

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the light of the world our King of Kings, Jesus Christ our Lord, amen.

[Put on Sunglasses] It's Christ the King Sunday! I'm not wearing these cool sunglasses because it's so bright in here... But who knows, this could be a look that will catch on. *[remove sunglasses]* It seems odd to be wearing sunglasses inside on such a dark and gloomy day, but for an unsighted — blind — person, this accessory may soon make perfect sense. A special pair of shades that can deliver the gift of sight is now in development. It's called "Argus" — named after the mythological Greek god who had 100 eyes. **(Slide)** This innovative system can help blind people to see by providing them with an artificial retina. Here's how it works: A small video camera is mounted on a pair of sunglasses. This camera is connected to a tiny electronic implant in the eye. The implant is connected to damaged photoreceptors on the patient's retina — photoreceptors known as rods and cones. Then the images from the camera pass through the implant and stimulate the photoreceptors, which transmit signals to the brain through the optic nerve. Voila! Suddenly, the people who walk in darkness are able to see a great light, and those who dwell in a land of darkness — on them the light shines! According to researchers, these artificial retinas have been successfully implanted in six patients, allowing them to see light and detect motion. These artificial retinas are an amazing innovation, but they don't do much

for us when we're struggling with forms of darkness that have nothing to do with degenerated rods and cones. Maybe our personal darkness comes from depression, or disillusionment, or doubt. Perhaps it originates in discouraging work or a deteriorating relationship. Maybe it comes from having nothing to look forward to, no contribution to make, or no one to love. Maybe your personal darkness is caused by isolation from family and friends. To find some light in this type of darkness, it's going to take more than an Argus system to help us. We need the eyes of Jesus. **(Slide)**

The prophet Isaiah certainly knew the deep and disorienting darkness of despair when he wrote the passage of Scripture we just heard. His people had experienced the rod of oppression, the tramping of warriors and the tumult of battle, the humiliation of defeat. They knew the reality of depression and death. Darkness had settled on the land of Israel when, out of nowhere, there came this good news of great joy: "For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests up on his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace ..." (vv. 6-7). Isaiah wrote this about 500 years before that child was actually born. He wrote in the confidence of trusting the promise he had from God. Isaiah never got to live to see this newborn King, but he wrote as if Jesus had already been born. For us today, Jesus has already been born, lived his

life for around 33 years, was crucified, died and rose again. This child given for you has completed the battle against sin, death and the devil so completely just like Gideon did in the battle for Midian. The victory is so complete they no longer needed their warfighting uniforms. They rolled up the garments that had been soaked in blood and burned them in the fire. That's how complete the victory Jesus won for us.

When that child was born in Bethlehem the world was introduced to a new way of seeing. Expectations were turned upside down by a prince being born in a barn, a Mighty God taking the form of a vulnerable baby. This birth marked the beginning of a new era in human history, one in which injustice, selfishness and violence were to be replaced by justice, righteousness and peace. But like all new forms of seeing, this innovation requires some adaptation. Maybe we're still making the adjustment of seeing with the eyes of Jesus today... I mean just look at the headlines, half the country looks at the recent verdict in the Kyle Rittenhouse case and applauds that the jury made a great judgment in spite of all the negative and false media attention and even threats against the jurors. The other half sees the same verdict as totally unjust, letting a racist, white supremacist run free. How are we to know the truth? In times like these we could all use a pair of Jesus eyes.

So, what does it mean to see the world through the eyes of our Savior, Christ the Lord? Isaiah gives us a clue with the four names he attaches to the child who is

put on the throne of David and given the kingdom of God. To have Jesus Eyes is to share the vision of a Wonderful Counselor. This means that we come to see the world with the perspective of the one who is our guide and our leader. When Jesus ushered in the Holy Spirit upon his disciples He gave us this Wonderful Counselor right inside our very own hearts. We're not forced to figure out everything for ourselves. Instead, we can follow the clear and compelling guidance of the one who knows the path to wholeness and everlasting salvation. Consider the fresh new perspective Jesus the Counselor gives us on the way we are to treat our enemies. "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy,'" says Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. "But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:43-45). When we have Jesus Eyes, we aren't looking to love only those people who love us... Everyone does that. Instead, we're looking to love everyone — friends and enemies alike... Republicans, love those Democrats who disagree with you. Democrats, love those Republicans whom you disagree with.

To see with these lenses is also to perceive the activity of a Mighty God. Sure, this may be hard to visualize when Jesus first appears on the earth as a powerless child, but keep in mind that he grows into a man who goes so far as to conquer sin, death, and the devil on the cross for you. The real Jesus is one who

would spare nothing to secure eternal life for you. Remember this when you are doing battle in your own life ... with a temptation ... with an obstacle ... with a setback ... with a rejection ... with a disappointment ... with the crushing grief of losing a loved one. You have a Mighty God riding in front of you, one who is ready, willing, and able to fight by your side as you make your way through all the fog and confusion of this world. This Mighty God became human to accomplish what mortal humans could never do, fulfill the Law, every jot and tittle. “Thanks be to God,” says Paul to the Corinthians, for the one, “who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:57).

Looking with Jesus Eyes also gives us a clear vision of our Everlasting Father. God is not an absentee father, nor is he an abusive one as some have suggested. Instead, he is a close and caring, attentive Father who wants nothing more than to have a close relationship with you. Here’s where it is important to remember that Jesus and our heavenly Father are one God, so the face of Jesus is the same as the face of God the Father. Jesus is our Everlasting Father, and when we need an image of a close and caring and attentive parent, we can look directly at him.

Finally, the eyes of Jesus help us to see the world from the perspective of the Prince of Peace. The mission of Jesus is to bring peace, in God’s love to all people, and he challenges us to work toward the very same goal. So often we

confuse the interests of our nation with the interests of Jesus, or we assume that our own sense of security is going to line up perfectly with the intentions of our Lord. When we look at life in this way, we might be in need of a vision correction. We might need to make sure that we have put on our Jesus Eyes. This child given to us brings us peace with God our Father. We need not fear the wrath of God because Jesus has come to bring us peace with God and to let us know just how much God loves you and me.

To see eye to eye with the Prince of Peace is to live “with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore” says Isaiah in verse 7. It means to embrace these virtues in our personal lives, in our community involvement, in the way we treat strangers, and in the way we practice our politics... If everyone lived by these values there would be no Kyle Rittenhouse trial because there would have been no rioting and no more hatred. It means that we see the world as a place that needs more peace, more justice, and more righteousness, and that our mission as Christians is to embody these goals in whatever way we can.

When you put on a new pair of glasses, you see the world in an entirely different light. May we all put on our Jesus eyes and show the world what God’s love can do! People of Darke County, we have walked in darkness for too long, let us shine the light of God’s love everywhere we go! Amen.