

Our Prince Of Peace

Introduction:

A few weeks ago we started a series of sermons based on Isaiah chapter nine and verse six. Today is our last week of Advent and we will look at Jesus as “Our Prince of Peace”. **"For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace."** Isaiah 9:6. One of the thoughts we considered was the government of God will rest on the shoulders of this Child. Daniel also reminds us of this Kingdom in the visions of **Daniel 7:13-14** -

“I was watching in the night visions,

And behold, *One* like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. ¹⁴ Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom *the one* Which shall not be destroyed (NKJV).

This everlasting Kingdom is defined by the Child who bears the Names of Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace.

Peace: is not the absence of war:

Many people today are looking for that place of peace where there is an absence of war. When you look at a dictionary this is what you will see defined:

- The non-warring condition of a nation, group of nations, or the world.
- An agreement or treaty to end hostilities and abstain from further fighting...
- A state of mutual harmony between people or groups, especially in personal relations: Try to live in peace with your neighbors.
- Cessation of or freedom from any strife or dissension.

If these are the definitions of peace, then we live in a world where there seems to be very little peace – don't we? I remember growing up as a young boy playing all kinds of games most often related to shooting or killing something. Why did I do this? The simply answer is we live in a world that is full of strife and warfare; that easily became my learned behaviour. Within the last one hundred years we have seen WW1 and WW2, the Korean War and then Vietnam, the Cold War and then the Persian Gulf. Now the world is 'on alert' against the war on terrorism. All of this has been man's attempt to bring peace on earth and goodwill towards man. When peace is defined as the absence of war we sadly miss the mark.

Even Jesus said:

“And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.” Matthew 24:6-7 (NKJV). This does not mean that Jesus agrees with war and conflict but is sadly the state of mankind.

The *Christmas truce* was a series of widespread unofficial ceasefires that took place along the Western Front around Christmas of 1914, during WW1. During the week leading up to Christmas, parties of German and British soldiers began to exchange seasonal greetings and Christmas songs between their trenches; on occasion, the tension was reduced to the point that individuals would walk across to talk to their opposite numbers bearing gifts. On Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, many soldiers from both sides – as well as, to a lesser degree, from French units – independently ventured into "No man's land", where they mingled, exchanging food and souvenirs. As well as joint burial ceremonies, several meetings ended in carol-singing. Why did opposing soldiers who were fighting to the death engage in the Christmas Truce of 1914? They had hope for a better life in light of the Prince of Peace.

Shalom:

Can you imagine what it would be like to live in a world where there is no war or fighting, no arguments or conflicts at all? It is difficult to do, why? Because from our earliest days we have never experienced peace or anything close to true peace because there is sin in the world. Even in our Christian families there are expressions contrary to peace. Leaders and people throughout history have talked about peace; but, few, if any, have ever had an actual plan to bring peace to the world!

However, God has a plan – a Child born as the Prince of Peace.

In the Western World, the term peace has been clearly connected with the absence of war; i.e. – if there is no war – there is peace. However, God has a different way of defining peace. The word that is used in the Old Testament for peace is “Shalom” and it means so much more than the absence of conflict. Most of us would know that the Hebrew word shalom is understood to mean "peace." And yet "peace" is only one small part of the meaning of shalom. "Shalom" is used as a greeting – hello or goodbye – to give peace. According to Strong's Concordance (7965) Shalom also means completeness, wholeness, health, peace, welfare, safety, soundness, tranquility, prosperity, perfectness, fullness, rest, harmony, the absence of agitation or discord. Shalom comes from the root verb shalom meaning to be complete, perfect and full. The wisdom of God in contrast to the world is simply; the world seeks peace on a practical level but the Kingdom of God sees peace in the person of Jesus Christ. Peace is actually a Person, not a geographical place of peace or a state or condition of inner calm.

When you have Shalom or the Prince of Peace, whether you live or die, enjoy life or struggle through challenges, we do not have to fear or be anxious. You know your purpose in life and you have a sense of wholeness and completeness because of the Prince of Peace. This is shalom – this is the peace that Jesus brings for us because he is Our Prince of Peace.

Today let’s look at two basic areas that Jesus brings peace into our lives. The first is:

Jesus brings peace between me and GOD.

I have heard it said, "You cannot have the Peace OF God without Peace WITH God." Our vertical relationship with God Almighty is of first importance is gaining Shalom in life. There is a great desire in the heart of God for Shalom to be the experience of the whole world. He created us to enjoy the garden of his love and presence being fully satisfied with him and each other; never any lack or want, never fears or tears. The story of the Garden of Eden changes when Shalom is exchanged for Sin.

Each of us because of the sin in our lives has a problem with God. Our sin has separated us from Shalom or the Prince of Peace. When we sin we do things God does not like thereby blocking us from the full experience of Shalom. Just as there are natural laws there are spiritual laws. One of the spiritual laws in place is sadly true; **"the wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23)**. The word wages means that is what you have earned and when we sin we earn death. This state of death opposes the Prince of Peace in our lives. Our sin separates us from Shalom therefore something must be done about the sin in our lives. Guess what – something has been done!

God sent a Prince of Peace to deal with the situation. He sent a Prince of Peace to fix the problem. He sent a Prince of Peace give us peace with God. How did He do that? **Romans 6:23** goes onto say, **"but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."**

God does not OVERLOOK our sin. He knows that we deserve death. "But" God did something about it. He sent his Son to be our Prince of Peace to take our punishment. Somebody had to do something about it and God did.

Rom 5:1-5 - Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

We can now have peace with God because of what Jesus has done for us. Jesus is God's gift to us. We were at war with God because of our sin. But Jesus - Our Prince of Peace gives us Shalom with God. He fixed the problem. He took the wages of sin to the cross so that we can have peace with God.

Jesus brings peace within MYSELF.

Carrying on with this theme of Peace, now we look at the horizontal aspect of Shalom. The Prince of Peace has redeemed our vertical relationship with God and now the Spirit of Peace restores peace within our lives personally. There is a great passage of Scripture found in **Isa 26:3 - You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You.** One of the greatest areas we lack the peace of God is in our minds. Why is this? Listen to **Rom 8:6**

⁶ **For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.** The point is that God sees the struggle between our sinful nature and the Spirit. However, he more than understands, he has given us the Spirit of God to allow us to fully experience peace in our mind and life.

Paul goes onto say that **“But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you (Rom 8:11).** Remember the meaning of Shalom – health, wholeness, soundness and completeness to name a few; this is God’s desire for our bodies in this age and in the next.

Let’s ask ourselves a question. What is robbing you of peace of mind right now? Sickness, lack of, anxiety over family or children, fears of the future and so on and so on. Maybe we are being critical of someone and our mind is not at peace. There are many things here today that take from the peace of God in our lives. Whatever our struggle is there is the remedy to our lack of peace. The remedy is a Person – our Prince of Peace.

God’s Everlasting Love:

The author of Romans goes onto to tell us in Chapter 8 the struggle and the beauty of gaining peace within ourselves. The struggle between the flesh – our sinful nature – and the Spirit of God is ongoing until Christ returns. The Prince of Peace has not left us alone in this battle but has given to us the Spirit of Adoption – **“you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ...” (Rom 8:15b-17a).** What better way to overcome the struggle than being adopted as a child of God and an heir as well. The present and the future reality of life taken care of – oh, how sweet is Shalom.

Another verse that helps me to sleep well at night is **Rom 8:26-27 - Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.²⁷ Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.**

The Holy Spirit helps us in those areas where we lack peace and find ourselves weak. There are times when we don’t even know how to pray to resolve our lack of Shalom, but then along comes the Spirit of God who intercedes for us according to God’s will. This is another ah-ha moment for me when I can trust in my Lord and Saviour – the Prince of Peace.

Lastly we see that even in the midst of great challenges in our natural life and in the spiritual dimension, nothing can separate us from God’s love. Ultimately, it is the love of God that brings peace to our hearts. Paul reminds us that when we encounter these things – **“If God is for us, who can be against us? (Rom 8:31).** Because of God’s love for us through his Son, we have peace, even through tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril or the sword.

We are most than conquerors because God's love us and has given us his peace. We are told that nothing **“shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom 8:39).**

Conclusion:

We serve a wonderful God. Over that last few weeks we have looked at Isa 9:6 where Jesus is described as our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and today our Prince of Peace. How awesome to be a part of the Kingdom of God where our leader is defined by these Names, and many more as well.

Again as we come to our time of Communion, let's reflect on our Prince of Peace.

Let's allow the Spirit to intercede for us where we are weak and lacking peace.

Let's receive Shalom from our Prince of Peace.

Let's share peace with others.

Amen...