



## His Name Shall Be Called Wonderful Counselor

Advent 2015

Isaiah 9:6

David Sunday

November 29, 2015

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Jesus is Lord—Lord of all. Lord of our future. Lord of the past. Lord of today. Lord of our future. We thank You that He came into our world in the fullness of time. God, You sent forth Your Son—born of a woman, born under law—to redeem those who are under the law so that we might receive adoption as sons. You have sent forth the Spirit of Your Son into our hearts, and we cry, “Abba, Father.” Your Spirit causes us to long to see You more clearly, to know You more dearly, to love You more truly.

We wait for the coming again of our Savior this Advent season. We pray, Lord, that You would return. Maranatha—come Lord Jesus in Your glory. Come today through Your Word and in Your Spirit. Stir and strengthen our hearts, transforming us for the glory of the Father, we pray. Amen.

We all know what it’s like to be on the receiving end of unsolicited advice. You tell a friend, “I’ve been feeling kind of sad and anxious lately,” and they say to you, “Have you prayed about it? Have you tried writing a thanksgiving journal? Maybe a gluten-free or sugar-free diet would help you.” Or even worse—in the style of Bob Newhart—“Stop it! Just stop feeling so anxious and sad.”

I read an article about a woman who was going to the farmer’s market with her colicky baby. She said, “I’ll never forget what it was like to have a scowling stranger rush at me to advise, ‘You should try feeding him.’ ‘Oh, that’s what you’re supposed to do with babies? Who knew?’” She then writes, “Unsolicited counsel can trigger reactions ranging from gratitude to feelings of inadequacy to anger. The quickest fix in these situations? Be direct. Say, ‘Thank you for trying to help me, but I might have given you the wrong impression. I’m not actually looking for your advice.’”

Now, that might be a good answer for over-zealous, meddlesome people in your life, but the truth of the matter is we are all looking for counsel. We are all people in need of counsel. And there are plenty of counselors out there, but few are really good ones. The question is not, “Do you need a counselor?” The question is, “What counsel are you listening to? Whose counsel are you seeking? Are they people who respect God’s counsel that will never fail and abides forever?”

We’re going to begin an Advent series of messages basically on one verse: Isaiah 9:6. I can’t tell you how excited I am because there’s no theme I enjoy preaching on more than the undiluted truth of Christ and His glories. I love preaching the character of Christ and this passage is all about the names of Christ.

We’ve been going through the life of Abraham together—taking some big swaths of Scripture. Now we’re going to hone in for at least four weeks on one verse: Isaiah 9:6. There’s plenty here to keep our minds filled with glory for a long time.

First, we’re going to read this verse in its context, then focus on Jesus as our Wonderful Counselor. Beginning with Isaiah 8:11, we’ll read through 9:7. As we read these words, think about Jesus the Wonderful Counselor and how His truth and wisdom are being addressed through the words of His prophet Isaiah. Hear the Word of our holy and living God.

*<sup>11</sup> For the Lord spoke thus to me with his strong hand upon me, and warned me not to walk in the way of this people, saying: <sup>12</sup> “Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread. <sup>13</sup> But the Lord of hosts, him you shall regard as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. <sup>14</sup> And he will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. <sup>15</sup> And many shall stumble on it. They shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken.”*

*<sup>16</sup> Bind up the testimony; seal the teaching among my disciples. <sup>17</sup> I will wait for the Lord, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob, and I will hope in him. <sup>18</sup> Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me are signs and portents in Israel from the Lord of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion. <sup>19</sup> And when they say to you, “Inquire of the mediums and the necromancers who chirp and mutter,” should not a people inquire of their God? Should they inquire of the dead on behalf of the living?*

*<sup>20</sup> To the teaching and to the testimony! If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn. <sup>21</sup> They will pass through the land, greatly distressed and hungry. And when they are hungry, they will be enraged and will speak contemptuously against their king and their God, and turn their faces upward. <sup>22</sup> And they will*

*look to the earth, but behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish. And they will be thrust into thick darkness.*

*<sup>9:1</sup> But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.*

*<sup>2</sup>The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,  
on them has light shone.*

*<sup>3</sup>You have multiplied the nation;  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as they are glad when they divide the spoil.*

*<sup>4</sup>For the yoke of his burden,  
and the staff for his shoulder,  
the rod of his oppressor,  
you have broken as on the day of Midian.*

*<sup>5</sup>For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult  
and every garment rolled in blood  
will be burned as fuel for the fire.*

*<sup>6</sup>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.*

*<sup>7</sup>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.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.*

Amen. Thank the Lord for His living and holy Word.

We will look first at Who Jesus is, secondly at what He does, third at why this is wonderful for us, and then finally ask how we can experience this wonderful ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## 1. Who Jesus Is

We see in verse six both His nature and His names. With regard to nature, He is a child Who is born. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary. As truly born as any other human being is born, as much a child as any other man has been—this refers to our Savior in His full humanity.

But then we see also in verse six that He is a Son Who is *given*. In that sense He is not born, because He is God the Son from all eternity, with no beginning and no end. He is one with the Father, the wholly uncreated One. This refers to His deity. So He is fully man and fully God, one Person with two distinct natures, God with us. Clothed and veiled in flesh we see the Godhead.

This is a mystery that we can never fully comprehend, but it lies at the heart of our faith and is a mystery before which we bow down and worship. God of God, Light of Light,

Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;  
Hail, the incarnate Deity...

(Hark! The Herald Angels Sing by Charles Wesley, 1739)

He is human, He is divine and thirdly, in verse six, we see that He is royal. It says, "*The government shall be upon his shoulder.*" He is a King Who can bear the weight of the world upon His shoulders, so you and I don't have to bear the weight of the world upon our shoulders. In verse four I love how the burden is lifted off the shoulders of those who trust in this Child, and that burden can be lifted because He bears the government of the world upon His shoulders. He is the King.

He is human, divine, royal, and finally He is generous. To us a Child is born. To us a Son is given. He is given to us in His fullness to be light in our darkness, joy in our anguish, liberation in our captivity and victory from our enemies. He is God's Savior to us, and we worship Him in His humanity and His deity, in His royalty and for His generosity. And we worship Him because of the names with which He is revealed. These names are descriptive of His character: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

## 2. What Jesus does

We're going to focus now on the first name, Wonderful Counselor, which brings us to what Jesus does. We've seen Who He is, now let's focus on what Jesus does. Jesus counsels. He's a Counselor. Think about that for a minute. It was by a crafty serpent's counsel that this world was ruined and destroyed back in the Garden of Eden. The serpent said to Eve, "Did God

really say you shall not eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?” (Genesis 3:1).

It was by that crafty serpent’s counsel that the world was ruined, and it will be by a Wonderful Counselor that this world will be restored, renewed and recreated. God, this Wonderful Counselor, has stood in the counsel of the Triune Godhead for all eternity, decreeing all that exists in the universe, creating the world by the word of His power, ordaining the providential oversight of all things, and devising the great plan of redemption into which angels longed to look. It was a redemption no human mind could ever have conceived or would have conceived, so marvelous is it in its wisdom and power.

He is the One Who has stood in the counsel of the Triune Godhead, ordaining our salvation. You and I today—if we are saved—are saved because we have been *“predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will”* (Ephesians 1:11). So for all eternity this Wonderful Counselor has been one with the Father, advising the King, planning and devising all that is and all that ever will be.

But this Counselor is also in the world today as the Lord Who gives us counsel. It’s a ministry that’s precious to us, a ministry that we treasure. Just think of some of the words in Scripture that speak of this ministry of counsel. Psalm 16:7, *“I bless the Lord who gives me counsel.”* Do you do that? Do you bless the Lord for giving you counsel? *“In the night also my heart instructs me.”* He’s always open for advice. Then David says, *“I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken”* (16:8). The ministry of counsel. Bless the Lord for giving you His counsel.

In Psalm 32:8 the Lord says to His frail, feeble, stubborn and sinful people, *“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you... watching you in all your ways. I am able to direct you and counsel you. I care so much for you.”* But God also says, *“Receive this counsel.” “Be not like a horse or a mule...which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you”* (32:9). Don’t stubbornly resist this ministry of counsel from the Lord.

In Psalm 33:11 we read, *“The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations.”* So this counsel has stood the test of time and has helped people from every age, in every place. Anyone who submits to this counsel will find that it is steadfast, reliable and true.

To have the counsel of the Lord in your life is a precious gift. Remember in Psalm 73 how Asaph became envious of the wicked, and then finally he got back in the sanctuary of God and realized what he had from God. Do you remember what he said in verses 23-24? *“Nevertheless,*

*I am continually with you; you hold my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me to glory.”*

What a precious thing the counsel of the Lord is, and how refreshing it is in a book like Isaiah, that derides throughout its pages the folly of the wisdom of men. There are so many places we could turn for this in Isaiah, but let's turn to Isaiah 19:11m speaking of the counselors of Egypt, *“The princes of Zoan are utterly foolish; the wisest counselors of Pharaoh give stupid counsel.”* That's pretty bad—to be living in a nation where the wisest counselors of the king give stupid counsel. But if you do ever feel like you live in such a place, remember there's nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

*“How can you say to Pharaoh, ‘I am a son of the wise, a son of ancient kings’? Where then are your wise men? Let them tell you that they might know what the Lord of hosts has purposed against Egypt”* (Isaiah 19:11-12). They don't know the future. They can't tell you what God's purposes are.

*The princes of Zoan have become fools, and the princes of Memphis are deluded; those who are the cornerstones of her tribes have made Egypt stagger. The Lord has mingled within her a spirit of confusion, and they will make Egypt stagger in all its deeds, as a drunken man staggers in his vomit. (Isaiah 19:13-14)*

What a picture of a people who are listening to foolish counsel! Confusion, staggering *“like a drunken man staggers in his vomit.”* How refreshing it is to read in Isaiah 25:1, *“Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you; I will praise your name, for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure.”* God, Your plans endure. Your counsel stands firm. Your eternal plans will be carried out.

Look at Isaiah 28:7-9:

<sup>7</sup> *These also reel with wine  
and stagger with strong drink;  
the priest and the prophet reel with strong drink,  
they are swallowed by wine,  
they stagger with strong drink,  
they reel in vision,  
they stumble in giving judgment.*

<sup>8</sup> *For all tables are full of filthy vomit,  
with no space left.*

<sup>9</sup> *“To whom will he teach knowledge,  
and to whom will he explain the message?  
Those who are weaned from the milk,  
those taken from the breast?*

“There’s no one who can give wise counsel,” Isaiah is lamenting. But look at the end of that chapter, Isaiah 28:29. *“This also comes from the Lord of hosts.”* What does it say about Him? *“He is wonderful in counsel and excellent in wisdom.”* He overturns, we read in 29:14, *“the wisdom of their wise men...the discernment of their discerning.”* The wisdom of this world is foolishness to God (1 Corinthians 3:19), and the foolishness of God is wiser than men’s wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:25).

Jesus is a Wonderful Counselor in a world of confusion, in a world of staggering. He’s not an angry counselor. Have you ever been to one of those? He’s not an aloof counselor, checking His watch, disinterested, wondering, “When can I get out of here?” He’s not a gruff counselor, or overbearing. He’s not meddlesome. But neither is He anemic or spineless. He is firm, robust in His counsel. He’s not clueless. He’s able to help us. We need His counsel, don’t we?

I remember a day—I think this was probably truer a generation ago—when to admit in the church that you needed counsel was kind of embarrassing and awkward. “You need a counselor? You’re supposed to have it all together. What’s wrong with you?” We didn’t talk about that. We were supposed to be able to handle things on our own, or take them to God. We weren’t supposed to need counsel. Thankfully that’s changing. We are more open to admitting, “I need counsel. I need people speaking into my life.”

I even need and open myself up to counsel. I want people helping me to see my blind spots. I want people who are able to correct me. I want older people and younger people to give me fresh perspective, people who have different gifts than I have and different life experiences. I look to friends. I look to my mom and dad. I look to our elders, all of whom give faithful counsel.

One of the things I love about being part of a Care Group is as we mingle together week after week, year after year, and listen to one another, interact with the Word and pray together, we receive counsel from one another. We receive wisdom and care from one another. One of the reasons we have a Center for Gospel Care in our church is we want that to be a catalyst for a whole culture of care and counsel taking place in our church. . We are people who can’t handle life on our own. We need counsel and godly wisdom.

A few months back Kate and I were facing some burdens. [I want to reassure you dear souls who might be thinking, “Oh, no, is it us? Is it our church?” that it’s not about you.] There were some perplexing burdens and trials we were facing, some questions we had, some things we needed help sorting out. We thought, “You know, it would be really helpful if we could speak—in addition to all the other people that we get counsel from—to someone who doesn’t really know us, someone who doesn’t see me as the pastor.” Sometimes it’s hard to look at your pastor and say, “You’re wrong,” or “You need to think differently about that.”

So a few months back we drove to Grand Rapids and spent a day with a professor and his wife who's a doctor, and sought counsel and wisdom from them. We sat for two and a half hours in their office, and just shared what was going on in our lives. They asked us questions and directed us to the Word.

It was so helpful that when Kate and I were driving home, we felt like burdens had been lifted off of us. We felt like fresh air was in the car. We felt like vision was being clarified. We felt like correctives were being put into place in our lives that needed to be there so we could run the race with endurance and go at a pace that is healthy. We felt hope from receiving godly counsel.

Why do I tell you thus? I tell you so that you might be freed from the pride of thinking, "I don't need help. I don't need counsel." Or that you might be freed from the false shame of thinking, "If I do need help, if I do need counsel, there's something wrong with me. I should be embarrassed by that." We shouldn't be embarrassed by needing counsel, needing care. We all have blind spots that everyone else can see but we can't.

What's the kind of counsel that we value the most? It's counsel that's approachable, where people are welcoming and set you at ease, where a counselor is attentive and listens carefully without jumping to conclusions. We need counsel that is revealing. Proverbs 20:5 says, "*The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.*" Isn't it helpful to be drawn out, for what's in there to come out so we can start sorting it all out in the light of God's truth?

We value counsel that's sympathetic, where we bear one another's burdens, rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep (Romans 12:15). But we also value counsel that's assertive and states, "I'm going to listen to you and affirm you, but I'm also going to give you correction, direction and firm instruction." We value that kind of counsel. And we love to give that kind of counsel too. I'm in a position where I'm often giving counsel to others—and I want you to know I love doing that. I love shepherding. I love pastoring.

But here's a little secret about most counselors I know. Most of us often don't know what to say. When we're listening to the burdens and trials that other people are bearing, most of us can often feel, "Oh, Lord, this is way beyond me." The kind of counselors you want are people who will cry out to the Lord, "Oh, make me an instrument in Your redeeming hands right now. Give me wisdom from above. You Who are excellent in counsel and glorious in wisdom, I need You to illuminate my mind and heart with Your truth right now, so that I—a person who needs change myself—can help this person who needs an encounter with the Christ Who does the changing in lives."

### 3. Why Jesus is a Wonderful Counselor

We've seen Who Jesus is—God, Man, King, Savior, Wonderful Counselor. Second, we've seen what He does as a Counselor. Third, we're going to see why Jesus is such a Wonderful Counselor.

When's the last time you used the word "wonderful"? Probably in the last 24 hours you've said that word, right? We can use it in pretty trite ways. Someone makes you a peanut butter and jelly sandwich—"Oh, this is wonderful!" Really? Or Amazon's having a great sale on flat-screen TVs for Black Friday. "That's wonderful!" It's not wonderful. We talk about the weather being wonderful. That might be a little more wonderful.

But we use that word in such a commonplace manner. The word means full of wonder, full of awe. Maybe you get full of wonder at a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, but it takes a little more than that to fill me with wonder. This is the Hebrew word *pele* that is only used of God in the Scripture.

It means He is a wonder of a Counselor. He is a miracle-working Counselor. He is a supernatural Counselor, not just a delightful or pleasing counselor. He is a Counselor Who is able to work wonders through the counsel He gives. He is able to change people through the counsel He gives. His counsel is unlike any other counsel you'll ever receive. That's what is being said here.

In Exodus 15:11, as Moses and Miriam praise the Lord for the parting the Red Sea, they said of the Lord, "*Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?*" *Pele*. "You are a wonder-working God." Or in Judges 13:18, Samson's father Manoah asks the Angel of the Lord—Who is a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ—what His name was. "*And the angel of the Lord said to him, 'Why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful?'*" It's beyond our comprehension.

The reason Jesus is a Wonderful Counselor is found in Isaiah 11:2-3, "*The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.*" So the wisdom you get from Jesus is a wisdom that far surpasses anything this world can give. He uses human counselors, yes, but He uses human counselors who recognize, "My job is to point people to the Wonderful Counselor, the One Who can do wonders in people's lives."

Why is Jesus such a Wonderful Counselor? Why can Jesus do for you in His counsel what no other human being can? Let me give you a few reasons. I was helped with some of these through a message given by Nancy Leigh DeMoss.

**1) He knows us better than we know ourselves.** Jesus knows what's in us—what makes us tick, our motives, how we're wired. He knows the words we just haven't spoken yet. He knows the longings in our hearts. No one knows us like Jesus does. When the woman at the well met Jesus, she went and told her friend, "He's told me everything about me. I've found a Man Who knows all about me." He knows us better than we know ourselves.

**2) He is able to understand our needs because He's walked in our shoes.** He's lived in our flesh and He lives in our flesh. He died our death. *"We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin"* (Hebrews 4:15). So when we are tempted and fail, He comes to us with mercy and sympathy.

He says to the woman caught in adultery, *"Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more"* (John 8:11). When we need rest, He says, "Come aside for a little while. Come to Me and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:29). When we are hungry, He knows how to multiply the loaves and the fishes (Mark 6:30-44). He's able to understand our needs.

**3) He is able to diagnose our problem—not just what's on the surface, but what's underneath.** When Kate first found out she had cancer, we got a false diagnosis. A surgical biopsy was taken and we were told, "It's lymphoma." She ended up in a lymphomal leukemia floor, only to discover, "No, it's not lymphoma. It's not a blood-based cancer. It's a tumor-based cancer. There's a whole different protocol of treatment for this."

Getting the right diagnosis is crucial. Jesus diagnoses and gets to the heart of our problem. The rich young ruler walks away sorrowful because Jesus gets to the heart of his problem—his love of riches and possessions, and his hope is in those things (Luke 18:18-23).

**4) Jesus has succeeded where we have failed.** He's walked in our shoes, He's fought our battles, He's faced our temptations and He has prevailed. He has won the victory. He was sinned against. He was tired and lonely and disappointed. He was betrayed and brutalized, but He never became bitter or gave in to self pity. He never was simply angry. He experienced all these things and never sinned. He succeeded where we fail.

**5) He knows how to help us with the right prescription and solution for our needs.** He tailors it to each person's circumstance. What God is doing in your life right now may be different than what He's doing in someone else's life. He's not a one-size-fits-all Counselor. "Here, plug this in" and out pops the right outcome. No, He knows what He's doing right now in your life, and He is able to tailor His counsel to fit your need.

**6) His counsel is always right.** It's always true. It's always faithful.

**7) He always tells us the truth**—not just what we want to hear, but what we need to hear. Even when we don't want to hear it. Even when the truth is, "You must repent." He wants us to be delivered and whole, so He doesn't hold back the truth from us.

**8) He's a Counselor Who offers Himself as the solution to our needs.** Jesus doesn't stand as a professor telling us what to do. No, He walks with us. Not only that, He comes to dwell in us and to empower us through His Holy Spirit. In John 14:16-17, Jesus says, "*And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper,*" another Advocate, another Paraclete, another Counselor, "*to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.*"

So He comes to live in us, to empower us by His Spirit. Christ in us is the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27). He doesn't stand at a distance and say, "Do this." He lives in us and conforms us to Himself. In John 16:7, Jesus says, "*Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.*" He has come to us and dwells in us.

**9) He has a proven track record.** You could ask anyone in this room who believes in Jesus, "How has His counsel transformed your life?" and you will get specific answers of how we've been changed through His counsel.

**10) His counsel is free!** No co-pay. No need for insurance premiums. No limit to His coverage. No office hours. No lines to wait in. No scheduling difficulties. No rejection. No reproach. Just free, faithful, hearty, sweet, wise, proven counsel from our Wonderful Counselor.

#### **4. How We Can Experience the Wonder of His Counsel**

So how do we get this wise counsel? We talked at the beginning about unsolicited advice. Never leave Jesus' counsel unsolicited. Never say, "I don't need that. I don't want that." Solicit His counsel. "*If with all your hearts you truly seek Me, you shall ever surely find Me*" (Jeremiah 29:13, Mendelssohn's translation). Seek it as for silver. Pursue it as for treasure, for in Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Proverbs 2:4; Colossians 2:3). Cry out for insight; lift your voice for understanding (Proverbs 2:3).

Yearn for the counsel of the Lord. Seek His counsel. Pray. Turn to Him. Don't be a man who is wise in your own eyes, for there is more hope for a fool than for such a man (Proverbs 26:12). Seek His counsel first and foremost. Whenever you're going to a human counselor, be looking through that counselor to the Wonderful Counselor and be seeking Him in the counsel you seek.

Don't just run to people and spill all your problems out and shout from the rooftops in frantic frenzy, "Help! Help! Help! Help!" Go to Jesus, then seek Him in His people. He uses people. In all the seeking you do, be seeking Him first and foremost. Solicit His counsel.

Saturate yourself in His Word. Did you hear that in Isaiah 8:19-20? Don't go to mediums. Don't go to necromancers. Inquire of your God. "[Go] to the teaching and to the testimony! If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn" (Isaiah 8:20). They do not see that the Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Psalm 119:105). The Word is the wisdom from above (James 3:17).

Psalm 119:24 says, "*Your testimonies are my delight; they are my counselors.*" So how "*Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night*" (Psalm 1:1-2). Go to the Word of God and saturate yourself in the Word.

This Advent season, wouldn't it be wonderful—truly wonder-full—if all of us read through one of the four Gospels and said, "Oh, Lord, Wonderful Counselor, show me Your wisdom. Teach me Your ways"? Solicit His counsel. Saturate yourself in His Word. Trust His counsel. Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us, "*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.*"

Don't be a double-minded man, going into the Word and forgetting what you hear, but believe that in this Word God is going to give you wisdom you so desperately need. God's counsel in His Word is sufficient. It is counter-intuitive, comprehensive and inerrant. James MacDonald says, "You cannot call Him Wonderful Counselor if you don't embrace His wisdom for your salvation, your family, your finances, your future, your everything." Take His counsel—don't spurn it—and direct others to it.

Take a minute to pause and reflect, then turn to Jesus, the Wonderful Counselor. If you recognize that sin is ruling in your life right now—if you recognize that you are lost, like a sheep without a shepherd—Jesus is here and His counsel to you is, "Come to Me. I have food that will satisfy. I have wisdom that will guide you. I have truth that will set you free." The first counsel is to come to Jesus for salvation.

So if you right now are realizing, "Oh, how I need help," Jesus is here to save you. Come to Him. If you are facing perplexing problems, relationship difficulties, things that you know are beyond your capacity, turn to the Wonderful Counselor.

Let's pray together.

Oh, Lord Jesus, in You are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. We are a little flock—weak, battered, harassed and helpless—and we need the Good Shepherd. We thank You for the wisdom of Your Word. We thank You that You are the Wonderful Counselor Who can do for us what no human being could ever do or even begin to comprehend.

So we thank You this Advent season that You come into our world as light into our darkness, as joy in our anguish, as liberation from our captivity. We look to You, Jesus, for wisdom. Help us this week not to neglect Your Word. Help us to live in those green pastures, to lie down beside the still waters, to find strength, nourishment and encouragement from You.

Forgive us where we've wandered off like sheep, gone astray and turned to our own way. Thank You that on You the iniquity of us all was laid, that You died on the cross not only for our faults but also for our follies, not only for our wrong deeds but also for our waywardness. And Wonderful Counselor, we pray that You will lead us and guide us into Your truth as we worship You. Amen.

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*All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.*

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