

“The Light of Grace: Peace – Isaiah”

Isaiah 2:2-4; 9:2-7; 11:1-8

2:2-4 2 In the last days the mountain of the Lord’s temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. 3 Many peoples will come and say, “Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us His ways, so that we may walk in His paths.” The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

4 He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.

9: 2-7 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. 3 You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder. 4 For as in the day of Midian’s defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. 5 Every warrior’s boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire. 6 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. 7 Of the greatness of His government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over His kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The Zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

11: 1-8 1 A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. 2 The 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 knowledge and fear of the Lord—3 and 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; 4 but 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. 5 Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. 6 The 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. 7 The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. 8 The infant will play near the cobra’s den, and the young child will put its hand into the viper’s nest. 9 They 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.

Ephesians 2: 13-22 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For He Himself is **our peace**, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by setting aside in His flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in Himself one new humanity out of the two, thus **making peace**, 16 and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which He put to death their hostility. 17 He came and **preached peace** to you who were far away and **peace** to those who were near. 18 For through Him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. 19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household. 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit.

John 14: 27-31 27 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. 28 "You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. 29 I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. 30 I will not say much more to you, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold over me, 31 but he comes so that the world may learn that I love the Father and do exactly what my father has commanded me. "Come now; let us leave."

Our Lord tells us all over the place in Scripture, including in our Old Testament lesson for today, that there will be perfect peace in the world to come. When Christ returns, he will restore everything to the way he originally intended it to be before sin entered the world and corrupted everything. [NOTE 1]

One of the ways the world was corrupted was that some animals became predators and other animals became prey. Before Adam and Eve sinned, there was no need for some animals to eat other animals. We are assuming this from Isaiah's picture of the restoration. Lions, tigers, wolves and bears, as well as all those other ferocious animals we can think of, could all just eat plants like their prey did. That's what Isaiah says it will be like when perfect creation is restored.

We don't know what that's like because we've never been a part of that perfect creation. We haven't lived in it. All we know is the world that has been tainted with sin in every way. Even in our own lives, the things that are supposed to give us joy and happiness often don't or, at the most, only give us satisfaction for a fleeting moment or two. Peace is very hard to come by and truly impossible when it comes to trying to find it in this world without the help of God.

It was no different in Isaiah's day. The people of Isaiah's day were under even more pressure than we are in our lives here. They were suffering persecution at the hands of the Babylonians. Long before this, though, they had lost their way by forsaking

God, chasing after the things of this world and worshiping false gods. They had forsaken the source of real security and peace. They had listened to the devil who sold them a pack of lies. Sounds familiar does it not? **[NOTE 2]**

Life in Jesus' time had not changed since Isaiah's time. Jesus had to come into the world because there was no peace between God and man. He didn't come to bring peace in an earthly sense, but he came to break down the wall of hostility that was between God and man. He did that by bridging the gap caused by sin and by paying the price that we could not pay. He lived a perfect, sinless life. He died a perfect, sinless death and suffered all for us! This, brothers and sisters, is the only way of peace!

In our day, you would think that with all of the advancements in technology, and with all the different ways we have to communicate with each other, that we would be able to communicate love with each other in such a way as to never have to worry about misunderstandings, arguments or fights, but that could not be further from the truth. Everyone seems more angry, more upset and less peaceful than ever. It is impossible to miss the polarization, how easy people get offended, how bad commonly accepted language has become, the wars, the violence, and the list goes on. **[NOTE 3]**

But Jesus, it tells us in Isaiah chapter 9, is the "Prince of Peace!" Advent means coming and we are awaiting and preparing to celebrate Jesus coming, God become man, as God sent His one and only Son to earth. So Jesus come to earth as a little baby, whom shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, AND THE PRINCE OF PEACE"! Jesus is the sort of king who comes in peace and who establishes peace, not by the brutal squashing of all opposition or defiance, but by means of a transparent vulnerability which makes defiance and opposition ... pointless! This King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ will rule by peaceful methods. He rules with love and faithfulness.

The prophecy of Isaiah found in Chapter 11 was composed at a time in which the dynasty of King David, the son of Jesse, had been reduced to a mere stump. The people of Israel were cowering in fear of the Assyrians, who were as cruel to God's people as the Egyptians had been if not more. In the middle of this frightening and violent time, God promises to launch a new kingdom. This new regime comes from a shoot—from a bud, a sprout, a young leaf. Not from a warrior king or a conquering army, but from a fragile sprout. "A Shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse!" (11:1) We know this shoot to be Jesus the Christ, the one born as a vulnerable baby in a manger in Bethlehem, the city of David. He doesn't come to us at Bethlehem as a Messiah with unlimited military might, even though legions of angels are at his disposal. Rather than scorching the earth with firepower, these angels are instead singing on Christmas night, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, PEACE, and good will toward all." The prince of Peace talks about a peace obtained through acts of love. In Jesus' words to the disciples He talks about a peace that eliminates fear. A peace that responds to trouble and fear with love. **[NOTE 4]**

When Jesus says to the disciples in John chapter 14, "Peace I leave with you," He is not talking about the absence of war. For the Hebrew, peace was a positive blessing

growing out of a right relationship with God. So when Jesus leaves the 11 (Judas is no longer with them) with peace, He is giving them one of the fruits of the Spirit. This positive word of farewell is greater than all their troubles and fears. It is a victorious peace. In the Bible the words for peace is “Shalom”, which never means simply the absence of trouble, strife, or war. It means everything which makes for our highest good. The peace that the world offers us is a peace of escape, a peace that comes from the avoidance of trouble and often from refusing to face things. The peace that Jesus offers is a peace of conquest through love. No experience of life can ever take this peace from us and no sorrow, no danger, no suffering can diminish it. The peace that Jesus gives is not dependent on outward circumstances. A Christ-given peace is a serenity that God is in control and with the peace that passes understanding cowardice and troubled hearts are nowhere to be seen. **[NOTE 5]**

Jesus comes to bring each one of us peace/Shalom. He provides that peace that the world cannot give, no matter how hard the world may try. He simply asks us to trust Him and trust *in* Him. He is preparing for us a place that goes above and beyond all our finite, human understanding. It is a place where lions and lambs can lie down together, where a bear can eat grass like an ox and where people can live in perfect peace with one another.

As we look forward to that day when Jesus comes back again, we are able to live in peace right now. We long for it, but we also wait with expectant joy because he has already left his peace with us. He has already filled our hearts and lives with that peace. We can already experience that peace even though we can't fully understand it. **[Note 7]**

As you wait for that most glorious day, do so with real peace in your hearts, knowing that Christ has already won the victory. In this peace we depend on Him and His presence in the midst of the struggle of life. So here it is, the question I ask you every single week. So, what are you going to do about it? Please, write down on your bulletin, in your phone, or somewhere you can easily access it, when and where you will pray every day for peace and love to rule your life. May every single one of us seek to live and act with the kind of peace that attracts others and points them to Jesus. He has defeated sin, death, the devil and hell. Satan cannot harm us. We are free! Love has won the victory! Now that, brothers and sisters, is REAL peace. Let's pray ...Amen.

Sermon Notes for “The Light of Grace: Peace – Isaiah”
based on Isaiah 2:2-4; 9:2-7; 11:1-8, Ephesians 2:13-22, and John 14: 27-31
Given in Doster on Second Week of Advent 2023

- I. “The 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. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox.” (verses 6-7)
- II. Before Jesus came to earth there was NO PEACE between God and man. Jesus came to break down the wall of hostility that was between God and man. He did that by bridging the gap caused by sin by paying the price that we could not pay.
- III. Jesus is called “THE PRINCE of PEACE.” In case you needed another reason to follow Him, here is a good one. Jesus is the King who comes in peace and who establishes peace by means of a transparent vulnerability which makes defiance and opposition, pointless! He rules by love and faithfulness.
- IV. The Prince of Peace tells His disciples about a peace that eliminates fear. A Peace that responds to trouble and fear with love. (There are 365 references in the Bible that essentially say, “Do not fear,” one for each day of the year).
- V. Shalom, the Hebrew word for peace, means everything that makes for our highest good, the conquest of love, with God in control. A peace that passes understanding (logic).
- VII What are you going to do about it? Will you write down when and where You will pray every day for God’s peace to rule in your life? Pray to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that you might conquer anxiety, stress, busyness, and anger with love and peace.