

Christ in Us
Part 4 – Peace Undisturbed
Isaiah 11:1-9 ~ Philippians 4:4-7

Rev. Jeff Chapman ~ May 3, 2026 ~ Faith Presbyterian Church

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¹A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

²The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of might,
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the
LORD—

³and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.

He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,
or decide by what he hears with his ears;

⁴but with righteousness he will judge the needy,
with justice he will give decisions for the
poor of the earth.

He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;
with the breath of his lips he will slay the
wicked.

⁵Righteousness will be his belt
and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

⁶The wolf will live with the lamb,
the leopard will lie down with the goat,
the calf and the lion and the yearling together;
and a little child will lead them.

⁷The cow will feed with the bear,
their young will lie down together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

⁸The infant will play near the cobra's den,
and the young child will put its hand into
the viper's nest.

⁹They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of
the LORD

as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:1-9,
NRSV)

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⁴Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again:
Rejoice! ⁵Let your gentleness be evident to all. The
Lord is near. ⁶Do not be anxious about anything,
but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with
thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And

the peace of God, which transcends all
understanding, will guard your hearts and your
minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:4-7, NRSV)

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Early on the Sunday after Jesus was crucified, his disciples began hearing reports that he had risen from the dead. Their friend, Mary, claimed to have actually seen him in the flesh. That same night they went hiding, locked up together afraid that the Jewish leaders might be coming after them next. It's hard to blame them. At this point, they must not have known what to think. And that's when Jesus appears to them in person for the first time. All at once he's just standing there in their midst.

Do you remember what was the very first thing Jesus said to them this side of the grave? "Surprise!" "I'm back." "Guess who?" No. The very first thing Jesus says to his friends after he defeated sin, evil and death is, "**Peace be with you.**"¹ That's worth noting, that the first word out of Jesus' mouth was "Peace!". Of course, the exact word Jesus would have used was probably the Hebrew word *shalom*, or maybe its Aramaic equivalent, *shlama*. *Shalom* is not a trivial word, just some casual greeting like what you would offer a neighbor on your morning walk. I believe Jesus intentionally extended peace, or *shalom*, to his disciples as the very first thing he offered them after the resurrection because no other word as adequate to capture the moment.

Let me explain. *Shalom* is a hard word to translate. There is no perfect English equivalent. It is often translated "peace," but it means so much more than what we mean when we speak of peace. The literal root meaning is "to be whole, uninjured, undivided." Words like wholeness, completeness, welfare, and flourishing get close to its meaning. In the Old Testament, where it is used nearly 250 times, *shalom* speaks to a reality where everything is exactly as God desires it to be, all things set right, especially all relationships.²

Theologian Cornelius Plantinga defines it this way,

¹ John 20:19. This and all other biblical citations are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

² <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/7965.htm>

The webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in justice, fulfillment, and delight is what the Hebrew prophets called shalom. We call it 'peace,' but it means far more than just peace of mind or cease-fire between enemies. In the Bible, shalom means universal flourishing, wholeness, and delight—a rich state of affairs in which natural needs are satisfied and natural gifts fruitfully employed, all under the arch of God's love. Shalom, in other words, is the way things are supposed to be.³

Probably the best picture we have of shalom in the Bible is in the beginning. When the creation story ends in Genesis 2, we are left with a picture of the world bathed in shalom. At that point literally everything in God's good creation is whole, complete, flourishing. God calls all of it good, very good. But then in chapter 3, humanity turns its back on God in sin, trusts in themselves rather than in their good Creator, and everything unravels. I say everything, because when sin came into the world it did not discriminate. Everything was polluted. Death riddled the entire globe. As one writer put it, "No rock, river or flower was now able to render back to God the complete perfection for which it was created."⁴

Most tragically, it was our relationships which were corrupted. Human was now against human; brother kills brother in the very next chapter. The natural world, though still bearing the glorious fingerprints of its creator, is in upheaval. Everyone but the most ardent skeptic admits that our environment is sick, and that our own bodies as a part of it all will eventually become sick and die. Worst of all, our relationship with God was severed, humanity cut off from his presence and the shalom which is only available in his presence.

Here's the good news. From that moment of total corruption on, God's central mission has been to restore shalom to his broken world. It's what Jesus was referring to when he taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." This is why all through the Old Testament, from Genesis 3 onwards, we are given glimpses of this mission and its coming fulfillment, few as bold and captivating as the vision we have in Isaiah 11. There we are told that one is coming from the "stump of Jesse" (i.e. the line of King David, who was the son of Jesse), one who will be so full of the Spirit of the Lord that he will uplift the poor and purge the world of evil. The shalom he brings will even extend to the animal kingdom, wolfs and lambs, leopards and goats, living

together in harmony. Nothing will harm. Nothing will destroy. Every corner of earth will be as full of the glorious knowledge of the Lord as the ocean is full of water. It's a stunning vision!

A few chapters earlier in Isaiah, the prophet identifies this one who will inaugurate all this as the Prince of Peace, the Prince of Shalom.⁵ Later in the prophesy, Isaiah describes this coming reality as a new Jerusalem. Jerusalem, you may know, literally means City of Shalom. Everything in the Old Testament points forward to God's mission to restore all things.

If you then go to the end of the scriptures, at the end of the New Testament to that very famous and beloved passage in Revelation 21, we see in the vision the Lord gave John how all this will one day come to pass. John speaks there of a new heaven and a new earth, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven like a bride prepared for her husband. And when that happens God will speak and declare that shalom will now be the reality from that point forward, everything made new again forever:

**"See, the home of God is among mortals.
He will dwell with them;
they will be his peoples,
and God himself will be with them and be their
God;
he will wipe every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,
for the first things have passed away."**⁶

When we sang "Mambo Mambo Sawa" earlier, we sang in anticipation of this fulfilled mission of God, that when the King is on the throne things cannot help but get better. It is Christ, of course, who is the King, the Prince of Peace through whom all this is being realized. And this is why it makes perfect sense that the very first thing Jesus declares to his disciples on the other side of the grave is "Shalom!" Shalom, in fact, had been the theme of his entire ministry on earth, what he aimed to achieve through the cross and the empty tomb. In fact, Christ embodied this peace in everything he did and said, constantly giving glimpses of what was to come. He healed the sick because sickness has no place in shalom. He cast out demons because evil has no place in shalom. We welcomed outsiders because exclusion has no place in shalom. He fed the hungry because poverty has no place in shalom. He forgave sin because shalom even restores the damage sin has done

³ Cornelius Plantinga Jr., *Engaging God's World* (Eerdmans, 2002), 15.

⁴ Jonathan Landry Cruse, *The Character of Christ* (The Banner of Truth Trust, 2023), 51.

⁵ Isaiah 9:6

⁶ Revelation 21:3-4

to our relationship with God. And what we saw then in glimpses, we will one day see in all fullness. Amen?

There's a beautiful picture of this embodied shalom in Mark 4.⁷ There we find the disciples in a boat on the Sea of Galilee when a storm engulfs them. Remember, a good number of these men are seasoned fisherman, and so they know that this is the sort of storm that sends sailors to a watery grave. But while these men are desperately trying to keep the boat from filling with water, do you remember what Jesus is doing? Jesus is sleeping in the back of the boat! Out of options, they wake him up and accuse him, "**Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?**"⁸ At once he gets up and rebukes the wind and the waves, which obey immediately. Then he rebukes the disciples, "**Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?**"⁹

How could Jesus possibly sleep in the middle of a storm like that? He could sleep because the storm belonged to him and was therefore subject to him. Why would Jesus worry about something over which he had complete control? In fact, can you think of a single time when Jesus worried or was anxious? He displayed all sorts of other emotions and reactions: anger, frustration, sadness, weariness, compassion. But never worry. Never once was Jesus anxious. And not because he didn't care. There are people who don't worry because they just don't care. Jesus cared, had limitless compassion for everyone and everything. He just didn't worry.

As we talk about peace as a part of the fruit of the Spirit, let's remember that this is the fruit of the Spirit of Christ, a description of Jesus' character. And where there is peace, there is not worry, because with peace comes a confident trust that not only are all things in God's hands, but that the God who holds all things is good and loving and working in and through all things to make all things right. As Romans 8:28 famously declares, "**We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.**" Not just some things – *all things!* Every single storm which might ever seem to threaten!

This is the peace that Christ embodies and, in turn, wants to see formed in us as he is formed in us, his peace becoming our peace, as his love and joy also become our love and joy. But understand, this kind of peace, this *shalom* peace, cannot be ours apart from Christ. He doesn't give us this peace, but he gives us himself who is peace. As Ephesians 2:14 declares, "**He is our peace.**" And so if the Holy Spirit dwells in us,

the Spirit of God who holds all things in his hands, and is working out all things for the good of those who love him, what in the world could ever disrupt that peace?

Did you know that the opposite of this sort of shalom peace is not noise or conflict? No, the opposite of the peace God has for us in Christ is anxiety and worry. In fact, you cannot have both peace and worry. And so let's be honest, we so often don't know or reflect the peace of Christ because we are so often stuck in worry and anxiety.

I'm going to preach to myself for a minute here, and if you want to listen in and find this applies to you, please join me. What are you anxious about right now? Sometimes it's the big things in life which make us worry: a negative health diagnosis, a child who has gone astray, or events on the global stage which seem to have no possible positive outcome. We find worry the natural response to these things. But other times it's the small everyday things which keep us up at night: a strange noise and yellow "check engine" light on the dashboard, lost luggage on an airplane trip, unexpected traffic when you're late for an important meeting. If it were somehow possible to hook up a worry monitor to you that would track your anxiety through the day, you might be shocked to learn how often it registered anxiety in your mind and heart. For some of us it's always there beneath the surface.

In Philippians 4, which we'll look at more closely in a moment, Paul tells us, "**Do not be anxious about anything...**" The word *anxious* there literally means "to take careful thought."¹⁰ Careful thought can be a good thing, of course. But when you are giving careful and sustained thought to some potential negative outcome, that's when it becomes anxiety and disturbs the peace that Christ wants for you. It's natural not to be happy when the airlines lose your luggage. Much more so when you see nations engage in endless war. But when we allow worry to become our response to these things, we have gone too far because then we are demonstrating that we do not trust our heavenly Father with these matters.

That's why when Jesus rebukes the disciples in the boat he accuses them, "**Have you still no faith?**" After all that they have seen him do, do they still not trust him to work things out? Do we not think God knows about these problems in our lives and in our world? Do we not think God cares about these problems? Do we not think God has the power to work out these problems? Because if we truly believed God knew about, cared

⁷ I'm indebted to Jonathan Landry Cruse for making this connection, 53-55.

⁸ Mark 4:38

⁹ Mark 4:40

¹⁰ <https://biblehub.com/greek/3309.htm>

about, and was working out these problems, we would not worry.

The great Scottish evangelist, Oswald Chambers, called worry “unconscious blasphemy.” He didn’t mince words when he wrote,

Worrying always results in sin. We tend to think that a little anxiety and worry are simply an indication of how wise we really are, yet it is actually a much better indication of just how wicked we are. Fretting rises from our determination to have our own way. Our Lord never worried and was never anxious, because His purpose was never to accomplish His own plans but to fulfill God’s plans. Fretting is wickedness for a child of God. Have you been propping up that foolish soul of yours with the idea that your circumstances are too much for God to handle?¹¹

Jesus put it much more succinctly when he asked rhetorically, “**And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to your span of life?**”¹² The answer is, no one. Not a single good thing comes from worry. Worst of all, worry and peace cannot coexist. We worry because we do not trust God.

So what do we do about it? How do we trust God, extinguish worry and anxiety in our lives, and see the peace of Christ more fully formed in us? This is where we turn back to Paul’s words in Philippians 4. Let me read what he says there at length:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, 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.

It’s interesting that joy here is connected to peace, just as love last week was connected to joy. One aspect of the fruit of the Spirit cannot be separated out from the other aspects. Knowledge that the Lord is not distant, but close by, and not only near at hand but at work setting all things right, is a source of joy and an invitation to ask for peace. Paul gives us a very practical way to cultivate that peace. Don’t be anxious about anything he says. Anything. Meaning what he has in mind here are all the things which make you worry, from that lost piece of luggage to the war in

Iran. Nothing is too small or too large to set before the Lord. Even worries which most other rational people might consider silly, bring even those to your heavenly Father.

Think about it, if your young child is worried because she’s afraid there are monsters under the bed, how do you respond? It’s a silly concern, right? There is no such thing as monsters under the bed. She has no valid reason to worry. But she is worried, and for her the anxiety is very real even though the monsters are not. So a good parent doesn’t tell this little girl to stop bringing up the monsters. A good parent sits and listens to her concern, not because the monsters are a real threat, but because her worry is a real threat. Similarly, our heavenly Father invites us to bring all these worries to him, even the ones that make no sense, because we are his beloved children and if these things matter to us, then they matter to him as well.

You see, this isn’t about us trying to remove on our own these anxious thoughts. Good luck with that. This is about us turning to God in prayer when anxiety comes to disturb the peace. Instead of worrying, instead of trying not to worry, simply pray. That’s Paul’s wise counsel here. Pray about *everything* that causes worry. Have a conversation with the one person in the universe who will always hear you, know you, understand you, care about you, and respond to you.¹³ In that conversation, thank God, not only for what he has already done, but also for what you trust he is about to do as you bring these things before him. And then tell him what he already knows, whatever it might be which is disturbing the peace he wants for you in Christ.

Pray a prayer that might sound something like this:

Lord, my luggage is lost again. I’m far from home on a vacation I have been so looking forward to. Now all my things are lost. I’ve done everything I can, but it may not be enough. I don’t like this anxiety that is welling up in me. So Lord, give me your peace. Thank you that you are in control of all things, even airlines and lost luggage. I’d like my suitcase back, Lord. I thank you even now for bringing it back. I also thank you if I never see it again because I know that either way you will work this out according to your good purposes. Either way, may I know the peace of Christ who lives in me.

And if lost luggage isn’t what’s disturbing the peace for you, then substitute the war in Iran, or the diagnosis of your loved one, or whatever other monster, real or

¹¹ Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*, July 4. Read online at <https://utmost.org/updated/one-of-gods-great-donts/>

¹² Matthew 6:27

¹³ Gerald H. Hawthorne, *Word Biblical Commentary: Philippians* (Word Books, 1983), 183.

imagined, it is that is making you worry. Whatever it is, the promise is the same. Do you see the promise? Paul says that the supernatural peace of God we know in Christ, the peace that only comes from Christ, will guard your anxious heart and mind. That word “guard” is a military word that refers to a whole company of soldiers. Imagine how well you would sleep at night in a dangerous world if an entire army was positioned right outside your door? That’s the promise here. Yes, the attacks will keep coming to threaten peace, but if we take them to the Lord when they come, those attacks will be met with an overwhelming defense.

Again, and to be clear, Paul is not suggesting here that when you pray the circumstances which are causing you to worry will immediately be worked out according to your wishes. No, the luggage may never be found. The war may continue, and even get worse. The diagnosis may end up terminal. But as you bring these circumstances, along with the anxiety they are causing you, before the Lord, he is ready and willing to cultivate in you a deep peace that comes from a confidence in him to work all things out in his time and his way, that shalom in all things really is coming. As I’ve heard it put before, in all these instances God will give us exactly what we would ask for if we knew what God knows.¹⁴

Think about those disciples again, the ones who heard the risen Jesus meet them in that locked room that night and greet them with “Shalom!”. Three days earlier they watched this same Jesus be tortured, spit upon, cursed, reviled, and then executed on the cross. Then they watched them stick his lifeless body in a tomb. Do you think that as they watched him die they could ever have imagined that in this most horrendous circumstance of all, that the Lord was actually at work doing the most beautiful thing of all, going to the pit of hell so that heaven one day might come to earth? No, they could never have seen this. But that is what God was doing.

And so in the worrisome circumstances in your life right now, can you believe that the Lord is also doing exactly what you would ask him to do if you knew everything God knows? You cannot generate this faith that leads to peace on your own, but you can ask him to give it to you because he has already given you himself. So commit today to doing what Paul urges us to do, to bring every concern we have to the one who has promised that shalom is coming to set all things right again.



Horatio Spafford was a Chicago lawyer who lost everything he owned in the Chicago fire of 1871. Just two years later he sent his wife, Anna, and his four daughters on boat to England. Tragically, that ship hit another ship and sunk. Anna survived, but the four girls all drowned. When she reached England she cabled home a tragic two-word message to her husband: “Saved alone.”

As this grief-stricken husband and father then traveled himself to England to bring his wife home, along the way, and maybe even near the waters where he lost his precious daughters, he was inspired to write the hymn we are going to sing at the end of our service. You know the refrain: *It is well with my soul.*

Do you remember where the hymn begins? It is no coincidence that it begins with peace.

*When peace like a river, attendeth my way
When sorrows like sea billows roll
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say
It is well, it is well, with my soul*

Horatio Spafford goes on in the lyrics to declare that even though great evil would come against him, including his own sin, that because of what Christ has done, all is indeed well. All is shalom, or soon will be.

Most certainly the circumstances disturbing the peace of Christ in your life are not as dire as the ones Horatio Spafford faced all those years ago. And so as we turn now to this Table, this feast prepared by Christ, and all that it points us to, can we remember and rejoice in what it is Christ has done. His body was broken, his blood was shed. But that same body, after being laid in a tomb, rose three days later, and when he rose the first thing he declared was “Peace! Shalom!”

May the peace of Christ be with you! The peace of Christ be with all who come to ask for, and then receive, what it is he has to offer, a peace that goes far beyond understanding to guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. And what we find here at this table this morning, is only a taste of that which is to come.

Amen.

¹⁴ I’ve heard Pastor Tim Keller say this often in his teaching. Recently I heard it in his sermon entitled “Peace” from November 10, 2025. See *The Gospel in Life* website at <https://podcast.gospelinlife.com/e/peace/>



The Next Step

A resource for Life Groups and/or personal application

1. Read the passage again from Isaiah 11:1-9 again. If this is truly a vision of the *shalom* God intends to make a reality in creation one day, what do you find to be the most captivating part of this vision? What stands out to you?
2. How do you define peace? How do most people define peace? And how does that compare to your understanding of what *shalom* is?
3. If *shalom* is primarily about relationships, in which relationship do you find you are most lacking the peace of *shalom*? Your relationship with God? Your relationship with others? Your relationship with yourself? Where do things seem most unsettled and fractured for you these days?
4. What is something you are worried about right now, something that is making you anxious? And what do you think about the assertion that your worry is an indication of your lack of trust in God, at least in that area? Consider again what Oswald Chambers said about worry:

“Worrying always results in sin. We tend to think that a little anxiety and worry are simply an indication of how wise we really are, yet it is actually a much better indication of just how wicked we are. Fretting rises from our determination to have our own way. Our Lord never worried and was never anxious, because His purpose was never to accomplish His own plans but to fulfill God’s plans. Fretting is wickedness for a child of God. Have you been propping up that foolish soul of yours with the idea that your circumstances are too much for God to handle?”

5. Did Jesus really live a life that was completely free of worry and anxiety? If so, is such a life even possible for us to live?
6. Read Philippians 4:4-7 again. What stands out to you from what the Lord is saying to us here through Paul?
7. Why do you think that Paul says the antidote to worry is to bring our concerns to God in prayer, and to do so with thanksgiving? Have you ever tried this? What happened?

8. Take time, either as a group or as an individual, to do exactly what Paul is telling us to do here. Take one worry to the Lord, and do so in a spirit of gratitude. Expect God to respond to your prayer by granting you the supernatural peace of Christ.

Table to Table: A Question for kids and adults to answer together.



Why do people worry? Why does Jesus not want us to worry about anything?