

Advent 2016 PEACE

Christmas Songs

Luke 2.8-14

Peace – the NT import of OT concept of *shalom*

- Sense of wholeness and rightness
 - By-product of focusing on God (Isa. 26.3)
 - Can have emotional impact but is not primarily about that
 - You can have emotionally stable people without biblical peace
- Phil 4.6-7 – focusing on God -> peace guarding hearts and minds
 - Like the shepherds with the angel, our eyes need to be only on God
 - What we see is God breaking out of the ordinary to come to us

Most genuine and deepest problem is our own brokenness from our sin – we have no peace

God refuses to leave us in our brokenness (“Bring you Good News...”)

- Edison Lights – do what they were created to do, enjoy them shining, step into broken fuse
- God wants us to do what we were created to do
- God wants to enjoy us doing what we were created to do
- God steps into our brokenness to bring a solution

Objections

- “I am too Broken” – “*all* the people (which includes you)”
 - “There are just too many pieces and too much darkness”
 - Some love their brokenness so much they can’t imagine life without it
 - God’s peace brings wholeness and comes when we focus on Him, not our brokenness
 - Luke 4.31-41
- “God is too Angry / Disappointed” – “on earth *peace*...”
 - He doesn’t love my brokenness but does love me (like with our own kids)
 - Why would God pursue us if he wasn’t “pleased” with us, loved us?
 - Anger = more distance
 - Tolerance = no pursuit

What you sense is the truth that Christmas is an accusation before jubilation

- It makes us face that something is wrong before celebrating that God has moved toward us in order to remedy it

What did God do?

- He pursued us
 - “for unto YOU...”
- He saves us
 - Savior – He rescues us from our sin by paying the debt and purchasing favor
 - Brings peace by dealing with our sin (Romans 5.1)
 - Christ – He makes good on His promises (the OT Messiah is the NT Christ)
 - Through His promises, He destroys the power of sin
 - He delivers us from our enemies
 - Lord – He reigns over everything
 - He always works for our good and His glory

Questions for Discussion

1. In the introduction, peace is described as a byproduct of focus on God. How would you describe it in your own words? What do you think Paul meant when he said it would “guard our hearts and minds?” (Phil. 4.6-7)
2. During the sermon, we argued that the fundamental problem is our brokenness from our sin. In what ways have you seen sin bring brokenness in your own life, into your family, or into the world immediately around you? What would *shalom* look like in any of those situations?
3. Of the two objections of coming to God mentioned above (too broken or God is angry / disappointed), which is more likely for you to buy into or believe? Why? Name any miracle of Jesus. What if the people who experienced that miracle had objected like that? How prone are you to objecting like that?
4. The angel announced there was a Savior who is Christ the Lord (Luke 2.11). Which of those titles are you most grateful for today? Why?
5. The first act of God at Christmas was to pursue His people. Can you think of another biblical example of God pursuing His people? What stories come to mind? What do those stories tell you about God?