

Introduction

1. I remember 6 or 7 years ago, I wrapped a Christmas present and set it by the Christmas tree
 - a. It was a tall box – about 4 feet tall
 - b. It was a heavy gift
 - c. And I put no name on it
 2. When the children, and Myrna came home that day, they immediately saw the big box by the tree
 - a. All wondered what was in it
 - b. All wondered who it was for
 3. Of course, I enjoyed their curiosity, they wondered everyday about that gift
 - a. One guessed it was a floor lamp
 - b. Others wondered if it was nothing – and I was just playing games
 4. What in the gift box lies?
 - a. On Christmas Eve I had to give the gift to the one for whom it was given
 - b. I handed the box to Myrna
 - c. And she opened it
 - d. And inside – was about 4 foot Nutcracker
 - e. She had said at one time she wanted one – and so I thought I'd do it up right (pause)
 5. In the manger there is gift –
 - a. We try to peer into this manger – and all we see is wrapping of swaddling cloths
 - b. We hear the soft sounds of a baby...
 - c. And we wonder – “Who in the manger lies?”
- I. **Now, before I tell you who in the manger lies – I want to ask you a question: Has anyone ever made you a promise and did not keep it?**
- A. This world is full of broken promises
 - i. We've heard many wedding vows, you know, “Until death do us part” – but often times the parting comes way sooner than the death because of broken promises
 - ii. Or a child has promised to clean a room, or a parent has promised to buy the child a new pair of shoes – and many times – the promise has been broken
 - B. We go to Isaiah, chapter 11, and God makes a promise: “There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.”

- i. We've heard this promise before – When God promised King David that the Messiah would come from family line, and that the kingdom of this descendant would last forever
- ii. Finally, through Ruth, Boaz, to Jesse – God makes this promise again through Isaiah, the prophet
- iii. Jesse is the father of David – and from Jesse's roots shall eventually come forth the fruit of this family tree: the good and perfect fruit, Jesus Christ

C. And then when Gabriel comes to Mary – the angel says, “Mary, you shall be with child. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end”

- i. See – God keeps His promise!
- ii. The Messiah comes, Jesus –
- iii. The PROMISE KEPT – that's what's in the Manger!
- iv. Who in the manger lies? – the kept promise of God!
- v. God has not deserted you; God has not broken a promise to you: He promised you Jesus from the line of David...
- vi. And in the manger – there He is!

II. **Here's another question for you: Aren't you tired of dealing with people who are so imperfect?**

A. Think of how we have to deal with people who always mess up...

- i. The mechanic who says he fixed your car, but it still doesn't work
- ii. The students who always misbehaves toward their teacher
- iii. The check-out lady at WalMart who is distracted and so slow
- iv. The parent who always seems to know nothing
- v. The politicians who run on a platform, but change their tune once they get into office
- vi. It would be nice for a change if we could just deal with people who were a little more trustworthy, and who wouldn't make so many mistakes, a little more perfect

B. Back to Isaiah the prophet – Isaiah promises ONE who will come who will judge the poor with righteousness, and whose belt on his waist is righteousness

- i. If only one would come who is perfect – maybe He could fix all the imperfect messes of this world, including our own imperfections
- ii. And then Gabriel comes to Mary and says, “Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus”

- iii. Jesus – He is the PERFECT RIGHTEOUS One – who comes to fix all of our unrighteousness and all our imperfections
- iv. We are broken, we are hurting in this world, we are scared, depressed, and anxious...
- v. And the perfect ONE, Jesus Christ, comes – and by dying on the cross fixes us, and makes us holy like Him; we are forgiven and made righteous
- vi. Who in the manger lies? → Jesus Christ, whose very name means “One who saves”
- vii. And the One who can save us for all eternity is the Righteous perfect, Jesus Christ

III. One more question for you tonight: Do you long for peace? Do you wish there was peace in your life, and calm, and tranquility

- A. I talked to a man the other day who is quite fearful of this world
 - i. He speculates a major financial depression among us, with our money having no buy power
 - ii. He speculates a whole generation of people who have had no real hurts in their lives, and may have to face them in the near future
 - iii. He speculates warfare and crises by stocking up on water and food
 - iv. Paranoid maybe – but we all have some paranoia, and we all long for peace in various aspects of our lives

- B. Isaiah speaks of a time when the wolf shall lie down with the lamb, the leopard with the goat, the child with the snake
 - i. This is a prophesy of the days of the Messiah
 - ii. That even on earth, before His final coming – God’s people may know of the perfect peace of Jesus Christ, the forgiveness of sins He wins on the cross, the life everlasting He gives us by rising from the dead
 - iii. But even more so – we look forward to the return of Paradise, in heaven → where there will be no more crying, no more pain, no more worry, no more sadness, no more death, no more sin → but only perfect peace!

- C. Who in the manger lies? It is the Prince of Peace
 - i. This is the One who brought us back to God by being the sacrifice of our sins
 - ii. This is the One who feeds us His meal of peace – and we are confident of Him calming our soul
 - iii. This is the One to whom we cry out when we are in distress, depression, sadness, anxiety, and sorrow – and in our Baptism, He touches us with His divine peace and wipes our tears and lifts our souls to a real hope, and real resurrection

Conclusion

1. The manger is not a big mysterious box
 - a. We know what's in it
 - b. And we know who it's for
2. Who in the manger lies?
 - a. It is the kept promise of God
 - b. It is our righteousness – where we are forgiven all of our sins and made perfect
 - c. It is our peace – where our anxieties are met by the Infant Christ
3. Who in the manger lies?
 - a. God!
 - b. Jesus Christ!
 - c. Amen.