

# Isaiah 9:6

by Joseph Carroll

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*Living a life pleasing to God requires faith, trusting in His sovereignty, and resting in His plan.*

**Duration:** 36:09

**Scripture:** Psalm 55:22, Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 9:6, Matthew 11:28, John 14:27, Romans 14:23, 2 Corinthians 5:7, Philippians 4:6-7, Hebrews 11:6, 1 Peter 5:7

**Topics:** "Christian Life", "Trust in God", "Faith"

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## Description

Joseph Carroll emphasizes the significance of faith in the life of a believer, drawing from Isaiah 9:6 to illustrate the attributes of Christ as Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. He recounts the transformative power of faith through the story of Charles Grandison Finney and the life of Miss Gladys Dieterle, who exemplified trust in God's authority and responsibility. Carroll encourages believers to place their burdens on Christ, affirming that true faith leads to a life of rest and peace, as it acknowledges God's sovereignty in all situations. He challenges the congregation to live a life that is fully trusting in God, which is the only life that pleases Him. The sermon concludes with a call to commit to a life of faith and reliance on God's guidance.

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## Transcript

Holy Father, we thank Thee that Thou hast not only given us Thy Word, Thy eternal Word, but Thou hast also given us Thy Spirit, that He might teach us all things, that He might lead us into truth, that the truth might make us free. We pray that as we wait before Thee this morning, Thy Spirit Himself and Thy Spirit alone shall minister His own Word to the need of our hearts, that we might be set free to follow Thee and to love Thee. For we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

One of the great preachers of all time, a man who was used mightily in revival in this country, was Charles Grandison Finney. Finney, before his conversion and call to the ministry, was a lawyer. The Spirit of God had moved upon him, convicting him of his sin, and because of that he was led to attend a prayer meeting, where a number of people from various churches gathered to pray.

After being present for some meetings, he was asked by one of that number, Mr. Finney, do you not desire us to pray for you? And he said, no, I do not. Well, why do you not desire us to pray for you? He said, because I do not think your prayer for me would be of any value. What has caused you to come to that conclusion? His answer was devastating and possibly true.

He said, after listening to you pray for a number of weeks, I am convinced that you are not expecting with all your heart God to answer your prayer. And I am sure, absolutely sure, even with my knowledge of the scriptures, that it's not the slightest use praying for anything unless you believe God. Finney had seen, even in his unconverted state, that the one thing God looks for, the one thing he seeks for above all else, and the one thing he must have, is faith.

The Word of God leaves us not in the slightest doubt about this, for it tells us in Hebrews 11, verse 6, but without faith, it is impossible to please him. Much of our praying is not pleasing to God, much of our labor is not pleasing to God, because it is not in faith. Indeed, whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Faith is the one thing that God will respond to. We all know that there was only one thing that ultimately saved us. We may have wanted to be saved, as I did for many months before I was converted.

We may have wept, we may have repented, but God did not meet us in our need until we believed. When we believed, God did something, but not until we believed. It is faith that brings God into action, and faith alone.

I want to share with you this morning, in the light of this tremendous fact and great need, the need of faith, some obvious truths from a very wonderful verse of scripture, which in a very simple way, if we understand it, can launch us into a life of faith, which is the only life pleasing to our Lord. It is the verse that was read this morning, in Isaiah chapter 9, verse 6, a verse which is usually dwelt upon during the Christmas season and then forgotten for the rest of the year. But a verse which I want to suggest should be before us throughout the year.

It is one of the truly great verses of scripture which reveal to us some of the wonders of our Lord. For unto us a child is born, unto us, unto you, a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. To rightly understand this verse, and to live by it, can lead us into a satisfying walk of faith.

For many years I tried to discover an adequate definition of faith. You might say, well, you turn to Hebrews chapter 11, and you'll find a definition of faith. There is some doubt as to whether that is truly a definition.

Faith is the substance of things, hope for the evidence of things not seen. Now what is faith? The finest and the most accurate definition I have yet discovered is this. Faith is personal trust in a person.

What is faith? This faith that is so important, this faith by which we are saved, by which we are sanctified, by which we walk, what is it? Faith is personal trust in a person. It is many years ago now since I met a quite remarkable woman of God. When I met her, she had the spirit of a teenager, and she was in her eighties.

Our first meeting was on a very windy, cold corner of the city of Chicago in winter. I'd been ministering at the Moody Memorial Church, and following one Sunday evening meeting, I was introduced to this wonderful woman. She told me that she was on her way to Los Angeles.

She had just received her last shot, and from Los Angeles she was to fly to Formosa to begin the work for the Lord there. She had already been in Shanghai for fifty years and more as the director of the Door of Hope mission, a wonderful work amongst orphan girls in China, a work of faith. And now in her early eighties, the Lord had spoken again, and he said, I want you to go to Formosa and establish a Door of Hope, a door for Chinese orphan children in Taipei.

And so she was off again in her eighties. Well, I realized that such an act was a tremendous demonstration of faith, and could only be taken by a woman who really knew the Lord. And when I got to know Miss Gladys Dieterle in a more intimate way later in Formosa, I discovered the secret of her life, and it was the only secret to any great life.

She was a woman of great faith. She came from Germany, and in her early days she discovered that what the Lord required of her more than anything else was faith. And so she learned to trust.

And she learned to trust because she mastered the truth of this verse. And this was the verse she lived by. And I once heard her speak on the first part of this verse.

I'm sure she only had four or five messages, but if you have four or five hydrogen bombs, you don't need very much more. You see, very often some of us preachers have a lot of messages, but they're just firecrackers. Just go off with a little pop and that thing happens.

Not Miss Dieterle. When one of her messages was delivered, something happened in, on earth, and I'm sure in heaven, and also in hell. This was one of her great messages, just the first word of this great verse.

For from her earliest years right through to the end, she lived by one principle, and it was this. It does no matter what happens or what comes to you, you must immediately say, Lord, the government is upon thy shoulder. In other words, it's all yours.

And even during the times when I visited with her, she would be confronted by a certain problem. She'd say, all right Mr. Carroll, let us pray. And she always prayed the same prayer.

Government on my shoulder, Lord. I expect you to do a wonderful thing. Amen.

That's all. That's all she needed to pray. Now what did she mean by that? When the Holy Spirit here speaks of government, he is speaking of two things.

He is speaking of authority and responsibility. Government speaks of authority and responsibility. When you place the government in the hands of any person, you are first of all giving them authority.

The President of the United States this morning has great authority. He also has great responsibility. So that when Miss Dieterle would say, Lord Jesus, government upon thy shoulder, what she was actually saying was this, Lord, the authority in this situation is all yours and the responsibility is all yours.

It's on your shoulders. Now it can't be on his shoulders and your shoulders too. If it's on your shoulders, it is not on his.

You see, that's the secret of faith. Government upon thy shoulder. And she left it there.

That's why one of the reasons I'm sure was why she lived into her 90s, almost 100. Hers was a life of faith, therefore hers was a life of rest. It's very important that we understand this.

When you are trusting, you are resting. If you are not resting, you are not trusting. And so she learned to put the government upon the shoulders of her Lord.

On one occasion, when the Japanese had occupied Shanghai, she came to her last bar of soap. She said to me, Mr. Cowell, now, you may not think it a very great problem to be reduced to one bar of soap, but I

can assure you that if you have 500 on earth one goes to care for and you are down to one bar of soap, it's a crisis of magnitude. She said, I told the members of the staff, we will gather the girls together in the chapel tomorrow morning.

We will place the government upon our Lord's shoulder for soap and we will praise him that he's going to send it. So the next morning, all the orphan girls were gathered together, mistakenly in prayer, placed the government upon the shoulders of her Lord for soap and then they began to sing hymns of praise. Whilst they were singing, one of her missionaries came and said, Mr. Dewey, there is a Chinese gentleman who wishes to see you.

Her first impulse was to say, no, I cannot see him. I'm leading this praise service. But the Spirit of God checked her and she was introduced to the man.

She showed him the work of the orphanage and when she concluded the tour with him, he said to her, Miss Dieterle, I deeply regret that I cannot give you any financial support. We are covered in all of our operations by the Japanese. But it is possible that I could help you.

You see, I am a soap merchant. And for the rest of the occupation by the Japanese, that Chinese Christian supplied them with soap. What do you think that meant to those orphan girls? That one demonstration of God's power brought into action in response to faith was worth more than a hundred messages.

A practical demonstration of the power of God to come into a situation and to transform it in response to faith. He's still the same today, wherever faith is exercised. The first step in any act of faith is to place the government upon his shoulder.

To say, dear Lord, the authority and the responsibility is all yours. But that isn't the end, it's just the beginning. I want you to notice the next step in this verse.

The government shall be upon his shoulder and his name shall be called Wonderful. Wonderful. Now you may place the government upon the shoulder of the Lord and then go about your daily routine with an attitude of how something like this, well, I hope it will all turn out the right way.

Or I wonder if the Lord will really intervene. Well, of course, that is not faith. The act of faith must always be followed by an attitude of faith.

And the attitude of faith, of course, is rest. Your attitude of rest is the evidence that you are trusting. But here we have a key to it, and it is this, that when we place the government upon our Lord's shoulder, we must tell him, Lord Jesus, now that the government is upon your shoulder, I want to thank you that you are going to do a wonderful thing.

Because your name is Wonderful. Because the psalmist said, he only doeth wondrous things. Lord, the government is upon your shoulder and you are going to do a wonderful thing.

Now, it's very difficult to doubt when you are telling the Lord every day that he's going to do a wonderful thing. This is an evidence of the attitude of faith. Thank you, Lord, that you are going to do a wonderful thing.

We have in our own experience had many occasions when we have been given the opportunity to know that he only doeth wondrous things. I was very moved by the request for prayer for this child this morning with this disease of the blood. It is over three years ago since we were told by a doctor one Friday evening in the city of Philadelphia that our little girl, who we thought had an insignificant illness, had a deadly cancer, a Wilms tumor.

She was only four years old and the tumor was very large and the surgeons did not give her very much hope. When you see a little girl in the morning playing, bright and cheerful, and then in the evening she's committed to a hospital being prepared for the removal of one of her kidneys and possibly death, you don't have to know the Lord. And there's only one thing to do at a time like that.

And my wife and I did it. We knelt down and we said, Lord Jesus, the government is upon your shoulder, the authority and the responsibility is all yours. And we know that you will do a wonderful thing.

We know that you'll do it, and he did it. But very often we think we know what the wonderful thing is when we don't. Well, Lord, the government is upon your shoulder and you're going to do a wonderful thing.

And we know just what it is. If we have a wayward child, the wayward child is going to come to the Lord. Well, he may not come to the Lord immediately.

If we have financial problems, well, Lord, you're going to do a wonderful thing. And I know what the wonderful thing is. You're going to solve our financial problems overnight.

Well, he may not. Well, this is where the next step in a life of faith comes into focus. His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Counselor.

Now, Counselor speaks of wisdom and guidance, wisdom and guidance. If you go to a Counselor, you go to one who has wisdom, and because he has wisdom, he can guide you. Make him your Counselor.

Let him tell you what he is going to do. Don't tell him what he should do, because he knows very well what he's going to do, and he doesn't need our advice. He is God.

He may have some plan that you have never even dreamed of, and his answer is always wonderful. It is always exceeding abundantly above, if you'll trust him, if you'll trust him. You remember, I'm sure, the story of Daniel.

When he was sentenced to death, painful death, by being cast into the den of lions. Well, if I would have been alive at that time, and the Lord would have said to me, what will I do for Daniel? I would have said, Lord, please don't let him be cast into the den of lions. If he is cast in, he's finished.

Save him from the lions. But God had something greater than that. He didn't save him from the den of lions.

He saved him in the den of lions. There is a difference. You see, none of us like lions.

I don't. Because if you're in a den, and sometimes God sees fit to places in a den, and you're staring at a lion face to face at any moment, he can devour you. And I'm convinced that the lions didn't fall asleep, as some artists portray them.

I believe Daniel did, because he was a man who trusted, and therefore he rested. I'm sure he slept that night in the den of lions. But I'm equally certain that those lions glared at him and would have devoured him, but for God.

God saved him moment by moment by moment in the den of lions, and what he did for Daniel, he can do for you. He may place you in a den of suffering, but he can keep you moment by moment as you trust him. Yes, he can.

He may place you in the most unwanted circumstance. And all the time you're crying, Lord, take me out of this place. When he wants to keep you there long enough to prove to you that he's able to keep you.

Then he'll take you out in victory, not in defeat. He never takes you out in defeat. He'll leave you in the den until he has proved to you his sufficiency.

Then he'll take you out. So it may be that some of us need to stop praying, Lord, Jesus, get me out of this. And we should begin to pray, Lord, all things work together for good to them that love God.

Keep me in this situation until I've learned what you want me to learn. And then if it pleases you, take me out. Counselor, make him your counselor.

Government shall be upon his shoulder, authority and responsibility. And his name shall be called Wonderful. He only doeth wondrous things.

There is an incident that comes to my mind even as I read that verse. There was a wonderful thing to us. It was during the time we were expecting the birth of our first child.

We were living in Los Angeles, into hunger, about 40 miles from the hospital in Glendale where we anticipated the child would be born. Well, we didn't have very much experience in this sort of thing. And when the labor pains began, we were not certain as to just whether or not they were labor pains until I was convinced they were.

We had a little Volkswagen, and between our home into hunger and that hospital in Glendale, there must have been at least a hundred lives. And I had the conviction that unless the Lord worked for us, that child was not to be born in Glendale, but in the Volkswagen. So I knelt down and I prayed and I said, Lord, now the government is on your shoulder and I expect you to do a wonderful thing.

And I can testify this morning that we went through green lights all the way. Not one red light in 40 odd miles. And 15 minutes after we arrived, the child was born.

You see, you don't have to ask for green lights. If you need green lights, the Lord knows what you need and he'll provide it. He only doeth wondrous things.

Counselor, make him your counselor, because of his wisdom and because you need his guidance. The mighty God, now mighty God speaks of victorious energy in battle. He is the one who is victorious in battle, the Lord mighty in battle.

He not only does wondrous things and wants to be your counselor and will be your counselor if you let him, but he will fight for you if you will let him. You remember the experience of the three Hebrew youths? How they refused to bow down to an idol. How they refused to compromise.

And they said, our God is able to save us, but if not, we're not going to compromise. And the Lord mighty in battle worked in their behalf. Those who would have thrown them into the fire themselves were consumed by the fire.

And I've lived long enough to see on many occasions men who would persecute true men of God have themselves been consumed as they tried to bring down the man of God. Still the same today. Our God is able, he is able.

Doesn't matter what you do, God is able. And so they were cast into the fire. And the Lord himself was with them in the fire.

And because they were willing to be cast into the fire and God mighty in battle worked in their behalf, through that experience the king was spoken to. The only way he could have been spoken to because of his hardness of heart was by a miracle. God still performs miracles today.

If we trust and obey, he's still the same. He is the mighty God. Then he's the everlasting father, the everlasting father.

Father speaks of love. Father, for God so loved the world. God is love.

He's a tender, loving, compassionate, concerned, heavenly father. What a Lord he is. And finally he is the prince of peace.

But I want you to note that this verse does not begin with prince of peace, everlasting father, mighty God, counsellor, wonderful owner. It ends with prince of peace. As far as his government extends in our lives, thus far extends our peace.

Did you get that? It's very important. As far as his government extends in our lives, thus far extends our peace. No further.

What does it mean to live a life which is pleasing to the Lord? It must be a life of faith. But how is it to be expressed? It is to be expressed in personal trust in a person, Jesus Christ. When we come to him to trust him as our saviour and we are saved, this is not the end, this is the beginning of a life of faith, if we are to please him.

We are to place the government upon his shoulder for every situation that confronts us. Not merely the ones we think to be difficult and he must deal with, and the others which we can deal with. Every situation must be cast upon him.

Government upon his shoulder. Then we are to tell him, because of our attitude of faith, that he's going to do a wonderful thing. We're not to tell him what to do, because he knows what he's going to do, but if we make him our counsellor and wait upon him and seek from him his plan in his time, he will tell us what he's going to do.

He'll tell us. Make him your counsellor. And then we find as we trust him and praise him and look to him, he is the Lord God mighty in battle, only doing wondrous things.

And then it is that we know in the fullest sense that he is our everlasting father and we experience his abiding peace. Now shall we pray. Holy Father, we realize there's the terrible danger of always learning and never coming to the knowledge of the truth.

Thou knowest that we are apt to know doctrines, yea Lord, and thy word itself, thou knowest that we are apt to know the truth. And yet never be brought to a walk of faith in a living, loving Lord. We ask that thou will give us honest hearts this morning as we wait before thee.

Let us not escape the word of thy spirit. Give us grace to humble ourselves and to acknowledge that a life that is self-centered and a life that is self-directed is sin. For it is missing the mark, it is falling short of that which thou hast for us in this life.

Give us grace to acknowledge our need and to confess our sin, that it might be possible for thee to orient us to thy will and launch us into that life which thou hast for us. A victory in Jesus Christ by faith. And as we about this morning in the presence of our Lord, knowledge demands response.

Truth demands action. Has the Lord spoken to you this morning? Has he been saying to you, this is not the life that you live? The life that you live is not what I would have you to live. The life you have been living is one of partial trust in me and partial trust in yourself.

Henceforth you must trust me and me only. You must learn to walk by faith. For this is the only life pleasing to me.

Are you willing to live such a life? Are you willing to say, Lord, I've fallen short. Mine is not a life of faith, mine is not a life of restful trust, but from this morning by thy grace I want it to be such a life. If that is the desire of your heart, will you raise your hand that we might see you and pray for you? Yes, yes.

Lord, I have not lived such a life. If you're honest with the Lord, he'll bless you. If you turn aside from truth, that truth, instead of becoming light, is apt to become darkness.

The one thing that pleases him is faith. Have you been walking by faith, living by faith? Have you? If not, you need to confess your sin this morning. And you need to say, Lord, I have fallen short.

But from this day I want to live this life that is pleasing to thee and the life that alone can be satisfying to me. Will you raise your hand as we are bowed in his presence? Yes, yes, many hands. Others? Lord, this is the life that I want to live, and by thy grace I will live from this day forward.

Will there be others? Lord, I now commit myself to such a walk of faith. Will you raise your hand just where you are? Yes, yes, yes. Holy Father, we trust thee by thy Spirit to convict where conviction is necessary and give grace where that grace is needful to those who should confess and should commit themselves to thee this morning in a new way.

For we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

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