



PEACE

ADVENT | Week 2

Peace is one of those words that we are all familiar with, whether it is used to describe a calmed spirit, the ceasing of war, or a casual greeting. Peace has its own iconic symbol that can be seen on bumper stickers and at the center of social movements.

It is a word that is also significant to the biblical story.

The angels announce “peace” to the shepherds on the hillside the night of Jesus birth (Luke 2:14).

Seven hundred years before the birth of Jesus Isaiah prophesied, “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end...” (Isa. 9:6-7).

The Gospel writer Luke records the days when Caesar Augustus was summoning the world under the name of peace to increase the burden of taxes. God was summoning the world to fulfill His Word, to establish the throne of His Son, and to make the way for a peace that will have no end.

God’s glory is revealed in the coming of His Son Jesus. God’s peace comes everywhere His Son is received. And the eternal promise is, of the increase, there will be no end!

Isaiah is looking forward. Luke is looking back. Both are looking at the same event. Both are seeing the same day. Isaiah writes with hope. Luke writes of fulfillment. Peace is announced. Peace has come!

Delightful Disruption

"Send out your light and your truth;
let them lead me;
let them bring me to your holy hill
and to your dwelling!
Then I will go to the altar of God,
to God my exceeding joy,
and I will praise you with the lyre,
O God, my God.
Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation and my God."

Psalm 43:3-5 (ESV)

Imagine yourself waking up in the middle of the night needing a glass of water. You're half asleep, trying to maneuver through what you thought was a familiar bedroom only to find yourself tripping over a stray shoe or bumping into a wall you could have sworn wasn't there before. You don't want to turn on the light because it would disrupt the comfort of your eyes and your sleepy disposition. We've all been there. We'd rather trip, stumble, or even fall before we try to turn on the light.

In Psalm 43, we see David seeking after God after he has been attacked by his enemies and sees injustice surrounding him. Some scholars believe he has turned away from God and is seeking Him again for deliverance (v. 2). Others believe he is writing this psalm in reference to his fleeing from Absalom (2 Sam. 17). Though David is known as the man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22), what he knows about God and what he is experiencing are going head to head with each other (v. 5).

“Send out Your light and Your truth...” (v. 3a). David is seeking the One he knows can bring not only clarity to his current circumstance, but more importantly, peace. David isn't just saying a rote, religious prayer; he makes it personal. Twice he says “my God” (vv. 4-5). He calls out to his God who delights to bring light and truth. Light and truth are part of peace and allow David (and all who call on the Lord) to dwell in perfect communion with Him.

“Where
there is joy,
there is
peace.”

“... let them [light and truth] lead me... Then I will go to... God my exceeding joy...” (vv. 3b, 4) David is asking for God's direction to His presence—the very place he will find peace. He is relying on the One who is his “exceeding joy” (v. 4), in whom there is the “fullness of joy” (Ps. 16:11) even in the midst of his circumstances. Where there is joy, there is peace.

“Why are you cast down... Hope in God...” (v. 5) David is preaching the Gospel to himself. He is reminding his heart and mind to not lean on his feelings or the season he is in, but to trust in the Lord. He is reminding himself of the future faithfulness of God—“... I shall again praise Him... (v. 5b)—and the constant mercy of God—“... my salvation, my God” (v. 5b) all which bring him perfect peace.

Peace is a central theme seen throughout the Advent and Christmas season. As believers, we know that Christ is the Prince of Peace, and often we tend to overlook this because it becomes like white noise, especially this time of year. But when we realize the beauty and the astronomical price Christ paid to be our peace (Eph. 2:12-19) and to bring us peace (Isa. 9:6; John 14:27; Rom. 5:1; John 16:33), we should stand in awe. Jesus delightfully obeyed and descended to earth so that we could have peace. He came in human form, felt the things we feel, experienced the same temptations (but didn't sin), and most importantly endured a death we should have died all so that we could know Him and therefore have ultimate peace.

“Jesus delightfully
obeyed and descended
to earth so that we
could have peace.”

There are many times we find ourselves walking in dark seasons, whether that is the result of our own sin, the sin of others, or simply because we live in a fallen world. If we try to find peace on our own or solve problems by making our

own “peace,” we are just like the person walking around in the dark, tripping over obstacles and end up causing more harm to ourselves and sometimes others.

We must have light and truth in order to have peace. Light reveals truth; truth brings peace. We cannot make these happen on our own, though we try. God exposes our sin through His Word (truth) and through Christ (light), just like turning on a light would reveal the obstacles that are in a darkened room. In the moment, it disrupts our comfort and causes us to sometimes complain but, in the end, it is for our eternal good and for His glory. Just like the night Christ entered the world and disrupted the plans of the enemy: He began to shine His light in darkness thus paving the way for our peace.

We cannot rely on this world or our feelings in the dark seasons or any season in our lives. Our feelings are very real, but they are not reliable. We must rely on the light and truth we know and read in God’s Word. The truth is yes, we will feel hurt, disappointment and maybe depression, but for those in Christ, we are not without hope (2 Cor. 4:7; 6:10a).

“Our feelings are very real, but they are not reliable.”

Our hope isn’t that God will remove us from the suffering but that He is with us in the midst of it. He is Emmanuel (God with us). He is our Prince of Peace. He is our empathetic High Priest (Heb. 4:14). We can rejoice in all seasons of life, not because everything is going well or we have everything we want, but because our most desperate need has been met in the person and completed work of Christ. He has shown us His light and His truth. He has become our peace and will forever be our peace.

Prayer

Lord, thank You for being my peace and the price You paid by coming to earth and sacrificing Your life so that I may know you and have peace with you. Help me to continually run to you when circumstances are difficult and when life is going well. Lord, help me to rely on You and the Holy Spirit when my feelings overwhelm me and open Your Word in every season of life. Thank you for being my source of light and truth. Thank You that You are with me and you have good plans for me.

Further Reflection | Individual Study Questions

1. When you find yourself in a difficult season, who or what do you tend to run to? Does God feel far away or closer?
2. When life’s seasons aren’t difficult, do you feel you are as close with God?

Further Reflection | Family Study Questions

1. What does the world tell us brings us peace? What does God say brings us peace?
2. How can we remind ourselves to go to God when difficult things happen in our lives?
3. When things are going right in our lives, how can we remind ourselves to continue to go to God?

Notes:

Year: _____

Year: _____

Year: _____

