



"The Heav'n Born Prince of Peace"

Various Scriptures

December 24, 2018

Followers of Jesus Christ, we gather on this Christmas Eve as those who are deeply interested in the past, and as those who are vitally concerned for the present, and as those who are very enthusiastic about the future.

We understand tonight that the birth of Jesus Christ is of massive historical interest. It was the Son of God being born into the world. That is a unique one of a kind event. But tonight, we have so much more than a history lesson.

It has been my prayer that each and every person here would have a sense of what the birth of Christ means for us today; that we would understand the power that it has for the present time and for the great promise that it has for the future.

By the future, I don't just mean the days that we have in the years and decades ahead of us. I am talking about centuries and millennia and eternal ages into the future. In Christ, we have reason to rejoice.

It has been my prayer that each of us would be interested in what happened on that night in the past; that we would understand its power for the present and its hope for the future. I want to read a portion of Scripture that speaks to all these things. It is what we might call a Christmas prophecy.

A man of God named Isaiah was filled the Holy Spirit hundreds of years before the birth of Christ to talk about the coming of the Messiah, the birth of the Messiah, and the character of the Son of God who would be born into the world.

These words were written when a very, very foolish king, a man named Ahaz, was reigning in Israel. These words were written when there were many hearts wandering in the Holy Land. Yet, these words illuminate the pages of Scriptures, and I pray that they will illuminate the hearts of those gathered here tonight.

We read in Isaiah Chapter 9 and Verses 2 through 7:

**²The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.
³You have multiplied the nation;
you have increased its joy,**

**they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as they are glad when they divide the spoil.
⁴For the yoke of his burden,
and the staff for his shoulder,
the rod of his oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian
⁵For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult
and every garment rolled in blood
will be burned as fuel for the fire.
⁶For 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.
⁷Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.**

The child that is spoken of, the baby that was born, this is Jesus. This is the Messiah that we come here to worship tonight. This passage of Scripture, it is so dense and rich with meaning as it conveys to us just who that baby in a manger was and is.

This evening I could spend some time talking to you about the life-giving and wonder-working and soul-reviving nature of His truth, for He is the Wonderful Counselor. I could spend a good portion of time talking to you about how in Christ the whole fullness of deity, of who God is, dwells in bodily form.

For as this prophecy declares, He is Mighty God. We had a message here in December talking about just that. He is the incarnate Deity. Or we could talk about the fact that His rule is one of paternal care and generosity, because He is Everlasting Father.

But in the time we have tonight in the Word, I would like to focus in on the fact that He is the Prince of Peace, in keeping with the title of this evening's message for Christmas Eve, *The Heav'n Born Prince of Peace*.

Christ is the Prince of Shalom. That is what He has come to bring as we trust in Him, as we believe in Him, as we take to heart all that He came and taught us, and as we believe what He did on our behalf.

Through the month of December as a church, we have been tracing through the theologically rich Christmas carol *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*. It is my favorite Christmas carol, and it may very well be my favorite song. It so good!

In this song, there are many titles of the Messiah. One of them is Heav'n-born Prince of Peace. I want to take some time to talk to you about the nature of the peace that He came to provide. I want to draw some truths from Scripture and for us to think about how His peace goes in three directions when it is filling our lives.

Jesus came to provide an upward peace, an inward peace, and an outward peace. I pray that you will know that peace through faith in the Son of God here tonight. First and foremost, if we are talking about Jesus the Prince of Peace, we must think about the:

1. Upward peace that He came to bring

We see this stated for us in the New Testament book of Romans, Chapter 5 and Verses 1 and 2, among other places where it is taught in Scripture. Here it says here:

¹Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ²Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

The peace of Christ is laid out for us here. Through Jesus we have peace with God. To understand this kind of upward peace that Jesus came into the world to bring, we have got to understand that apart from Jesus Christ, the human race and every single person that comprises it, is at enmity with God. We are under His judgement.

I don't bring this up here on Christmas Eve because I'm some kind of a scrooge or grinch. Actually, I think I'm a pretty joyful guy. But I want to give you what is at the heart of Scripture and I want you to know the rescue mission that Jesus came into the world to do, because, ladies and gentlemen, this is the heart of Christmas.

When God looks upon humanity, He looks at each life. In His Word, God declares that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. You and I both know that we sin, and we don't sin on accident. We do it on purpose. We have all transgressed God's moral law.

Scripture paints a picture of the human race as a parade of sin. We are all in that parade. Some people actively shake their fists at their Creator. Some people mock and scoff at their Creator. A great many people are pretty much indifferent to the God who gives them life and breath as they use and even misuse the gifts that He has given—gifts of speech, gifts of intimacy, how we use our hands, how we use our feet.

We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, but the Good News is that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. The One who was presiding over this parade of sin entered in to it. Unto us a child is born. Unto us a Son is given. God became a human being. That is Christ.

He preached the truth of the Kingdom of Heaven. He called us to repentance. He displayed what love and righteousness look like, and He did it perfectly, and to satisfy the justice of God. Yes, God is Judge. You take that to heart and you believe it.

God is offended by sin. He is grieved and angered by the abuses that take place on this earth. If we get mad at these things, think about the holiness of God. God must judge sin, both yours and mine. Christ Jesus came into the world to take the just payment of our sin upon Himself because of the greatness of His grace and love so that God could still be the just God and sinners like us set free and forgiven.

The baby in the manger grew into maturity and He was nailed to an old rugged Roman cross. On that cross, the wrath of God was poured out on Him in order to be averted from us. Jesus died for us, and on the third day Christ rose again with power over death, with the victory, with the salvation in His grip.

It is through Christ and it is through Christ alone, that any human being on this earth will have peace with God. Jesus came into the world to bring this peace to us. Romans Chapter 5:

¹Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are justified. Justified is one of the most important words in the pages of Scripture. It is the gift of Christmas. Those who are justified, they are made right in God's sight through Christ. When you believe in Jesus with a humble heart saying yes, that you are sinner in need, two things happen.

One, our sin is removed from us. Jesus took our sin into Him and upon Him on the cross. Our sin is washed away when we believe in Jesus. He paid the price for us. It goes further than that.

In addition to cleansing us, Jesus clothes us in the gift of His righteousness, so that when we enter in to eternity, we do so as those who are perfectly righteous in the sight of God. We fit right in, because Jesus clothes us in His goodness and in His righteousness. This the gift of Jesus to each one who will receive it by faith.

Jesus came to bring us upward peace with God. This is His gift. Believe and trust in Him. There is more to this peace that Jesus came to provide. There is also an:

2. Inward Peace that He desires for us.

Jesus came to bring inward peace of heart as well. We read about it in Philippians Chapter 4 and Verses 4 through 7:

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. ⁵Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The LORD is at hand; ⁶do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be

made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

There is peace of heart and there is peace of mind to be found in Jesus. The Word of the Lord to each child of God who believes in Jesus is: Don't be anxious.

I'm up here saying "don't be anxious," but would you believe me if I told you that sometimes I get anxiety? Don't be anxious! But I get anxious a lot too. It is something that I must keep taking back to the Lord.

When I experience anxiety, it is something that I feel in my core. It is in the heart and its in the stomach. It's in the gut. I wonder if any of you know what that feels like. But in the portion of Scripture that we just read, this language of anxiety is a word of the mind.

The New Testament was originally written in Koine Greek, a picturesque language. The Greek word for *anxiety* is *merimnao*. *Nao* is the mind and it is a divided mind. It is a racing mind. It is a mind that is going all over the place—what's it going to be? Is it going to be the good or is it going to be the bad, or is it going to be somewhere in between? What's going to happen?!

It is a racing mind and Scripture is telling us: You just let your thoughts go straight up. Let them travel to the Lord. You give them to God. You rejoice in Him. You remember who He is and what He has done for you. Remember that He is at hand, that He is close by. Remember that He is concerned and that He cares for you.

As you draw close in prayer by faith, you experience the peace that God gives within. This is the peace that Jesus wants for you. In this fast-paced world, friends, you must find time to slow down and take your burdens to the Lord.

Going back to Isaiah, he spoke of this inward peace as well. Isaiah's testimony in Chapter 26:

**³You keep him in perfect peace
whose mind is stayed on you,
because he trusts in you.**

That's Isaiah talking to the Lord. Now he is going to talk to us:

**⁴Trust in the Lord forever,
for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock.**

The Lord desires for you to have peace of heart, perfect peace as well. So, slow down. Be like Mary as we read in the Christmas story tonight. It says in Luke Chapter and Verses 1 through 20, that Mary treasured these things and pondered them. Her mind was stayed on the Lord.

Here in the Christmas season I think that we all long for the pace to be silent night, holy night. All is calm. All is bright but is it just me, or is the pace of Christmas frantic? That kind of

bustling is good in measure, but when one thing after another keeps coming, it can wear you down.

So, you must carve out time to be quiet in the presence of the Living God, because Jesus wants to convey His peace to our hearts. How is that going to happen if we never spend time with Him, if we never slow down and abide in His presence?

There an inward peace that Jesus has come to bring as well. Third, there is an:

3. Outward peace that Jesus wants us to experience.

This starts with that upward peace with God. Then that inward peace of heart and mind. More and more, the Lord desires to use us as agents of His peace. This is spoken of going back to the book of Romans, where the Word of God is given to the church of God. Romans Chapter 12 and Verses 16 through 18:

¹⁶Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. ¹⁷Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. ¹⁸If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

Be a peacemaker! This is what the Lord desires for us.

I am something of a Laker fan. This week there was an article on Sportswire.com that got my attention. Here is what the headline said: *Lonzo Ball says the Lakers have no egos in the locker room. Everyone's cool. Everyone's cool—no egos!* JaVale McGee, the Laker center, concurred: *It might be the chilliest locker room I have ever been in.* Not chilliest, but chilliest.

That was nice to hear. Just by God's common grace, if the Lakers locker room can be a place where everyone's cool, how much more the church of God, where the Prince of Peace is to be reigning? How much more among us should there be shalom and peace in our midst?

Paul gave the key to it. Do you know what it takes to have peace in the family of God? It takes a humble spirit. That's what it takes. We must be those who don't think ourselves better than anyone. Don't be wise in your own sight.

Guess what? In the midst of a relational conflict, you might be wrong. They might be wrong too. So, if we want peace, we can't be people with exaggerated views of our own wisdom. We must be humble. We must be forthright. We must be honest. But we do so with a gracious and humble spirit. That leads to harmony. Then we must take that same attitude wherever we go into this world.

Now we want to share with people that Jesus is King. That He is the Lord of lords. That there is one way to Heaven, and that's Jesus. Some people will resist truth. They won't like it. I pray that they will. We can't have peace with everybody, but wherever there is a breakdown it should

not be because a Christian is arrogant, rude, or obnoxious. Let the truth offend, and not our attitudes.

We must take this humility out into the world with us everywhere we go. We got to be humble-hearted followers of Jesus. As we are, we are going to be agents of the Prince of Peace here in this world. He wants us to have that outward peace too.

There are three kinds of peace—it goes upward, it goes inward, and it goes outward. I will finish with one more aspect of the peace of God. This gets me excited. Jesus has come to bring everlasting peace to His people.

Going back to where we started. Jesus came into the world the first time on a mission of mercy to save His people from their sin. But Scripture teaches that He is going to come back again in a very visible and powerful way.

We have that visible Kingdom described for us in Isaiah Chapter 9 and Verse 6, where I want you to notice how peace is everlasting and even expands:

**⁶For 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.
⁷Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.**

Notice that in Verse 7: *Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end.*

His Kingdom is going to keep expanding and expanding and expanding. Our Messiah is going to have initiatives and projects that are so cool, and His rule is going to keep growing. With the growth of His reign, there is going to be an increase of the experience of shalom deep within our hearts and with the people we are in the Kingdom with.

It is going to get better and better and better. Just like the volume keeps getting cranked higher and higher and higher, and we adjust with it. Did you see the word *increase* here? I can't wrap my mind around what all that means.

This week we put a few Christmas presents under the tree, and the kids were wondering what was in the packages. We read portions of Scripture like this one, and we must think, *Wow, how is that going to work and how is that going to be.*

This is why we have great hope and enthusiasm for the future, because life in Christ is a life that goes centuries and millennia, and everlasting ages into a future that will never end. You can enter in to it by trusting in Jesus. Believe in Him.

Merry Christmas. Let's pray.