

“Mighty to Save”
Matthew 1:21; Isaiah 62:11-12; 63:1
(Preached at Trinity, December 24, 2017)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Tomorrow we celebrate one of the greatest events in the history of the world – the birth of Christ, His incarnation – the eternal Son of God coming to earth to take upon Himself the flesh of humanity. The only other event of such magnitude and significance would be the resurrection, God's almighty affirmation of the crucifixion of our Lord.
2. We could spend much time this morning talking about the mysteries of the incarnation – God revealing Himself through the Divine Logos.
John 1:14 KJV – "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."
3. We could talk about the miracle of His birth; born of a virgin, knowing no earthly father.
Isaiah 7:14 – "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."
4. We could talk about the hypostatic union of Christ – a union not of two personalities but of two natures in one person. Jesus is both God and man.
5. As we consider Christmas this morning I want to direct your attention to the reason for the birth of Christ.
Matthew 1:21 NAS - "And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins."
6. More specifically, I want us to consider our Lord's almighty power to save His people. Isaiah prophesied of this mighty savior.
Isaiah 63:1 NAU - "Who is this who comes from Edom, With garments of glowing colors from Bozrah, This One who is majestic in His apparel, Marching in the greatness of His strength? "It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save." As we often see illustrated in the prophets, that which pertains to national Israel finds its greater fulfillment in Christ and the proclamation of the Gospel of grace.
 - A. In chapters 62-63 of the Book of Isaiah, Isaiah was prophesying of God's great deliverance of Israel from their captivity in Babylon, but there is a much greater deliverance seen; a much greater salvation proclaimed.
Matthew Henry describes it well: "This, as many like passages before, refers to the deliverance of the Jews out of Babylon, and, under the type and figure of that, to the great redemption wrought out by Jesus Christ, and the proclaiming of gospel grace and liberty through him." ¹

¹ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*, (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 1206.

- B. Who is this One described by Isaiah as marching forth in the greatness of His strength? Who is this one mighty to save? He is the One proclaimed to Joseph in a dream hundreds of years in the future:
Matthew 1:21 NAS - "And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins."
- C. Baptist pastor and theologian, John Gill wrote: "That He is mighty to save appears from the spiritual salvation of His people . . . God laid help on one that is mighty, and He being mighty undertook it, and has accomplished it; and which work required strength, even almighty power, since sin was to be atoned for by bearing it, law to be fulfilled, justice to be satisfied, the wrath and curse of God to be endured, and innumerable enemies to be engaged with; and of such a nature was that salvation, that neither angels nor men could have ever effected it."²
7. This is the ultimate Christmas story. It is a story of a mighty Deliverer who has come to save His people from their sins. It is a story bathed in judgment because it comes in the context of sin. Jesus is not only the mighty Savior, He is the glorious Judge who will return to judge the living and the dead.
 Isaiah describes Him as One coming in great vengeance to judge His enemies.
 In **Isaiah 63:1-2** He is described as coming clothed in dyed garments. The word literally means "red" or "crimson" garments. The picture is of our Lord's clothing splattered with the blood of those being trampled under His feet. It is a gruesome and grotesque picture of each individual bearing the full consequence of his sin.
8. In the midst of this bloody judgment, however, is a story of salvation. This Deliverer is described as One coming in the "greatness of his strength" who is "mighty to save."
9. In the birth and manger scene we must never lose sight of the fullness of Christ. In the incarnation He took on the flesh of humanity while maintaining His full divinity. He is almighty God but also man.
- A. As God He is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father. As God He possesses all the attributes of the Godhead. As the Father is omnipotent, so is Jesus.
1. Jesus participated in all of the work of God's divine decree. He was with God and He was God.
John 1:1 NAU - "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
 2. Jesus participated in all the work of creation – the creation of the angels, the forming of the world, the making of man.
Colossians 1:16 NAU - "For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created through Him and for Him."
 3. Before any of His work as our Redeemer, Jesus Christ was God.
 4. He did not cease being God when He became man. In fact, Scripture teaches that He is God now sharing the throne with the Father.
- B. In His incarnation Jesus Christ became man. He was born as a human baby to a human mother. He grew into manhood as any other human being. He shared all of the weaknesses of humanity. He suffered, and died, and was buried.
- C. His two natures are not mixed, mingled or confused. His deity was not weakened by His humanity. Nor was His humanity enhanced by His deity.

² Gill, John. *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, (Paris: The Baptist Standard Bearer, Inc, 2006), page 369.

- D. As the incarnate Son of God, Jesus possesses infinite power. He demonstrated dominion over nature, dominion over Satan and his angels, dominion over death. Jesus Christ has dominion over all things.
Isaiah 9:6 NAU - "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace."
10. **Isaiah 62-63** comes with the backdrop of Israel in bondage to the Babylonians.
- A. Israel was a people under God's judgment because of their sin.
Isaiah 63:10 NAU - "But they rebelled And grieved His Holy Spirit; Therefore He turned Himself to become their enemy, He fought against them."
- B. But God did not abandon them – He was mighty to save.
11. We too have sinned grievously against the righteousness of God. But the Lord Jesus Christ is "Mighty to save." He has come to save His people from their sin.
- I. The first thing I want us to do is look at the words "to save"
 What do they mean? From what have we been saved?
- A. We use the word in many ways
1. A prize fighter that avoids defeat by the end of the round is said to be "saved by the bell."
 2. The firefighter rushes into the burning building and saves people from the burning inferno.
 3. A man falls overboard and someone throws him a floatation ring and he is saved from drowning.
- B. When we read the words "mighty to save" there is a particular focus. This salvation comes in the context of sin and condemnation
Matthew 1:21 NAU - "And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins."
1. We have been saved from the wrath of God
Romans 5:8-9 NAU - "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him."
 2. Over and over in the Word of God we are told of God's wrath
Ephesians 5:6 NAU - "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience."
Romans 2:5 NAU - "But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God"
 3. Jesus saves us from the wrath of God by bearing our sins and suffering under God's wrath in our place.
- C. Jesus saved us from the horrible penalty of sin.
1. Hell describes the everlasting revelation and ultimate expression of God's divine wrath.
John 3:36 NAU - "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

2. Hell is the eternal display of the terrible sinfulness of sin.
It is a terrible end for those who were unaffected by the goodness of God.
It is for those unconcerned about the mercy of God.
It is a terrible end for those who would not have God as their Master.
 3. As horrible as hell is, this is not the ultimate focus of our salvation.
The gospel must never be reduced to something that only saves us from a future place of torment. While Jesus does save us from the penalty resulting from our guilt this is not the ultimate focus of our salvation.
 - a. Our ultimate problem is not that we are hell bound
Our salvation is not limited to freeing us from eternal torment.
 - b. We need a powerful deliverance from sin's grip upon our lives.
- D. Jesus saves us from the mighty power of sin
1. Sin is a powerful unbeatable enemy. Every man has succumbed to its power. It is cunning and deceitful, making promises of happiness that it cannot deliver. Sin laid hold of our hearts and our hearts deceived us into bowing to the delights of sin.
Hebrews 3:13 NAU - "But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is *still* called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."
 - a. Sin is an addiction – we are gripped by it. We cannot let it go.
 - b. Many foolish men have taken up religion with vain plans to reform but no man can continue the charade. The sow will soon return to her wallow. You may take her, clean her up, feed her the food of kings – but she will not be content. The wallow is ever on her mind and she will not be happy until she is merrily wallowing in its mire.
 2. Jesus has saved us from this powerful grip of sin
 - a. We have been saved unto holiness – He is making us holy
 - b. He has given us a new heart which has led to new appetites
We once hated holiness – we now love holiness
- II. What does it mean that Jesus is mighty to save?
- A. Jesus was mighty in keeping Himself a spotless Lamb of God – in demonstrating His qualifications as our Redeemer
 1. Jesus came to earth and became man – He was born under the Law and was subject to its demands.
Galatians 4:4-5 NAU - "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵ so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."
 2. He was tempted in every way we are tempted. Every man without exception has succumbed to sin, but not Jesus.
Matthew 4:1 NAU - "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil."
Matthew 4:8-9 NAU - "Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; ⁹ and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me."

Hebrews 4:15 NAU - "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin."

3. Jesus Christ by His mighty power was preserved from sin – He was holy, harmless and undefiled by the filth of sin.
- B. He was mighty in accomplishing our atonement
1. Jesus didn't just die to make men savable – He died to actually accomplish salvation for His people.
 2. Drinking the cup of God's wrath for us was an infinite agony, yet Jesus drank it all.
 3. Jesus Christ is mighty in saving each and every one of His own – not a single one shall be lost
 4. The resurrection displays His victory over sin
- C. As mighty King Jesus is mighty in applying His salvation to us
1. Jesus is mighty through His Spirit in exposing our sins to the light of the Gospel. He convinces us of our guilt and condemnation.
 2. He is mighty not only to save those who repent – He is mighty to make them repent. No man left to himself would ever turn from his sins.
 - a. Sin was our true love – we gave ourselves to it
 - b. Jesus is mighty in leading us to turn from our wicked ways
 3. He is mighty not only to save those who believe – He is mighty to enable us to believe
 - a. Our hearts are too wicked, we are too addicted to sin to see the need for a Savior – Jesus Christ is powerful to make us willing.
 - b. Jesus is mighty to show us our need of Him; our need of His redemption
 - c. It is Jesus who makes preaching effectual –
1 Corinthians 1:18 NAU - "For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."
1 Corinthians 2:4-5 NAU - "and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God."
- D. Jesus is mighty to keep us—as our mighty King He delivers us from our enemies.
1. He has never lost a single one of His own
John 6:39-40 NAU - "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.
⁴⁰ "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."
 2. Jesus does not save us and then leave us to fend for ourselves – His mighty and abiding presence is ever with us
Hebrews 13:5 NAS - "Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,"
 (the idea here is that the Christian is to be content with the abiding presence of Christ)

3. We persevere because He keeps us
1 Peter 1:3-5 NAS - "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

III. What proof do I have this morning that Jesus Christ is mighty to save?

- A. Look at the surety of God's Word
 1. Scripture affirms the work of the Savior was approved by the Father
 2. We are promised that all who repent and trust Christ shall be saved. Not a single one will be lost.
- B. Look around you at the multitudes He has saved – both in generations past and now
 1. Look at the changed lives. Look at the martyrs who were devoured by wild animals, skinned alive, roasted at the stake. Look at missionaries who have lived among the savages.
 2. Look at Christians today – true Christians. See how they shine as lights in the world. See how they love one another. See how they glow at the mere mention of Christ.
 3. There are Christians here tonight that can testify to His mighty power
 As in the words of our Lord,
John 3:11 NAS - "Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen"
 4. It is a sad truth that there are many professing Christians who show none of the evidences of Christ's mighty power in salvation. They hate worship and preaching and demonstrate it with their frequent absence. They hate the Lord's Day because it demands thoughts towards God.

Conclusion:

1. This is the Gospel. Jesus Christ is mighty to save sinners. We must preach Christ, and Him crucified. There can be no pardon for sin without Him.
2. It is not the eloquence of the preacher. It is not his power to persuade. It is not the vestments of religion. It is Jesus Christ who is "Mighty to Save."
3. Have you trusted in Him? How guilty, how vile you are if you deny so great a Savior. How shall you escape His vengeance when He has been merciful in bringing the Gospel to you – so many times.