Part 2 OUR GREAT PEACE

[ISAIAH 9:6-7](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah9%3A6-7&version=NKJV), [EPHESIANS 2:14-18](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians2%3A14-18&version=NKJV), [LUKE 2:7-14](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke2%3A7-14&version=NKJV)

Advent: A time of expectant waiting and preparation.

What is peace? Is it a feeling, an emotion? The absence of conflict? Keeping your spouse happy? A warm fire on a cold night? Some would say even to talk of hope, peace, love, and joy in the year 2020 is out of place. But I say these things are greater than the sum of their parts because of their source. This second Sunday of Advent, in the midst of our waiting, in the period of “already but not yet,” we are going to unpack what peace truly looks like.

The proclamation of the angel, documented by Luke, presents Heaven’s light piercing the darkness. [Isaiah 9](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah9%3A6-7&version=NKJV) tells us “there will be no end to peace.” This event, planned in eternity, brings peace to the hearts of man. Listen, Church, peace is more than an emotion. It is *someone* we experience, God coming to earth in the form of a baby to make peace available in reconciling us to Himself. God’s glory and mankind’s peace lie in Bethlehem’s manger. The peace of God comes from peace *with* God. Peace is justification through faith for believers. [Romans 15:13](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans15%3A13&version=NKJV) tells us that hope lies in believing. If we want peace to rule in our lives, God must rule in our lives. In coming to earth, Jesus did not lay aside His deity or His glory. The angels announced that through Jesus, true peace had come to earth.

The birth of Jesus occurred during a time in history known as the *Pax Romana* (the Peace of Rome). During this roughly two hundred years, the Roman Empire’s authority ruled over relative peace. A first century philosopher, Epictetus wrote in these lines in reference to the Pax Roman: “While the emperor may give peace from war on land and sea, he is unable to give peace from passion, grief, and envy. He cannot give peace of heart, for which man yearns more than even for outward peace.” The peace we experience this Advent season is not an absence of conflict, not Miss USA’s “world peace.” No, the angel of Luke’s account is not wishing us a Christmas card greeting, such as “May you have peace in this season.” It is an announcement that true and lasting peace has come to the hearts of those who are redeemed in Christ. Peace is a product of a relationship with the Prince of Peace. In the time of the Pax Romana, when the government claimed it was responsible for its

residents’ peace throughout the empire, the prophet Isaiah had already declared in [chapter 9](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah9%3A6-7&version=NKJV), “The government shall rest upon His shoulders and His governing will never end.” It is as if the angel of the Luke account announced, “Ya’ll ain’t seen peace yet!” (Oh, sorry, Church—you know all my angels are Southerners!) [Luke 2:11](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke2%3A11&version=NKJV) documents the announcement of His birth and the proclamation of His reign.

Sometimes, we want the peace of God without the Lordship of God, but we must know in our hearts that God’s Glory and our peace cannot be separated. There is no true peace apart from Jesus Christ *reigning* as Lord of your life—a calling to repentance and holiness.

This angel’s announcement is not just a proclamation for our information but also for our *transformation*. [Romans 5:1](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans5%3A1&version=NKJV) tells us that having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. If we want peace to rule in our lives, God must rule in our lives. Family listen: Peace is a result of believing that God is who He says He is, taking God at His word. ([Ephesians 2:14](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians2%3A14&version=NKJV) –“For He Himself is our peace”). This peace will and should affect each of us and all parts of our lives--our relationships with God, others and ourselves. When any of our earthly relationships are out of whack, we should go back to the source of peace, the person of peace, Christ Jesus.

And, Family, can I just say this? *Stop expecting peace from a world that knows nothing about it.*  [John 16:33](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John16%3A33&version=NKJV) says, “In Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” Peace is the fruit of the Spirit experienced and expressed when we walk in the Spirit. A heart focused on the glory of God will know the peace of God. As we walk in the Spirit, intimacy is increased. There is victory over the flesh. We magnify God’s greatness.

Let me leave you with one final thought. We experience peace when we embrace Christ’s sufficiency. [John 14:27](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John14%3A27&version=NKJV) gives us total assurance of His sufficiency: “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” And Paul instructs us in Colossians 3:15, “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.” Justified through faith, we have peace with God and of God through Christ!