

UNWRAPPING CHRISTMAS

PEACE ON EARTH.

Christmas can be the most wonderful and the most *hectic* time of the year... and yet it is a holiday founded on peace.

In fact, when telling the very first people about Jesus' birth, the angels ended their announcement with, "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

Glory to God.

And peace to us.

Peace may seem like something out of reach. We pray for world peace and wars still wage. We pray for peace in relationships and still deal with sharp words and hurt feelings. We pray for inner peace and are often still left confused.

But in a world that's still broken, God offers peace. He offers to take our anxieties. He promises joy to people who work for peace. And even though in this world stress may still rise and anxieties threaten to drown, thanks to Jesus' work on the cross, we're promised this:

"And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen."

IN THE BIBLE.

Luke 2:9-14

9 Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, 10 but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. 11 The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! 12 And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

13 Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying,

14 "Glory to God in highest heaven,
and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

Proverbs 12:20

Deceit is in the hearts of those who plot evil,
but those who promote peace have joy.

1 Peter 3:11

Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it.

1 Peter 5:6-7, 10-11

6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. 7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. 11 To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

QUESTIONS.

1. What stands out to you in those verses? Why?
2. What does it mean to be people who "search for peace, and work to maintain it"?
3. How can you specifically promote peace this holiday season?

Whenever you read the Bible, ask yourself these three questions:

1. What does this tell you about God?
2. What does this tell you about yourself and the world?
3. How is this going to change who you are and how you live?