

Advent The Coming of Peace Luke 2:12-14

Introduction & Review

- This is the Second Sunday of Advent, the celebration of Christ's coming.
- Last week we focused on **HOPE**.
- ***Remember Biblical hope is a strong and confident expectation of future events based on the word of God.***
- And God's word gives us **hope is in the coming of Jesus Christ**.
- In his coming in the **Past** to **die for our sins**.
- In his coming in the **Present** to **enter and transform our lives**
- And in his coming in the **Future** to call us into **his presence for all eternity**.
- **So, our hope is built on nothing less than Jesus Christ.**
- Now this week **the focus of Advent is the PEACE that through Christ**.
- In **Luke chapter 2** the angel, announcing Jesus' birth to the Shepherds, says this....

¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!” (Luke 2:12-14)

- **Christ's Coming, the Incarnation**, marked the **COMING OF PEACE On Earth....**
- And so, we begin with...

The Meaning of Peace

- In the **OT** the main Hebrew word for **Peace** is **Shalom**
- And in the **NT** the Greek word is - ***eirēnē - Irene – Name Irene means Peace.***
- And just like our **English** word **Peace**, **Shalom** and **eirene** have a range of meanings.
- **Peace** can mean a **cessation of war** between nations.
- Today, **December 7th** marks the 84th Anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor which lead to our entry **into World War II**.
- But since the end of WWII **the US and Japan** have been at **peace**.
- **Peace** can also mean a return to **good relations** between individuals.
- The husband and wife were arguing about their finances.
- But they agreed to limit their spending and now they are at **peace**.
- And finally, peace can mean an **internal sense of calm**, security, and tranquility.
- The man was anxious about the test results he got from the doctor.
- But after he prayed, he was at **peace**.

- So, with this **range** of meanings,
- what kind of peace were the Angels Announcing in **Luke chapter 2** when they say

on earth peace

- Some people read this and think it means Jesus came to bring **World Peace**.
- *Wikipedia says that...*

World peace is the concept of an ideal state of peace within and among all people and nations on Earth.

- Peace on Earth.
- And **WORLD PEACE** is often seen as the answer to all humanity's problems.
- But when the angel says, "***on earth peace***" is this what he was referring to?
- Is the ***multitude of the heavenly host praising God that Jesus will put an end to war among all people and nations?***
- Well, if that's the case then we have **two problems**.
- **First**, there's a **Biblical problem**... Because in **Matthew 10:34**, of himself Jesus said...

³⁴ Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. (Matthew 10:34)

- Jesus specifically says, he not only didn't come **to bring peace to the earth**,
- But, in fact, his coming would **bring the sword**, a **symbol of violence and war**.
- Jesus knew that his coming would cause **great division and even violence** among people.
- So, **first, biblically** speaking we can't say Jesus came to bring "**World Peace**"
- And **second, practically** speaking we can't say it either.
- Because both before and after the coming of Christ **the world** has not experienced much **PEACE**.
- According to a **2003 New York Times Article**...
- Since the beginning of **the 4,000 years of recorded history**,
- There are **only 286 years** that historians **cannot** point to as specific **conflict between people**.
- And right now, there is war **between Russian and the Ukraine**.
- Between **Arabs and Israel's**.
- As well as a number of **civil wars** taking place **mostly in Africa**.
- So, both **Biblically and Practically** we know that when the angels cry out...

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!

- They were not talking about **the end of human wars**.
- So, we ask, what kind of **peace** were they talking about?
- Not **peace between nations or even among people**.
- But **what we will see** this morning is they were talking about peace between God and at least **some people on earth**.

- The peace that the Angels spoke of **really has a three-part definition.**
- And each part relates to God, **FIRST...**

1. Peace is the cessation of hostilities towards God.

- And that cessation of hostilities leads **to part 2...**

2. Peace is a return to right relationship with God.

- And that right relationship with God leads to **part three.**

3. Peace is an internal feeling of tranquility from God.

- Now, I don't know about you but, **as I look at the division in our nation.**
- Especially **the violence and protests against our government.**
- And the **radical departure** from many of the **Biblical values** we once held dear.
- I sometimes find it difficult to experience **the third part of the definition.**
- **The internal feeling of tranquility.**
- Instead, all too often, I find myself feeling anxious about the future,
- Worrying not so much about myself (I'm 62 how much time do I have left)
- But I do worry about what's going to happen to **my kids and grandkids.**
- **Maybe you can relate.**
- Maybe your sense of peace has been taken away by your present circumstances.
- Well, it's my **prayer** that as we look at God's word today.
- As we focus on **the peace he offers, peace that transcends our circumstances.**
- ***Peace that surpasses all understanding.***
- That we might not only experience peace with God,
- But **a new or rejuvenated** sense of peace, tranquility from God.
- And to do that **we must**, in our hearts and minds, firmly establish

The Source of Peace

- If our peace is not based on our circumstances, then where does it come from?
- And how do we experience it?
- Well first and foremost, we need to know that...

1. Peace Comes Through Christ

- **Notice in Luke 2**, that the Angel's announcement of **Peace follows his** announcement of Christ.
- He says to the shepherds...

¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

- And as soon as the announcement is given All HEAVEN breaks loose...

¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" (Luke 2:12-14)

- **Glory to God for He** is going to do something new.
- God has sent His son into the world.
- And that son will bring **Peace**.

- ***The Apostle Paul wrote... Romans 5:1***

¹ Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:1)

- Peace with God comes through our Lord Jesus Christ...
- Now before we talk more about PEACE, **we need to back up a second...**
- Let's not miss the obvious,
- If Peace comes through Christ.
- If Christ brings peace, then before Christ there was no peace.
- Ever since the Fall.
- Ever since humanity was corrupted by sin we have been separated from God.
- Sin put a wedge a separation between God and man.
- The **Prophet Isaiah** makes it very clear when he says...

² but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. (Isaiah 59:2)

- Most of us have probably heard **this separation explained this way...**
- God is **Holy and therefore** cannot allow **Sinful People** to be in His presence.
- **And that is true**
- But it's more than that, when it's explained that way it seems that we have some disease that God does not want to be exposed to.
- And that we are just waiting patiently for a cure.
- That we are just the passive victims of SIN.
- But scripture gives a different picture.
- Yes, we are corrupted by sin.
- Yes, because of that corruption we cannot be reconciled to GOD.
- But we do not just sit back and wait for a cure.
- **We are not passive.**
- We are not the innocent victims of sin.
- We are **hostile towards God.**
- We are His Enemies.
- We are in fact at war with GOD.
- **In Romans 5 the Apostle Paul writes...**

¹⁰ ...while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son... (Romans 5:10)

- Christ did not bring peace with God for those **who were neutral.**
- He brought peace, reconciliation to those who **were enemies of God.**
- Christ brought a **cessation of hostilities and a return to right relationship with God**

- And how was this accomplished?
- ***In Colossians 1:20-22 Paul writes...***

²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. ²¹ And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²² he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, (Colossians 1:20-22)

- You who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds.
- You who had not relationship with God.
- In fact, you were at war with God.
- **BUT Christ by his death on the cross**, through the shedding of HIS Sacrificial BLOOD has made peace.
- He has brought an end to the war and reconciled the alienated, the hostile, the evil... to God.
- And now HE can present you holy and blameless above reproach before God.
- Through CHRIST ALONE **Peace with GOD is Accomplished**.
- So, we have (I hope) firmly established that Peace with God comes through Christ Alone...
- But there's another thing we need to establish...
- That is who receives this peace with God.
- For whom have **hostilities with God ceased**.
- Who has **returned to a right relationship with God**.
- And **who can receive that internal sense of tranquility from God**.
- **That's our second point...**

2. Peace Comes to the Pleasing

- In **Luke 2:14** the angels say...

¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" (Luke 2:14)

- Peace on earth **does not come to all people**,
- It comes to those with whom God is pleased.
- So, we must ask the question, **who is God pleased with, who pleases God?**
- And we could say, God is pleased with those who live in obedience to Him.
- When we do what God tells us to, **that pleases him**.
- But the Bible teaches that before we can please God with our obedience, we must first put our trust in Him.
- ***In Hebrews 11:6 we read...***

⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

- No amount of obedience to God will please him if that obedience is not done in Faith.
- It is impossible to please God without first putting your faith in Him, in Jesus Christ.

- Therefore, Peace with God comes only to those who have **FAITH**...
- **Remember ... Romans 5:1**

¹ Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:1)

- Those who've been justified by faith have peace with GOD.
- So, what does it mean **to be justified by faith**?
- Justified means to be **acquitted, to be freed**.
- And **Faith means** to rely upon, **to put your trust in, to believe in**.
- We are **set free from out sin** by putting our trust in **Jesus Christ ALONE**.
- And when we **put out FAITH in Christ** then **we Please God**.
- And those who please God are **at PEACE with GOD**.
- **(Remember Col 1:20)**

²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. (Colossians 1:20)

- Because of Jesus death,
- HIS blood shed on the cross for you and me we **can now be reconciled with GOD**.
- God extends **the olive branch of peace to sinful people**.
- God has **written a PEACE treaty in His word**.
- And has signed it in **His own Blood**.
- And those **who by faith accept the terms of the treaty are reconciled**, are at peace with GOD.
- And the terms **of the treaty are as follows**.
- **Complete surrender to Jesus Christ**.
- You must have faith in Christ's finished work on the cross,
- In his sacrificial death for you.
- That his death in your place, provides the atonement the payment for your sins.
- And you must put your trust in Christ; you must follow him in every area of life.
- You must surrender, give yourself completely to HIM,
- Your life is no longer about YOU it is about the GLORY OF GOD.
- The Apostle Paul makes this very clear in **1 Corinthians 6**

¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

- To please God...
- YOU MUST PUT YOUR COMPLETE FAITH IN CHRIST – You must Trust.
- And YOU MUST LIVE FOR CHRIST, FOLLOW CHRIST, GLORIFY CHRIST – You must Obey.
- Bottom line, you must Trust and Obey **for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus**.
- There is no other way to experience peace with and from.

- And those who accept these **terms of surrender are reconciled to GOD.**
- The war with GOD is over.
- Your sins are forgiven.
- You can enter into relationship with God.
- You are pleasing to God and therefore you are at peace with GOD.
- And you can begin to experience that inner peace that comes from trusting in CHIRST.
- That peace that we long for but all too often **struggle to grab hold of.**
- Now this **internal peace** of the soul is directly related to **our peace with GOD.**
- It's not until we have **peace with God** that we can have **true peace in our soul from God.**
- It is not until we have a **relationship with Jesus Christ** that we can have internal peace.
- Jesus is the **PREREQUISITE TO PEACE...**
- Maybe you've heard the saying...

**NO JESUS NO PEACE,
KNOW JESUS, KNOW PEACE.**

- It may be cliché, but it is TRUE!
- Peace with GOD comes through JESUS CHRIST ALONE...
- And it's when we have peace with God.
- When we have returned to right relationship with God.
- That we can begin to experience internal peace (or tranquility) from God.
- ***Paul said to the church in Thessalonica***

16 Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all. (2 Thessalonians 3:16)

- Jesus is the Lord of Peace...
- Last week we read **Isaiah 9:6** where Jesus is called the **PRINCE OF PEACE.**
- Jesus, the **LORD and PRINCE** of peace, gives **internal peace** to those who put their faith in HIM.
- It was only to his disciples that Jesus promised,

27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. (John 14:27)

- For those that follow Jesus He offers Peace.
- This is a supernatural peace...
- This peace does not come from the world.
- It's not based on whether you or others in your life **are healthy or sick.**
- It's not based on **your ability to go and do what you want when you want.**
- It's not based on **having a job, or financial security.**
- It's not based on **who the president is...**
- It's not based on **living in a free country.**
- It's not based on **the bright future of your kids and grandkids.**
- **And I could go on and on...**
- Peace is not based on present earthly circumstances.
- It's based on the finished work of JESUS CHRIST.
- It's based in our eternal security in Christ.

- **So how do we experience this kind of internal peace?**
- How, in the midst of so much turmoil, **do we experience tranquility in our hearts and souls?**
- We know peace comes through Christ.
- **Know Jesus Know Peace.**
- And we know it comes to **the pleasing those** who put their faith in Christ.
- But it doesn't come all at once, **it's not magic.**
- When we give our **lives to Christ**, he doesn't cast a **PEACE** spell on us.
- Peace like so many other internal qualities (hope, joy, love...) come and grow in us by the power of the Holy Spirit as we live in **Relationship with GOD.**
- **That's our third point....**

3. Peace Comes in Relationship

- *Again, Paul wrote to the Thessalonians.*

16 Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all. (2 Thessalonians 3:16)

- Peace is given by the LORD of PEACE.
- And Paul says, ***"The LORD be with YOU all"***
- Peace is **given by Jesus**, but it is given **in relationship with JESUS.**
- Known Jesus, Know Peace.
- There's a great deal of **peace that comes** from being in relationship with JESUS.
- Knowing that **His love for you is real.**
- Knowing that **He will never leave you or forsake you.**
- Knowing that **your sins are forgiven, and you have been reconciled to GOD!**
- Knowing that **He will meet your earthly needs.**
- Knowing that **He has prepared a place for you in heaven and will one day be with you for all eternity.**
- **And I could go on...**
- To the extent we trust CHRIST and HIS WORD **we will have peace.**
- And **TRUST COMES and Grows IN RELATIONSHIP.**
- **Who are the people you trust?**
- They're the people you know
- The people you have **experience with.**
- The people who've **proven themselves in the past.**
- They are the people you **have relationship with.**
- And the same is **true with Christ.**
- To the extent we are in **RELATIONSHIP** with HIM **we will trust Him.**
- We will not fear, we will have **internal security and comfort, peace.**
- **The deeper our relationship with God is, the more peace we will have.**

- **So, I'd like to conclude this message** by pointing out **four ways** that Scripture tells us we can **grow in having greater PEACE**.
- And **interestingly** each of these **four ways of gaining peace** are also ways that we grow in our relationship with GOD.
- First...

A. Peace Comes by Obedience to God

- Remember we talked about the need to Trust and Obey...
- Isaiah wrote...

17 And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. (Isaiah 32:17)

- Righteousness, doing what is right, **obeying GOD**.
- This will bring us peace.
- **We know this is true by experience.**
- When we sin, **when we choose to disobey God**, when we are unrighteous.
- Our relationship with God is not severed because we are his Children.
- But it is damaged.
- And there is no PEACE in our heart, instead there is turmoil and anxiety and regret.
- But when we repent and confess our sin, he forgives, our relationship with Him is repaired
- And peace is restored.
- So, to the extent we live in obedience to the LORD,
- To that extent we will have peace, tranquility from the LORD.
- Then **second...**

B. Peace Comes by the Word of God

- Jesus says...

33 I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

- The things that Jesus said to His disciples were to give them peace.
- Not peace in the world.
- But peace with God in their hearts.
- AND we are able to receive these same words of Christ written down for us in the Bible.
- And in fact, I believe, **the entire word of God brings peace**.
- It is, as I said before, **the peace treaty between God and humanity**.
- As we read his Word, **as we study His word...**
- As we memorize **and rely on the promises of God's word**.
- And as we **apply his word to our lives...**
- He fills our hearts with PEACE.

- Let me just give one example of this.
- In **Romans 8:28** we find the familiar promise...

28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

- When I read and believe and live my life based on this promise, **it fills me with peace.**
- Because I know that no matter what my earthly circumstances are,
- God is working them for my **eternal good.**
- So, second God's Word brings peace...
- And along with that, or part of that, **third...**

C. Peace Comes by Meditating on God

- God reveals himself through his word.
- And so, as we read the Bible, our focus should be **on God himself.**
- And this focus on God, this meditation on God will bring peace to your soul.
- **For, Isaiah** tells us...

3 You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. (Isaiah 26:3)

- Perfect peace comes to those whose **mind is stayed, fixed on God.**
- As we read the word and as we go about our daily lives our thoughts are to be consumed with GOD himself.
- Now this is something that we **really struggle with in our culture.**
- Fixing our mind on anything is difficult.
- There are so many distractions.
- That's why I believe we need to take the time to **meditate on God.**
- **Meditation seems to be a lost art.**
- Taking the time, to get away from the distractions and focus on GOD.
- **In the morning** before our minds are **filled other things** we must **fill them with God.**
- We must **go to his word** where He reveals Himself
- And we must fill our minds with HIM, with his will and ways.
- And then we can **meditate on (think about)** Him throughout the day.
- And as we focus on God, our minds are stayed in HIM,
- our trust in him and our peace from him grows.
- So, we have seen that in our relationship with God...
- Peace come by obedience, by God's Word and by Meditation on God.

- And finally, ...

D. Peace Comes by Praying to God

- Probably the best-known verses related to **peace in the Bible** are found in **Philippians 4:6-7**
- Paul writes...

⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

- This is some of the most practical advice (commands) every given in the Bible.
- Do not be anxious about anything.
- And I know this is difficult, but really it should be!
- Especially if our minds are fixed upon God.
- Why should you be anxious?
- If God is real, if He is both a God of Great Power and a God of Great Love...
- If he is working all things together for your good.
- Then what do we have to be anxious about.
- But this life is full of things that make us anxious.
- Sickness, financial issues, relational problems, political and cultural craziness,
- **and so much more...**
- Now some of these things we can do something about and others we can't
- But in every case we are subject to anxiety and fear.
- **But Paul says...**
- Instead of anxiety over the things you cannot control
- Give them to the Lord in Prayer.
- **Take them to Him...**
- Put them on His plate...
- He can handle it all.
- Thank him for his love and mercy and willingness to hear your requests...
- And then comes the promise
- And a great promise it is... ***And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.***
- When we take the things in our lives that are causing us anxiety.
- And when we give them to God in Prayer.
- Trusting in His Power and Love.
- Trusting that He alone knows what is best for us and for others.
- Then we will have peace.
- **Now let me explain to you this peace of God.**
- **Oh**, wait a minute, how can I explain it. **It surpasses all understanding.**
- We cannot explain the peace of God, but **we can experience it.**

- And we can see examples of it, especially in difficult circumstances...
- It's the **Peace that David Felt when Facing the Giant Goliath**
- It is the Peace that **Daniel Felt in the Lion's Den**
- It is the Peace that **Shadrack Meshak and Abendego** Felt when they were thrown into the fiery furnace.
- It is the peace that **Peter and John Felt** when they **were beaten for proclaiming the Gospel**.
- It is the peace that **Paul felt when he was shipwrecked, beaten and left for dead**.
- And it's the peace that you and I can experience,
- Even in the midst of our **difficult circumstances... if we will TRUST IN GOD...**
- If we enter into relationship with GOD through Jesus Christ.
- If we obey HIM,
- If we trust in His Word and Meditate on HIM.
- And if we cast all our cares unto HIM through Prayer.
- We will experience a deep un-understandable PEACE.
- **Over 2,000 years ago Christ came into this world.**
- He not only brought peace, but he became our peace...
- Paul writes to **the Ephesians...**

¹⁴ For he himself is our peace... (Ephesians 2:14)

- Through Christ Alone
- Through His death, the shedding of His Blood **we Have Peace with God**.
- But to receive this peace we must please God by putting our faith in HIM.
- We must trust in him above and in spite of our circumstances...
- Then we can experience **that internal Peace, comfort, security, tranquility**.
- That comes through **relationship** with **HIM**.
- Would the ushers come forward, and would you **Join me in pray that we might**,
- in the coming days weeks months and years,
- Experience this kind of Peace with and from God.

Prayer

- Now as we come to the Lord's Table on this second **Sunday of Advent**,
- Our focus has been **Peace with God**.
- And that focus continues as we partake of communion, again, **Colossians 1:20** says...

²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. (Colossians 1:20)

- Every time we celebrate communion,
- we are commemorating the peace that Jesus provides through his death on the cross.
- Through his broken body and shed blood.
- So, during this advent/Christmas Season,
- we remember, not only Jesus' Coming into our world.
- That he is Immanuel, God with Us...
- But that he is God who died for us... he died to save us from our sins.
- To reconcile us to God, to bring peace between God and those who please him by faith.
- And so, when the ushers distribute the bread and the cup this morning...
- **I would remind you that this is a celebration for those who are at peace with God.**
- Those who've **pleased God by putting their faith in Jesus Christ.**
- So, whether you are **member or regular attender** of this church or not...
- If you've put your faith in Christ, then you are encouraged to join with us in communion.
- When the bread and cup are distributed, take them and **hold onto them and we will partake together.**
- **However**, if you've never trusted in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior,
- We are very glad you are here with us this morning.
- And we pray that God has spoken to you through his word.
- But we ask that when the cup and the bread come to you just let them pass.
- **DISTRIBUTE THE ELEMENTS...**
- Let us remember and celebrate the peace with God that Jesus provides through his sacrificial death on the cross.
- In **Matthew 26** we read...

²⁶ Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." (Matthew 26:26)

- Remembering that Jesus' death provides **peace with God**, Let us partake of the bread together.

²⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, ²⁸ for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. (Matthew 26:27-28)

- Remembering that Jesus' death provides **peace from God**, Let us partake of the cup together.
- **Prayer...**
- **SONG**