

## Jesus Is Our Peace

Isaiah 9:1-7

**We are studying Advent, and this is the 2nd week of our 4-week series—“Advent Peace.”**

- Advent season is a season of anticipation, of waiting, of listening.

**Advent is simply preparation for Christmas—we PREPARE to Celebrate Jesus’ arrival.**

- We acknowledge the already-and-not-yet nature of the Kingdom of God.
  - *Christ HAS COME—Christ IS with us—also that Christ WILL come again.*
  - *In remembering the anticipation of Christ’s first coming, we acknowledge and nurture our anticipation of Christ’s second coming.*

**We wait, but it is not an idle waiting— we ACTIVELY wait and hope with eagerness.**

- We eagerly wait because we live in a world where there is still much darkness...
  - We see pride and arrogance and greed and war and racism and violence...
  - There is gloom and depression and anxiety that still needs to be overcome...

***ADVENT is a season for us to remember that in a world that lacks peace, we wait on the the arrival of the Prince of Peace.***

### Isaiah 9:1-7 (NASB)

But there will be no *more* gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make *it* glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.

2 The people who walk in darkness  
Will see a great light;  
Those who live in a dark land,  
The light will shine on them.

3 You shall multiply the nation,  
You shall increase their gladness;  
They will be glad in Your presence  
As with the gladness of harvest,  
As men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

4 For You shall break the yoke of their burden and the staff on their shoulders,  
The rod of their oppressor, as at the battle of Midian.

5 For every boot of the booted warrior in the *battle* tumult,  
And cloak rolled in blood, will be for burning, fuel for the fire.

6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;  
And the government will rest on His shoulders;  
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Eternal Father, **Prince of Peace.**

7 There will be no end to the increase of **His government or of peace,**  
On the throne of David and over his kingdom,  
To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness  
From then on and forevermore.  
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.

## **We are in the throws of the Christmas season—As a culture we are all preparing for Christmas**

- You cannot escape this message of “preparedness” as advertisers bombard us with urgent reminders to PREPARE!
- We spend more money this time of year than at any other time.
- It might be the only time of year you go to the mall.

## **As Christians, preparing for Christmas is significant!**

- Christmas means something DIFFERENT to us than it does to our culture...
- So we prepare for Christmas DIFFERENTLY than our culture prepares.
  - Our culture prepares for Christmas by buying gifts and planning events as a way for people to bless one another and be happy.
  - As Christians we ought to prepare for Christmas by preparing to receive God’s gift of PEACE which brings people together with God and with one another in joy and in true peace.

## **The only loving and true gift of Christmas is given by God—not from others...**

As we prepare, we SLOW DOWN to remember and remind ourselves of what is most true.

- **Matthew’s Gospel declare’s Jesus’ birth as, “The dawn of a new day!”**

Living in the midst of our culture, I’d sure love to see “The dawn of a new day”!

## **How many of us long for a “new day”?**

- Who here is hoping for something better?
- Maybe some of us are looking for a do-over...

## **We all long for a “New Day”—this has been the longing of God’s people from the beginning.**

From cover-to-cover Scripture reveals the collective longing of God’s people for God to SHOW UP.

## **The Bible reveals God’s people as a people who WAIT on God.**

- We are waiting for a better day when there is no more oppression.
- We are waiting for a better day when there is no more conflict.
- We wait for a better day when all of creation is restored to it’s intended state of peace.

## **There is coming a day when our King will inaugurate His kingdom on earth—a kingdom that is free of oppression—a kingdom of peace.**

*Today we wait and remember what God has done and we remember what God IS DOING.*

God gives good promises, and God makes good on His promises.

## **God’s promises are GOOD, but we tend to lose sight of them in the waiting.**

- God’s promises are not just good—they’re AMAZING!
- God’s promises are NECESSARY.
- God’s promises are our only source of hope.

## **So Advent is the season that reminds us to remember God’s promises as we wait.**

- It is an important season because it reminds us to wait WELL.
- Waiting well means we wait with HOPE and PEACE because we are in Christ—the Prince of Peace!

## **Because we often we don’t wait well...**

- We’re always “waiting” on the Lord...
- We’re always “hoping” for His coming in all things big and small...

*But we often get distracted...*

- We often take our eyes and heart off of God and His promises...
- We start believing what our culture believes and start searching for another peace...
- We often start to trust in other things in life rather than trusting in the Lord...

**When we don't wait well we move from PEACE into fear, despair, anxiety, depression, cynicism**

● **Advent is about waking up your HOPE!**

● **Advent is about rediscovering your true PEACE!**

**Advent is about waking up your HOPE and rediscovering your true peace.**

- Our HOPE and PEACE is rediscovered as we re-focus our waiting on the Lord.
- Our HOPE and PEACE is restored as we re-posture our lives around God and His promises.

Our culture celebrates positive emotions at Christmas:

- Joy.
- Togetherness.
- Happiness.

These emotions are represented by the patron saint of Christmas, the jolly, gift-giving Santa Claus.

- Santa is EVERYWHERE—the mall, on cards, cans of Coke, gift wrapping paper...
- And MAYBE, if you're lucky, you might also catch a glimpse of another Christmas character—baby in a manger— **probably not.**

Our culture doesn't value the coming of Jesus, but it CELEBRATES the coming of the fictional gift-giving Santa.

Our culture treats Christmas like a day at the spa—it's therapeutic self-care...

- People dress comfortably.
- We get nostalgic.
- We hope and wish and long for new STUFF.
- We eat foods we don't normally eat like ham and tamales...
- We drink eggnog & peppermint mochas...
- We feel all tingly and stare at the light and decorated dead tree we've erected in our living room and we sing together...
- We watch Elf over and over...

**For a moment our culture believes in Santa and forgets the problems in the world.**

**Frank Sinatra famously sang, "And when it's Christmas I do believe in Santa Clause. Why do I believe, I guess that I believe because I believe. I do believe that dreams come true, and if you wish for a dream by the wishing well, don't tell your wish or you'll break the spell. It may sound naive, but that's what I believe"**

- Yes, Frank, that does sound naive—and ridiculous!

But that is our culture's perspective and objective as it prepares for Christmas.

- And baby Jesus doesn't provide the same sentimental or emotional tug as Santa Claus.

The Bible reveals the story of Jesus to be more than a good sentimental story.

- The story of Jesus doesn't provide a temporary feeling of happiness...
- The story of Jesus doesn't simply help people feel better at Christmas...

**The story of Jesus is a story of REAL HOPE and REAL PEACE.**

- There is tremendous value for us to take our hearts and affections off of "Cultural Christmas" and refocus and remember the reality of God's salvation, and the HOPE of His return.

- **We need true HOPE more than ever...**
- **We need true PEACE more than ever...**
  - Things seem darker than ever—our world NEEDS the dawning of a new day!
  - Sometimes I fall into thinking that I need to behave well or God won't show up.
  - Sometimes I forget the Gospel and I start to feel like I don't deserve true hope or true peace because I am not a good Christian.
    - Sometimes I forget about God's grace and sovereignty, and I start to wrongly think that God won't work or move or show up unless things are just right... or progressively improving...
    - Like I need to create "IDEAL" conditions in order to meet Jesus.
    - Or that I can only hear from God when there is no chaos...

### **The Advent story is a story about Jesus coming in less-than-ideal conditions!**

- Jesus came as a vulnerable baby.
- Born to VERY young and dirt-poor parents.
- Born into a world of utter chaos.
  - Jesus was born into an oppressive world of genocide, slavery, racism, economic classism...
  - He came as a vulnerable newborn into a world of disease and 45-year lifespan.
  - Born into a world without knowledge of bacteria, viruses, infections or medicine.
  - Jesus was born in a dark, cold, filthy animal stable.

### **This is the chaotic world into which the Light of the World was born.**

As we prepare for Christmas it is good for us to remember that it is the CHAOS of life...

- STORM of life...
- BROKENNESS of life...
- It is into the HARD PLACES that Jesus enters into.

### **Jesus enters onto the scene at a chaotic hour... that's how He works—that's WHO HE IS!**

- If we aren't looking for Jesus in the midst of our chaos, then we will miss Him.
- When we miss Him, we miss out on hope and peace.

It is SO EASY to let chaos take our attention from remembering and waiting on the promises of God.

- Stress, fear, anxiety, depression, plain-old busyness can all turn us from our true hope.

### **When we don't wait on the Lord in the midst of chaos, we start to create our own version of peace.**

- We turn to other people... or relationships... or possessions... or substances...

We turn to lesser things in life to help order the chaos.

Every government in history has had it's own version of peace...

- People say they want peace, but peace means different things to different people.
- Peace seems elusive because nobody really knows what it means...
- Our confusion over the meaning of true peace makes true peace seem impossible to attain.
  - No matter how hard we try, peace seems to be out of reach.

### **- People promise and protest FOR peace, but are never able to deliver—WHY IS THAT?**

**Only someone who has truly experienced peace can bring peace.**

**Only Jesus, who is peace, can bring true peace.**

**What is peace?**—Hebrew word SHALOM and means wholeness or having no deficiency. It also means complete deliverance.

- Only God is whole & without deficiency—only God can fully deliver us.

- So true peace is only possible in the presence of God.
  - A state of peace is a state of lacking nothing.
  - Nothing is broken or missing...
  - It means a completely healthy and fully formed relationship with God and with others.

**Shalom peace is the promise of Advent— God enters our world and turns our chaos and conflict into Shalom.**

Christian, God wants to meet you right now—in the middle of whatever you are going through.

- In fact, God is ALREADY THERE!!
  - God is IN your chaos working to bring shalom.
    - Whatever is going on in your marriage or relationship...
    - Whatever is happening at work...
    - Whatever is happening with your finances or living situation...
- ...Listen, God is RIGHT THERE WITH YOU!

**This is why Advent is so good for us!**

- God enters into chaos and into conflict, and He works to bring shalom.
- ...and God is in the midst of the chaos in your life!
- ...God is at work bringing shalom to your life—wait on Him!

**God is not afraid of your low places.**

- In the midst of your pain and brokenness...
- In the midst of your fear and failures...
- In the midst of horrible conflict and hopelessness...

**God is in the valley with you, and His promises are faithful and true.**

Remember, we have a real enemy in this life.

- Every step we try to take TOWARD GOD...
- Every good thing we try to do for God...
- Every good decision and action that we want to make and act on...

EVERY GOOD THING is contested by the enemy...

BUT REMEMBER, on top of the presence of God in our lives now, Isaiah saw a bright future when this light will once and for all push the darkness back forever.

- Isaiah is assuring Israel that the darkness that seems like nighttime will give way to the light.

God's encouragement for His people throughout history has been:

- “hold on!”—“wait on the Lord!”—“Turn to the Lord for deliverance”—“Remember His promises”
- This was the cry of the Psalms—a cry of deliverance to God.
- This was the song of every slave throughout history.
- This was the song of African-Americans as they journey through history seeking freedom and justice and equality...
- This has been the cry of the Jewish people as anti-semitism has run rampant for centuries.

Listen to this Advent promise made by angels in the book of Luke:

**Luke 2:14 (NASB)**

**“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”**

This is a declaration from angels in heaven that PEACE is now ON EARTH!

- Peace has come to earth!
- Peace is ON EARTH and is available to everyone

This shalom—the completeness of life—has entered earth and is at work in the midst of your darkness.

- **True peace came to earth as the person of Jesus.**
- **This peace can be found by encountering the person of Jesus.**

Let's turn back to our main passage in Isaiah 9:

#### **Isaiah 9:6 (NASB)**

**For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;  
And the government will rest on His shoulders;  
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.**

- This child was given FOR US!
- This child was born TO US!
- Notice that this salvation and peace is FOR US, but it is not “**BY** us”—not what it says!

**Isaiah is saying that things are tough and will become tougher, but God has sent His deliver IN THE MIDST of the darkness of sin in the world.**

#### **This savior is “FOR YOU”**

- Read that with me right now—“For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us...”

**This savior is given TO YOU—He is given FOR YOU!!**

**Some of us need to hear this today—TRUE PEACE has been given TO YOU—it is FOR YOU!**

- God is not distant—He hasn't forgotten!
- God didn't send Santa to give you 3 weeks of warmth and then abandon you for the rest of the year.

**God's gift is “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.  
...and it is FOR YOU!!**

Regardless of the brokenness, anxiety, fear, or shame that swirls around life, **the Prince of Peace is given to you** and He will subdue it all.

Listen to this promise:

#### **Romans 16:20 (NASB)**

**The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.**

Jesus breaks the cycles of brokenness, anxiety, turbulence, fear, chaos and shame.

- Jesus absorbs these things from us and giving us shalom in return.

**This is how we find peace—we exchange our brokenness for Jesus' wholeness.**

- Jesus absorbs it all and transfers us into His kingdom of light!

Isaiah calls Jesus the “Prince of Peace”

This is the nature of his reign—His is a peaceable kingdom.

**If you submit your life to the reign of Jesus, you will have peace—regardless of what is going on around you.**

As the Prince of Peace, Jesus' work is a work to restore and put broken things back together.

- Under Jesus' rule, the lion will lay next to the lamb in peace.
- Weapons of war will be melted down and repurposed into implements of cultivation and culture.
- Right relationships are restored

In her book, *The Very Good Gospel*, Lisa Sharon Harper says:

**“The peace of self is dependent upon the peace of the other. God created the world in a web of relationships that overflowed with forceful goodness. These relationships are far-reaching: Between humanity and God, between humanity and self, between genders, between humanity and the rest of creation, within families, between ethnic groups or races, and between nations. These relationships were ‘very good’ in the beginning. One word characterized them all: shalom.”**—Lisa Sharon Harper; *The Very Good Gospel*

**True peace is restorative.**

- Even if you are SO BROKEN and SO LOST that you don't know what restoration looks like...
- Even if your marriage is SO FAR GONE...
- Even if you have NEVER had a healthy relationship...

**True peace brings restoration—even though you may not know what true restoration looks like.**

- **God restores us to right relationship with Him and with others because He designed us for healthy relationships, and He knows how to restore to relational health.**
  - God knows how to restore us to Himself.
  - God knows how to restore us to others!

I think there is something deep in us that causes us to KNOW that we were made for more than chaos...

- We were made for more than endless striving and insecurity...
- We were made for more than shame and fear...
- We were made for more than hurtful, harmful, chaotic relationships...

We are created in God's image and we KNOW that we were made for more than anxiety and brokenness.

*Our world is DEEPLY broken and divided, and when we are honest, I think we all long for something more whole and complete and good.*

- But where can we find hope for this sort of restoration?

**Ephesians 2:14 (ESV)**

**For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility**

Jesus is in the business of tearing down walls that divide people.

- On the cross, Jesus tore down walls and veils—the things that separate people from God and one another:
  - Jesus brought all people to God
  - Jesus brought all people together.

**EVERYONE is welcome into the kingdom, and we all come in TOGETHER!**

- Jesus is giving us a better vision for a better version of life together here on earth.
- Jesus is giving us a picture of God’s Kingdom here on earth.
- We don’t simply TOLERATE one another—we radically love and serve one another!
- We are people who know and serve the Prince of Peace!
- **There are no dividing walls in the Prince of Peace’s Kingdom!**

MLK pondered these things and as he accepted the Nobel Peace Prize he said this:

**“I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become reality... I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word.”—Martin Luther King Jr.**

- *Why would MLKjr believe these things??—Because he trusted the PRINCE OF PEACE!*

**Jesus’ kingdom is marked by Jesus’ character, and Jesus IS peace.**

THIS is the Christmas story—that God’s peace HAS COME to us.

- **Jesus IS the peace of God for all of humanity, and Jesus has invaded the world!**
- And we believe for a better world because of Jesus, the Prince of PEACE, is with us.

At Advent we remember that PEACE has come to earth.

- And at Advent we learn, once again, that peace is possible in our world through Jesus.
- At Advent we consider the reality that Jesus’ presence brings about:
  - Restoring broken and lost beings to God.
  - Restoring broken and hopeless relationships.
  - Restoring broken and divided races and people groups.

Remember the Angelic worship witnessed by shepherds in the field on the first Christmas Night:

**Luke 2:14 (NASB)**

**“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”**

**This is what the arrival of Prince of Peace brings about: “On earth PEACE AMONG MEN”**

Our passage puts it this way:

**Isaiah 9:7 (NASB)**

**There will be no end to the increase of *His* government or of peace**

As Prince of Peace, Jesus’ princely rule will continually increase.

- It is unlimited!
- Jesus’ rule of peace expands and increases!

The world spends a LOT of time debating and arguing over who should rule—who should be in power...

- Each of us wants to be lead with justice.
- We all long for wise, just, and gracious leaders who can lead in peace.

Look at what our passage would have us consider this Advent:

**Isaiah 9:6 (NASB)**

**For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;  
And the government will rest on His shoulders;  
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.**

**Jesus isn't just a religious figurehead—He is:**

- Wonderful Counselor
- Mighty God
- Eternal Father
- Prince of Peace
- The ONLY one who can shoulder right government.

- Jesus carries the weight of governing all of creation on His shoulders!
- Jesus is able to restore and reconcile all that has been divided and broken.
- Jesus is the only one who is able to open the scrolls—the deeds to our lives.
- Jesus is the rightful heir to the throne and He says that all authority has been given to Him.

**Jesus doesn't simply teach great lessons about peace—Jesus IS PEACE.**

**That means that Jesus is worthy of worship:**

- Jesus is the direct descendant of David.
- Jesus has fully satisfied the requirements of God's Law.
- Jesus led a perfect sinless life.
- He lay His own life down so we might be forgiven and saved through His sacrifice.
- Jesus took His life back and is raised in Glory & seated at God's right hand.

**ONLY Jesus is worthy of praise.**

- He is worthy of us raising our hands to in praise.
- He is worthy of us submitting our lives to.
- Only Jesus is worthy of ruling and governing and judging people.

The promise of Isaiah 9:7 is that there is NO END to Jesus' reign of peace!

- No power can overthrow it.
- It is eternal!

History can tell us about many empires that ruled for hundreds or even a thousand years.

- But history also reveals a thousand years to be like a flash in a pan—it's BRIEF!

Great governments can promise to meet our needs and some may even deliver on some of it...

- But ALL governments fall.
- ALL human institutions are rolled up like an old carpet and replaced.

Only Jesus' kingdom endures.

**Therefore, Jesus' Kingdom of Peace is the ONLY kingdom that matters**

- Here is our Advent meditation for today:

**When hardship, brokenness, chaos, or fear grips us—and it does—our only source of hope is Jesus and His eternal Kingdom of Peace!**

Hold on—Cling to Jesus!

He *has come*—and—He *is coming again*, so HANG ON!!

**The Bible Knowledge Commentary explains that, “A time will come when gloom and hardship will come to pass”.**

- **Maybe that’s you—maybe you’re in the midst of “gloom and hardship”**

This Advent, as we prepare our hearts and minds for Jesus’ arrival in all things...

- What if you were to allow God to minister THAT reality to your heart—that Jesus will return and abolish ALL gloom and hardship!

**The Reality of Advent is that Jesus, who is our peace, has come and is returning.**

- What if we found true HOPE for today in the reality of who Jesus is.
- What if we found true HOPE for real PEACE in the reality of who Jesus is.
- What if we raised our hands and desperately called for heaven to come to earth?

This is what Advent should produce in us.

**Advent should produce in us a longing for God’s Kingdom to come here on earth as it is in heaven.**

- **In the midst of chaos, anxiety or brokenness we say, “Jesus, Prince of Peace, come!”**
  - “Come, meet me right here and rule this relationship with your peace!”
  - “Jesus come rule and govern these circumstances that cause me to fear and strive”
  - “Prince of Peace, COME and rule my mind and my heart and my mouth with your peace”

Advent doesn’t present us with a bunch of options...

- Advent leads back again to the utter necessity of Jesus for any and all good thing to happen!
- Advent reminds us that if Jesus isn’t ruling it, then it it’s not good!
- Advent reminds us that if Jesus isn’t ruling then there will never be peace or shalom in life or in the world.

Our passage has the BEST ending...

**Isaiah 9:7 (NASB)**

**... The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.**

God is *zealous* about seeing this accomplished.

- Sometimes we might think that God is sleeping as darkness and drama engulf us...
- Sometimes we might forget about God’s zeal and assume that He is far off and indifferent...
- Sometimes we might feel like God just doesn’t care about our struggles and hardships...

**Sometimes we forget, and Advent is a season to REMEMBER God’s zeal!!**

**God is more passionate and zealous o bring shalom to the world than we could ever imagine!**

- He is passionate about establishing His kingdom.

It brings comfort knowing that God sees what’s going on and He is doing something about it.

How can we see God’s peace increase in our world?

- **Peace isn’t a by-product, it’s a person. Jesus is true peace.**
- Jesus IS peace!

**You can know peace and have peace and walk in peace by knowing and enjoying and walking with Jesus!**

At the end of His life Jesus left His disciples with these words:

**John 14:27 (NASB)**

**Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you.  
Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.**

God is not offering us a peace separate from Himself.  
You have to hear this...  
We have to get this...

**If you are longing for peace just say what you really need!!**

- I need YOU Jesus.
- I need YOUR presence in my life.
- I want you to rule my life with your peace.

THIS is Advent—we lay ourselves and our worries down and we take up the promises and the reality of God's peace and God's presence in our life.

**Jesus is in the waiting. PEACE is in the waiting.**

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Call to Prayer:

1. Maybe you're someone the Lord is speaking to today—you're dealing with discord or anxiety or fear in your life—there are people up front who are ready to pray with you and for you.
2. You might have some relational brokenness in your life and you are longing for peace and hoping for restoration—come pray with someone and ask the Prince of Peace to reveal Himself in the midst of your brokenness.