

## 12-18-22 Sermon #48 Peace

On this fourth Sunday of Advent we're lighting the candle for Peace. I'd like to ask Jim and Barbie to come up and share some thoughts with us.

Last week we lit the pink candle for Joy, and I shared that the word joy appears over 100 times in the Bible. The word peace appears in the Bible about 250 times. I think it's good for us to also see that God used the city of Jerusalem for Jesus' ministry. The meaning of Jerusalem is "city of peace". Jerusalem is often called Zion; Mount Zion is the hill on which the fortress of the city was built. God chose Jerusalem as Jesus' place of death and resurrection. "PEACE" is what God wants for us.

We can also see God's peace in the story of Adam and Eve. The way they lived before the Fall was in peace. God has always desired for us to have peace. Just thinking about the garden can bring Godly Peace to us. They had no worries or fears. After the Fall, God has never stopped trying to offer His peace. All of us desire to have peace and we try to find it in different ways.

Some find it in beautiful sunny days or sitting on a beach during sunrises or sunsets. When Trish and I ride our bikes, we get high up on a hill and look at all the beautiful scenery – that brings peace. Recreational activities like crafting, cooking, baking, fishing, golf and other things brings us peace. Whatever helps us feel calm is how we get to experience a form of peace.

The peace that God wants for us is different. God sent Christ so we can be sin free and return to peace with Him.

If we look at John 20:21-23 after Jesus' resurrection we read,

<sup>21</sup> Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." <sup>22</sup> And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup> If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Jesus' birth brought us a way to live in this kind of Godly peace. God's eternal peace comes through forgiveness.

When I think about Jesus' birth, I can picture the entire world pausing, and I can feel the calming that came with it – the way the shepherds received the news and the way the star shone in the sky. Jesus' birth brought God's peace to us. I like to picture Mary and Joseph holding Jesus – the way they looked on Him and the awe that was present.

For us, when we receive God's forgiveness for something, we feel this kind of peace. Peace also happens when someone forgives us, or when we go to someone and ask for their forgiveness. We get to feel Godly peace when we stop and pray to God in times of trouble.

Example of Trish when I was in the hospital.

I love Philippians 4:6 & 7:

<sup>6</sup> Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The peace that Christ offers, is an internal peace, and prayer gives this.

I'd like to share a few scriptures about Peace. Try to absorb the words.

Isaiah 9:6:

<sup>6</sup> For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Matthew 5:9:

<sup>9</sup> Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

John 14:27:

<sup>27</sup> Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

John 16:33:

<sup>33</sup> "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

2 Corinthians 13:11:

<sup>11</sup> Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

Psalms 4:8:

<sup>8</sup> In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety.

Psalms 29:11:

<sup>11</sup> The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace.

Psalms 37:37:

<sup>37</sup> Consider the blameless, observe the upright; a future awaits those who seek peace.

2 Thessalonians 3:16:

<sup>16</sup> Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.

Colossians 3:15 & 16:

<sup>15</sup> Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup> Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

Romans 5:1:

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Romans 8:6:

<sup>6</sup> The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.

Romans 16:20:

<sup>20</sup> The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

Jesus' birth started this kind of peace for us.

Mercy, grace and goodness is God's way of bringing peace.

Let's say the Lord's Prayer together.

To share in the peace of Christ, we have a special presentation of music today.

Please enjoy our local celebrity artists.

Benediction – May we be the peacemakers that the world needs and during this week may we also find the peace that is available only through Jesus.