

Wednesday of Gaudete, A²D 2010

1 Timothy 6:11-16; Isaiah 16:1-5

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

1 Closer now than ever before. The King: the Child born to the Virgin, whose name is Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. The wait for your King continues in this season of Advent, a season of preparation, a time of weeks and days and hours to prepare for an encounter, an eternal audience with your King. He is coming, heralds Advent. There is a King coming. Be ready. Prepare yourself. He will come with pomp and fanfare, with an awesome spectacle that everyone will see, with a trumpet blast and a fanfare that everyone will hear, with a company of attendants that will impress everyone. Jesus is coming again. He is the King of kings, a King unlike any other, with more power than any earthly ruler, with all authority in heaven and on earth given to Him.

2 So your King is coming. What can you expect? You know He is the Wonderful Counselor whose words give you the forgiveness He died to obtain. You know His words of counsel do what they say: give you the benefits of His death and resurrection, forgiving your sins with His "I forgive you." You know that this King is your Mighty God, putting Himself back onto the throne on the cross, reclaiming His reign over you by buying you back from your pseudo-kings of sin, death, and the devil, not with the normal riches of a king, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that you may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.

3 And He is your Everlasting Father. The third name given to the child born as King, prophesied by Isaiah is "Everlasting Father." How may you call Jesus, the Son of God, "Father"? He is certainly not your Father as His Father, God the Father, is your Heavenly Father, to whom you pray the Our Father, upon whom His Son cried from the cross, "Father, forgive them." In terms of His relationship toward you, Jesus is not your Father, but in His care and concern for you, it is certainly appropriate to use the title of Everlasting Father for Jesus.

4 What does a father do? What can you expect from Jesus as King who is the Everlasting Father? He gives you life. He cares for you as a father. And He provides for you. There are lots of different kinds of earthly fathers, but none is perfect. It's easy to pick out the rotten examples of fatherhood: those who abandon their wives and children, those who are absent, those who abuse their families, those who are only concerned with looking out for themselves. But even the good fathers, the ones we grow up respecting and admiring, will disappoint us. They, too, will make self-interested decisions. They, too, will at times abandon us. Even the best examples of earthly fathers are only dim reflections of your Heavenly Father, whose fatherhood is perfect, who defines fatherhood for the rest of us. And Jesus is an heir of all of His Father's perfection.

5 Jesus alone can give you life. Everything else fails when you die. Nothing you can do, buy, give, receive, think, say, eat, or wear will help at all on the other side of death. As life is impossible apart from the union of a father and mother, so the only way to receive eternal life is from Jesus who gives life through His Bride, the Church. He is the way, the truth, and the life. He has come that you might have life and have it abundantly. Abundant life, eternal life, life that never runs out is what Jesus offers. All other life is less real than what Jesus offers, and all other sources of life are not able to deliver you from death. But His death on the cross and His victorious rising from the dead, Jesus has delivered you from death.

6 Jesus alone cares for you as a father. His fatherly compassion for you is such that He endured mocking and abuse, humiliation and suffering, torture and crucifixion for you. Fathers and husbands are called to set aside their own needs and desires in order to live their lives for the benefit of their wife and children. Jesus is the example of this sacrificial love par excellence. He took your sins, your guilt, your problems, your mess-ups and made them His own. He took the blame, let Himself be punished in your place, in order to free you from sin and its consequences.

7 Jesus alone provides for you. With Jesus as your provider, every need is met. You who have been adopted into this royal Family in the waters of Holy Baptism are provided for your entire lives.

He makes sure there are preachers aplenty to deliver His life-giving Word to you. He sends His pastors, His absolution men to speak the words which forgive your sin and dispel your guilt and shame. More than a breadwinner, He is the Bread of Life. Better than merely putting food on your table, He spreads before you a feast of forgiveness, providing you with His real Body and Blood to forgive your sins and sustain your life beyond the grave.

8 Take heart. You have a King. He is Everlasting Father, who gives you life, who cares for you as a perfect father, and who provides for you everything necessary every day until His return. He is everlasting, and so are those who belong to Him.

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria

Pastor Jeff Hemmer