

“Real Peace”
December 10, 2023
Ephesians 2:11-18

I. Introduction:

There once was a King who offered a prize to the artist who would paint the best picture of peace. Many artists tried. The King looked at all the pictures, but there were only two he really liked, and he had to choose between them. One picture was of a calm lake. The lake was a perfect mirror for peaceful towering mountains that were all around it. Overhead was a blue sky with fluffy white clouds. All who saw this picture thought that it was a perfect picture of peace.

The other picture had mountains too. But these were rugged and bare. Above was an angry sky from which rain fell and in which lightning played. Down the side of the mountain tumbled a foaming waterfall. This did not look peaceful at all. But when the King looked, he saw behind the waterfall a tiny bush growing in a crack in the rock. In the bush a mother bird had built her nest. There, in the midst of the rushing of angry water, sat the mother bird on her nest perfect peace.

The King chose the second picture. "Because," explained the King, "peace does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. Peace means to be in the midst of all those things and still be calm in your heart. That is the real meaning of peace."

Today is the second week of Advent and we are reminded that Jesus is our peace as well as our hope. Talking about peace at Christmas seems like a good idea—we are continually being reminded of what the angels said to the shepherds in [Luke 2:14](#), “[Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.](#)” As Aggie and Eric read this morning from [Isaiah 9:6](#), Jesus is called the “[Prince of Peace.](#)” But peace—real peace—seems to be out of reach of everyone. The world as a whole seems to be almost totally devoid of any peace—if possible, there is less peace today than there was a year ago. Closer to home, things aren’t any different—celebrating Jesus’ birth has turned into such a big, busy, hectic time that it seems like the concept of peace is about as far from reality as one can possibly imagine. So much to do, so many things to buy and bake and be a part of. Instead of peace, all that can be seen are frantic, stressed out, overburdened

people rushing around everywhere, creating conflict as they strive for some ideal version of the holiday. Peace? Nice idea, but certainly not a part of most lives during the Christmas season—let alone the rest of the year. Because of this, some people even feel betrayed; Jesus has come so where is this promised peace? Where is real peace? And then when we read other verses in God’s Word, one really begins to wonder about peace ourselves. For example, in [Luke 12:51-52](#), Jesus said, “**Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three.**” This doesn’t sound like peace at all. Contrary to the expectations of the world, the peace Jesus brought wasn’t peace throughout the world or for all mankind. As we read in [Ephesians 2](#), the peace Jesus came to bring was peace between God and man—a supernatural peace. [Turn to John 14:27](#). Jesus came to bring a supernatural peace.

II. Supernatural Peace

A. The Nature of Peace The Hebrew word for peace is **שָׁלוֹם** (shalom). Shalom means more than just “*peace*.” Shalom means more than the absence of war or problems or troubles. Shalom means wholeness, completeness, contentment, health, security, and even prosperity—everything which makes for a person’s highest good. Jesus came to bring this kind of peace—shalom peace. When a person enters into a personal relationship with God by making Jesus Christ his or her Lord and Savior, then that person can have peace **with** God as well as the peace **of** God. Real peace, true peace comes from having a right relationship with God.

Ever since the fall of Adam and Eve, mankind has been at war with God. [Romans 8:7](#) says, “**The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.**” From birth, everyone is against God; [turn to Romans 3:10-18](#). As God said in [Genesis 8:21](#), “**Every inclination of man's heart is evil from his youth.**” Humanly speaking—in one’s own strength, it isn’t possible to have peace between men or between man and God.

As we read in [Ephesians](#), Jesus came to make it possible to reestablish a relationship with God, i.e., to enable mankind to have peace with God. Jesus came to reconcile or reunite Jews and Gentiles with one

another and with their heavenly Father. [Colossians 1:19 & 20](#) says, “For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, i.e., in Jesus Christ, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his Jesus’ blood, shed on the cross.” Paul put it this way in [Romans 5:1](#), “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Because Jesus paid the price for our sins, when we accept His gift of eternal life, our sins are forgiven. No longer are we enemies of God, we have become sons and daughters of God. We have peace with God.

But when a person is saved, he not only has peace with God, but he also has, as [Philippians 4:7](#) says, “The peace of God, which transcends all understanding.” This peace of God is capable of protecting believers from doubts, fears, worry, and distress. It is not affected or influenced by outward circumstances. Like the mother bird in the picture, real peace is independent of circumstances. It’s an inner peace—the spiritual peace of God—God has forgiven the past, provided for the present, and guaranteed the future. As [Hebrews 13:5](#) says, “God will never leave us or forsake us.”

Peace isn’t just a wish; peace is a fundamental part of a Christian’s life. Paul wrote in [Romans 14:17](#), “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” As we allow the Holy Spirit to fill us, we will experience peace—real peace.

This is why real peace cannot be found in the world. Without God, without the Holy Spirit, wars between and within countries will continue; violence between individuals will continue, sexual misconduct will continue. Without God, regardless of anyone’s “*good intentions*,” there can be no real peace, no shalom. Oh, for a particular place or people there may be a short time of peace, but even this superficial peace will soon disappear. As someone has written, “*Washington has a large assortment of peace monuments. We build one after each war.*”

The world may cry for peace; countries may even try to legislate peace, but over and over peace treaties are ignored; ceasefires are broken. The Bible reminds us that world peace really isn’t possible. In [Isaiah 48:22](#) we read, “‘There is no peace,’ says the LORD, ‘for the wicked.’” In [Romans 3:17](#) which we

read earlier; Paul wrote that “**the way of peace the ungodly do not know.**” People can work hard and be as sincere as possible, but world peace, even personal peace, will be just a dream. As [Jeremiah 8:15](#) puts it, “**We hoped for peace but no good has come, for a time of healing but there was only terror.**”

B. The Source of Peace So, what is the source of true, lasting peace? The only true peace is God’s peace. The world as a whole will never know peace until Christ returns and establishes His kingdom. Then, as it says in [Isaiah 2:4](#), “**He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.**” But until that time, the only way to have peace on earth is to know Jesus as one’s personal Lord and Savior; then and only then can anyone have peace with God and the peace of God.

Back in [John 14:27](#) Jesus said, “**My peace I give you.**” On the very night that He was going to be betrayed and then soon after that crucified, Jesus, the Prince of Peace, told His disciples that He would give them peace. But actually real, lasting peace comes from all 3 persons of the Trinity. For example, [Romans 1:7](#) says, “**Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.**” In [Galatians 5](#) we are told that the fruit of the Spirit includes peace. For the disciples, the Holy Spirit and the promised peace came at Pentecost. But from that point on, whenever a person makes Jesus his Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside him at that moment and the believer can have peace immediately. [Romans 8:9](#) says, “**You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.**” This is the source of real peace, of shalom: the Trinity—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

This is the same peace that allowed Christ to be calm as He was tried first by the Sanhedrin and then by Pilate and Herod. In [1 Peter 2:23](#) Peter wrote, “**When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.**” Turn to [Hebrews 12:2-3](#). If we look to Jesus Christ and, like Him, move in the strength of God the Father and are filled with the Holy Spirit, we, like Jesus, will have peace in the midst of any problem or hardship.

C. Personal Responsibility towards Peace Christians have a part or responsibility in having this peace that leads to “untroubled hearts and no fear.” In John 14:27, Jesus commanded His disciples (and us), “Do not let your hearts be troubled.” In 2 Timothy 2:22 Paul wrote to Timothy, “Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” For a Christian, there is no reason to be troubled or fearful in the midst of calamity; **but** for this to be the case, each Christian needs to pursue peace. This is our responsibility: we are to “pursue peace.” Isaiah 26:3 says, “You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.” If you are to have peace, you must be steadfast or immovable, trusting in God. Philippians 4:6-7 add, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 5:18 says, “Be filled with the Spirit.” Real peace, the peace of God doesn’t come naturally, Christians must pursue peace by allowing the Holy Spirit to fill them so that He can grow the fruit of the Spirit within them—**turn to Galatians 5:16-23.**

Sometimes a lack of peace comes from having made choices that limit God. No one can create any of the fruits of the Spirit, but we can prevent God from creating them in us. We may choose to spend time in lots of ways except allowing God to mold us and create all the fruits of the Spirit in us. We allow ourselves to be too busy, and squeeze God out of our lives, and then wonder where God is or why we aren’t seeing more of His power and goodness in our lives. Sometimes, we make deliberate choices that reject God—we refuse to be led by the Spirit. He has called, and we’ve said, “No!” We knew an act was wrong but cheated anyway. Lied anyway. Gossiped anyway. In Paul’s words (NLT), we have given in to “hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, divisions, the feeling that everyone is wrong except those in your own little group, envy, and drunkenness, wild parties, and other kinds of sin.” You can’t have inner peace, true peace if you aren’t right with God. Psalm 66:18 says, “If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.” If you want to have the peace of God—it must be

pursued. You need to let God into your heart and life and allow Him to grow His peace and the rest of the fruit of the Spirit as you walk in His ways.

III. Conclusion:

When they appeared to the shepherds, the angels said, “**Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests**” (Luke 2:14). The Good News of the angels was that the war between God and mankind can end. There can be peace. Jesus came to pay the penalty for sin so that the world can have the “**peace that transcends all understanding**”—the only true and real peace. When Paul told the Philippian jailor in **Acts 16:31**, “**Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved,**” he could have continued and said that “*then you will have real peace.*”

The world bases its peace on its resources *while God’s peace depends on relationships.* The world depends on one’s own ability and strength, *but the Christian depends on the power of Jesus Christ.* In the world, peace is something you hope for or work for; but never really have. *Christians can have peace—peace is God’s wonderful gift; it is received by faith.* Unsaved people enjoy a type of peace only when there is an absence of trouble; *Christians enjoy peace even in the midst of trouble because of the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit.* **Colossians 3:15** says that all a Christian has to do is to open his heart and “**let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.**” When you do this, then nothing can destroy your peace.

Do you want real peace—peace in the midst of trouble and calamity—then give your heart completely to God. Trust Him. Walk in God’s path. Allow the Holy Spirit to fill you and give you this peace. Then you will have the peace that transcends understanding—the peace that Jesus brought when He was born in a stable in Bethlehem. “**For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.**” (Luke 2:11 KJV). “**Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.**” (Luke 2:14 NAS)