

December 24, 2017

Title: “Mighty God”

Introduction:

I’ve heard a lot of people talk about a lack of heroes these days – people seem to be yearning for someone their kids can look up to. When I was a kid I don’t remember having any real-life heroes, but I had plenty of them on TV. There was “Mighty Mouse” who was one of my favorites – it was amazing what that mouse was capable of. Then there was “Underdog.” He wasn’t quite as impressive, but I still liked him. Of course, all of us thought “Superman” was quite the hero, but I really preferred “Aquaman” to him – in fact, I’d hate to tell you how many hours I put in watching Aquaman during my childhood.

The funny thing is, as an adult I invited a friend to church who had never been to church before in his life. A day or so later we were having a conversation and he told me that before going to church and hearing about Jesus, he thought Jesus was like one of these cartoon superheroes – flying around, saving damsels in distress, and that type of thing. He had no idea that Jesus was a real, true-to-life hero, who unlike the cartoons, really did have the power, desire, and might to save people in a way that made the cartoon guys look like amateurs.

- You see, the Bible tells us very clearly that Jesus is God – that He is a Mighty God, who came to this earth to rescue us. In this Christmas season we are looking at a passage in **Isaiah that prophesied the birth of Christ 700** years before it took place. And in this passage He gives Jesus four titles that we’re spending four weeks considering – the first one is “Wonderful Counselor” but today we consider what it means to say Jesus is the “Mighty God.”

*For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, **Mighty God**, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity. The passionate commitment of the LORD of Heaven’s Armies will make this happen! – **Isaiah 9:6-7 (NLT)***

It is wonderful to know that Jesus Christ, our hero, is acknowledged before He ever set foot on this earth as “Mighty God.” The Hebrew term for this name is *El Gibbor* – “El” means God, while “Gibbor” literally means hero – Jesus is our God Hero. **He is the One to whom "all power is given."** – He is the omnipotent God. It is an amazing fact that that little baby lying helpless on Mary's bosom held the universe together. Let's consider some ways that Jesus is the Mighty God.

1. MIGHTY IN INCARNATION

According to the NY Times, Americans are three times as likely to believe in the Virgin Birth of Jesus (83 percent) as in evolution (28 percent). Not only do 91 percent of [American] Christians say they believe in the Virgin Birth, but so do an astonishing 47 percent of U.S. non-Christians. **[End of illustration.]**

Isn't that amazing? Especially that such a large number of non-Christians believe in the miraculous conception of Jesus Christ. Now if you can believe in that, which I do, it is just another small step to accepting Jesus as Mighty God, and Savior of your life. If the Creator of the Universe can come to this planet wrapped up in skin like you and I have, what else is He capable of?

An angel told Mary:

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God.” – Luke 1:35 (NLT)

I think most of us have heard this Christmas story so many times that it has lost its punch. To think that God was born into this world, in all of His holiness, might, and glory, and took the title “The Son of God” is beyond incredible.

So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son. – John 1:14 (NLT)

This is what Jesus has done for us – **The Word became flesh.** The King of heaven **put aside his heavenly robes and divine prerogatives.** He came to us as one of us – **He lived among us; ate with us; drank with us; felt with us – all to win our love.** He could have forced us; He could have overwhelmed us, but He chose to romance us.

He stands here today with the smile of love and arms extended. He is the God who became real so that we could experience his transforming love. **Jesus is not just a truth to believe in, he is a person to be experienced.** He came here as the Mighty God, but He did so wrapped in the body of an infant.

2. MIGHTY IN TRANSFORMATION

One of the wonderful things about Jesus coming to earth as “Mighty God” is that He didn’t come here just to make some theological pronouncements, or to give speeches on correct doctrine.

Jesus didn’t come just to display His power and ability. Jesus came to this earth to literally transform people’s lives, to make blind men see, to make lame people walk, to take hearts that were black with sin and wash them clean with His own blood.

There are many, many stories in the Bible where we read that Jesus used His might to transform those who were willing to accept Him.

Some men brought their friend who was paralyzed and wanted Jesus to heal him. And in time, Jesus did heal him, but first He transformed the man’s heart.

*Some people brought to him a paralyzed man on a mat. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, **“Be encouraged, my child! Your sins are forgiven.”** – Matthew 9:2 (NLT)*

Jesus was more interested in our personal transformation than anything else.

He told three parables about a lost sheep, a lost coin, and a lost boy. Jesus used these parables as an illustration to show that His mission on earth was to find those who were lost so that He could transform their hearts.

***In the same way, there is more joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God than over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven’t strayed away!** – Luke 15:7 (NLT)*

I could give you example after example after example in Scripture of Jesus’ Mighty power to transform those who are far away from God and bring them home.

I could also give you example after example after example of people that I have personally known whom Jesus has transformed and made whole again.

Jesus was, is, and will continue to be in the business of finding people in desperate circumstances and bringing them the heart healing that they need.

Perhaps you find yourself in that type of situation today – *Jesus wants nothing more than to take your old heart and give you a new one.*

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life.

I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep Company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly." – Matthew 11:28-30 (MSG)

That is an invitation, both to those who are far away from God and have never known Him, as well as to those who are Christ-followers who have found themselves drifting away.

Sometimes our hearts need to be transformed, not for salvation, but for refreshment – Jesus offers us both. He is the Mighty God.

3. MIGHTY IN CRUCIFIXION

¹*Forty-two-year-old David Saunders waited on the driveway of his Hanover, MI, home for his 4-year-old daughter, Danielle, to get off her school bus. A pickup truck was stopped behind the bus. Saunders crossed the street to meet Danielle at the bus and then the two crossed the street together and stood in the Saunders' driveway. Suddenly he noticed that a car behind the bus was traveling too fast to stop safely before entering the crossing zone. The car swerved to avoid the pickup and went into the Saunders' driveway. Heading directly for them both, Saunders grabbed Danielle by the arm and flung her away from himself and into their front yard. He was then struck by the car – Saunders was pronounced dead at the scene. Danielle was treated for minor injuries at a nearby hospital and soon released. The 16-year-old driver and a 15-year-old passenger weren't injured. Sheriff's Captain Tony Philipps said, "It was a heroic act by a father to*

¹ "A Father's Love," *Detroit Free Press* (11-19-00)

save his child. He did everything he could, and in the process, he lost his own life." [end of illustration.]

The analogy between this story and the Christ story is an obvious one. **Jesus, as Mighty God, came to earth to take the hit for us on the Cross.**

For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he declares sinners to be right in his sight when they believe in Jesus. – Romans 3:25-26 (NLT)

Every year at Christmas time when I see baby Jesus in the manger I can't help but picture Him 33 years later nailed to the Cross.

From the cradle to the Cross – that was His destiny – He was born to die for us. **This is why Simeon prophesied to Mary:**

"...a sword will pierce your very soul." – Luke 2:35b (NLT)

He was talking about that day when Jesus' blood would be shed in my place and in your place – when all the sins of the world would rest on His shoulders.

What kind of guts did it take to go through all of that for us? Well, I can tell you what kind... the kind that could only come from a Mighty God who was born to die. And we praise Him this Christmas season for taking the hit for us.

4. MIGHTY IN RESURRECTION

Imagine the mystery and delight of not just hearing, but seeing the story of Jesus for the first time, almost as an eyewitness. That's what happened to a tribe in the jungles of East Asia, when missionaries showed them the Jesus film. The Jesus film is a very accurate portrayal of the entire life of Christ taken from the Gospel of Luke. **Not only had these people watching this film never heard of Jesus, they had never seen a motion picture. Then, all at once, on one unforgettable evening, they saw it all – the gospel in their own language, visible and real. Imagine again how it felt to see this good man Jesus, who healed the sick and was adored by children, held without trial and beaten by jeering soldiers.**

As they watched this, the people came unglued. They stood up and began to shout at the cruel men on the screen, demanding that this outrage stop. When nothing happened, they attacked the missionary running the projector. Perhaps he was responsible for this injustice!

He was forced to stop the film and explain that the story wasn't over yet, that there was more. So they settled back onto the ground, holding their emotions in tenuous check. Then came the crucifixion – Again, the people could not hold back. They began to weep and wail with such loud grief that once again the film had to be stopped.

The missionary again tried to calm them, explaining that the story still wasn't over, that there was more. So they composed themselves and sat down to see what happened next. Then came the resurrection. Pandemonium broke out this time, but for a different reason. The gathering had spontaneously erupted into a party. The noise now was of jubilation, and it was deafening.

The people were dancing and slapping each other on the back. Christ is risen, indeed!

Again the missionary had to shut off the projector. But this time he didn't tell them to calm down and wait for what was next. All that was supposed to happen – in the story and in their lives, was happening. [end of illustration.]

He was shown to be the Son of God when he was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. He is Jesus Christ our Lord. – Romans 1:4 (NLT)

My hope and prayer is that we would react like these tribal people – that we would begin to celebrate the Mighty God who rose from the dead to prove once and for all that He was who He claimed to be.

That we would begin to see Him again for the very first time and dance and clap and jump for joy that Jesus, our Mighty God, triumphed over the grave.

Conclusion:

I've often thought that Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter should all be rolled into one holiday.

Understanding that Jesus, our Mighty God, came because He loves us so much, that His entire life was dedicated to making us whole.