents really should be told to go and think again before they register a name. Mr and Mrs Wright probably shouldn't have called their daughter Eileen; Mr and Mrs Price should have avoided Lois; Mr and Mrs Ohff had so many to avoid but they still went with Hans! Also to be avoided might be – Chevy, Blip, Fairy, Apple, Apple blossom, Cheese, Hurricane, Leviathan.....

We're going to look at four of the names given to Jesus in the Old Testament – almost 700 years before he was born. Isaiah writes, '*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders*'. There is a prophetic certainty in those words and a real sense of hope. Isaiah knew that Messiah was coming and although he didn't get to see it he was convinced that it was going to happen.

Today we're going to look at the title **Wonderful Counsellor**.

These two English words come from two Hebrew words, pele yo'ez. Pele, it means a great football player. Pele means beyond understanding. It means too wonderful for words. When Isaiah was going to describe the one day Saviour of the world, Jesus, he didn't have the words to describe him. He used a word that said there are no words great enough to tell you just how awesome he is. He is too wonderful for words.

Yo'ez is the word translated as counsellor. It means to advise or to consult or to guide. One day a son will be born, a child will be given to us, his name will be pele yo'ez. He will be the wonderful counsellor.

He is God in the flesh. He is the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end and yet he knows you and cares for you and understands exactly what you're going through, therefore he can be your wonderful counsellor. I love the way it's described in Hebrews chapter 4 verse 15 and 16, speaking of Jesus, our high priest. 15 *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just*

as we are—yet he did not sin. Our high priest. Our Saviour. Our wonderful counsellor, Jesus, he's been through what we are going through. He's been tempted in every way that we're tempted yet he was without sin. He understands your pain. He understands your hurt. He has experienced life just as you have.

That's why, verse 16 says, *16 Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.* Let us then approach the throne of grace with what - with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us when, to help us in our time of need. Some of you right know, if you were honest would say, I'm in a significant time of need. The good news is there is one who is here to help. He is the pele yo'ez. He is Jesus, the wonderful counsellor.

The amazing thing to remember is that Jesus was really interested in people who were sick - when Jesus came, he came for those who were in need. In fact, there's an interesting story in the Bible one time, Jesus called Matthew, who was a tax collector, to be a follower of Jesus and if you know anything about tax collectors they were like the farthest ever from Jesus. They were corrupt and nobody liked them and Matthew was so pumped that he threw this great big party at his house and he invited all of his other wild friends, tax collectors, and other well known sinners to come and to meet Jesus and the religious people they were highly offended by this. Why would Jesus meet and hang out with these wild sinners? In Luke Chapter 5 verse 31 he told them why: Jesus answered them, *"It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. 32 I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."*

So, I'm curious, are you sick? Are you hurting? Cause truthfully we're all sick at one point or another. Just because of sin in this world, we all battle with weaknesses and vulnerabilities and strongholds and dysfunctions. Where are you sick? You know if we sat down face to face and just had a conversation and maybe I could see an area or part of your sickness and I might press you on it and ask you about it. Some of you you'd resist and say hey don't go there. Leave me alone. I don't have a problem with this. Just, you know, I'm fine, I'm fine, really, I am. Others of you your sickness would be so obvious that you couldn't even hide behind it.

We sometimes try to mask it and pretend like its not there, others, it's just obvious for everybody to see. Where are you sick? You know, this season kind of has a way of magnifying things. It make the good things look better and the bad things look worse. The Christmas holidays often magnify our sicknesses. It could be like so many people today you're just depressed. You wake up every day wondering how you are going to get through the day and you have no hope

that tomorrow is going to be any better. You're just simply depressed, heaviness, this weight, this sense of hopelessness.

Others of you live in fear. You're always worrying, always wondering what's going to happen, nothing's good enough and things could get worse and you just live with this anxiety.

Some of you are stressed. You're looking at your to do list and thinking how can I ever get it done. How can I do my job and shop for everybody, I've got family coming over, the house has to be perfect and the meals need to be just so and you just stress.

Some are just lonely. You see happy family and you look on and you go why can't I have that? Why do I go to bed alone? Why do I eat alone? I hate it. I hate it. For some it's more of a family sickness. You've got some problems in your family and you just don't want to address them. Instead of being excited about being with family during the holidays, you dread it. You don't want to be there. Maybe someone's hurt you and you're really angry about it. It might be something else entirely but the question remains, "Are you sick?" If your answer to the question is, "Yes", then remember the good news, there is a wonderful counsellor, his name is Jesus, and he came for those who are sick.

So, how do we find help from this counsellor? There are three biblical principles that will help us to find healing from Jesus.

1. **We must learn to be honest with the counsellor.** In fact, we need to be brutally honest with Jesus and so many of us are not. There is an amazing story about this in John chapter 4: it's about a woman who simply wanted to be loved and accepted, and she thought if she just found the right person, then her life would have meaning. Unfortunately, she picked the wrong type of men and went from one to another to another until she gave up on marriage and was living with her latest man. One day she went to the well for water and she met a man who was obviously different to any she had met before. She was there because she couldn't go at the same time as the other women - she was an outcast. He was there because he came for the sick.

She ended up having a conversation and Jesus asked a question which was really challenging - he asked her to go and bring her husband back. She could have lied and made an excuse as to why he couldn't come, but she chose to tell the wonderful counsellor the truth. Jesus then revealed that he had known that all along, and that she had had five husbands before this man she was living with now. He then went on to tell her that he was the living water that she had been searching for her entire life. Because she was honest Jesus was able to bring healing and fulfilment to her.

Maybe you need to be honest with Jesus - maybe your faith is a low ebb and you want to say to him, "I've prayed and prayed about something and I don't seem to have an answer. Where are you?" Perhaps you're thinking, you know what, I've got to come clean and be open about this, I'm hooked on something and it's got me and it's bigger than I am and I have not been able to overcome it. Here's the truth, I'm addicted to this. Some of you, you may be honest to say, relationally I'm just all messed up. I can't have intimacy with someone because someone really hurt me years ago, I don't know how to trust, I don't want to open up. Just getting close to someone it doesn't even seem like it's possible. We must be brutally honest with the peele yo'ez, with the wonderful counsellor, Jesus.

Psalm 55:22 Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you.

So the first thing is that we need to be honest with the counsellor.

2. We must learn to listen to the counsellor.

There is an amazing story in Mark, chapter 9. Jesus took three of his disciples up to the top of a mountain and God did this incredible miracle and God transfigured Jesus and allowed them to see something of Jesus' true glory. Then Moses and Elijah appeared as well and the disciples were amazed. Moses and Elijah spoke with Jesus and then God spoke. What do you think God said when he had these three disciples attention like never ever before. Here's what God said, Mark 9:7 *"This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"* If there's any three words that God might say to you today, it's listen to Jesus. Listen to what he wants to say to you. Now, you may say but how does he speak? Well, he speaks all sorts of different ways. He is the wonderful counsellor who speaks. I promise you, he will speak to you through his word if you will seek him. He may speak to you today through my words and he may say something very specific just for you. He may speak to you through someone sitting next to you at church today. He may speak to you through someone that you work with. He may speak to you on the way home as you're listening to a song. He may speak to you through a daily devotion. He may speak to you through circumstances. If you listen, you can train yourself to hear his voice.

You can recognize the voice of the wonderful counselor as you learn to listen to him. Here's what he said specifically. John 10:27 *My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.* We're brutally honest with the counsellor. We listen to the counsellor's voice and

3. We must do what the counsellor tells us to do.

When he speaks we must do what he tells us to do even when we don't feel like it and don't understand because truthfully Jesus will sometimes ask us to do things that don't make sense to our natural minds.

The good shepherd may tell you to do something that doesn't make any sense logically but you do what he says to do because he is your shepherd, he is your guide, he is the wonderful counsellor. There is a great example of this in scripture of a guy who didn't do what the wonderful counsellor told him to do and it cost him and it cost him deeply. In Mark chapter 10, there's a story of a rich guy, maybe you can relate to this guy in that he was very moral but the things of this world grabbed him. If he was alive today he would be the guy that was into his image and his car and his house - look at all these great things that I've got and he would not fully surrender to Jesus because all these things were too important to him. The story picks up in Mark 10:20, where he announces that he has kept all of the Commandments. That's a little bit arrogant, but rather than challenge him about it or turn him away Mark tells us that Jesus did something totally different - he had compassion on him. Jesus knew the man's sickness was that he loved material things and possessions. Jesus didn't look at him and tell him he was awful, he looked at him and he loved him. Because Jesus loved him he told him something that he didn't want to hear. Jesus may tell us things that we don't want to hear but we need to remember, it's because he loves us. He's going to highlight that thing that is keeping us from following him more closely. Maybe for you family is more important than Jesus; maybe you're struggling with bitterness or anger; maybe you like to pass on news about other people but it's actually to tear them down, rather than build them up.

I don't know what is for you, but I know what Jesus said to this man: *"Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."*

Here's the diagnosis. This will provide what the man needs, that thing that he's looking for but can't find. Sadly the story continues, *"At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth."*

He was unwilling to obey the words of the counsellor. The thing is if as individuals and together as a congregation we are not willing to obey the wants of the wonderful counsellor, then we will continue to live unfulfilled, and unvictorious lives - lives that break the heart of God. We need to do what he tells us to do.

It may be that we lack faith, and that makes us unwilling to do what Jesus is telling us to do. Any earthly counsellor can only take you so far. There comes a point where you need to take responsibility for your continued health and

well-being. We all have people we talk to - a close friend, a professional counsellor, maybe even a Minister and we recognise and benefit from their advice, but they can only go so far. Ultimately there is one whose name is Jesus, he is the son of God, he is the mighty God. He is the everlasting father. He is the prince of peace and he is the Pele Yo'ez. He is the wonderful counsellor. The counsellor who is so great there are not even words to describe him. Be honest with him. Listen to him and do exactly what he says to do.