

Prophetic Peace

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Preacher: Kent Dixon

[0 : 00] All right, well thanks to everyone who braved the cold this morning. Standing up here by myself preaching to an empty room would not have been that fun.

! I would do it because that's what I need to do on Sundays, but it's much more comforting to me when everyone is here like this. So welcome here this morning and we recognize that it is cold, so thanks for braving the cold.

We had a Christmas talent show yesterday, which was amazing. So you might say, well, the pastor has to say it was amazing. It was, anyone who was here would agree it was amazing. And so first annual, we've set the bar pretty high.

But we are, we're pretty confident that that bar can continue to be held at that level. So lots of people participated and demonstrated their gifts and their skills in different areas where God has gifted them musically or artistically.

We had some paintings on display. And so it was, it was a pretty cool day. And then we had an amazing dessert time of fellowship in the gym afterwards, which was great.

[1 : 11] A few people said to me, Pastor, can you bless the calories so that they are removed? And I said, well, I said, I can't exercise calories, but I've also heard that they don't count at Christmas.

So take that for what it's worth. Welcome here for the Sunday, December 7th, 2025. My name is Kent Dixon, and it's my joy to be the pastor here.

This morning, we're continuing in this season of Advent, and you see this wreath and candles. You know largely what they're all about. The wreath itself is shaped in a perfect circle, which symbolizes the eternity of God.

Each candle also has significance. And on each Sunday of the Advent season, we recognize one of the four virtues that Jesus brings to us. Hope, peace, joy, and love.

And this morning, as we continue in the season of Advent, we're lighting our first candle again, which represents hope. We're also lighting our second candle, which represents peace.

[2 : 17] Nice. Everyone gets a gold star. A gold Bethlehem star. How about that? Today, like Mary, we wait for the Christ child. We celebrate all that God has already done and say in the words of Luke 1, 46 and 47, my soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior.

We reflect on the wonder of the precious name of Jesus, our Savior and Prince of Peace. Today, I encourage us all to focus on the peace that comes from knowing that God is still in control.

And that Jesus is the God who saves. Amen. This morning, we're continuing in our annual journey back to Bethlehem, back to where the miraculous birth of Jesus changed the world forever.

And so we're continuing in our Advent sermon series this morning, Behold, a Savior is born. And our sermon is titled Prophetic Peace. One of my favorite times of the Christmas season is sitting in the living room with a Christmas tree with lights on at night or early in the morning.

There's such a quiet peace there that I deeply enjoy, a time when I can be with God and reflect on the light that Jesus Christ brings to the world.

[3 : 49] This peace was promised so long ago and is the reality for us now. Through Jesus' life, death, and his resurrection.

Isaiah 48, verse 18 says, If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your well-being like the waves of the sea.

God promises throughout Scripture that if we obey his commands, we can have this kind of peace, this kind of peace that flows like a river.

Maybe you remember that Sunday school song that reflects that message. Have you got peace like a river? As I was working on this sermon, that song popped right into my head and I thought, Got it, God, I got it.

Think for a moment of what it might be like to have that kind of peace. A river is a moving flow of water. God's word doesn't say we'll have peace like a pond, right?

[4 : 57] Like a slough if we live in Alberta and we call it a beach. If we're honest, we might be able to admit to somehow thinking of peaceful people as boring.

Maybe we think, you know what, I'm going to pass on the whole peace thing. I want to have an exciting life, right? I want to live a life of invigoration and adventure.

When was the last time you saw whitewater rapids? In reality, there are few bodies of water that are more exciting than rivers.

We can actually have active and exciting lives without suffering as well through constant turmoil. To have peace like a river means to have security and tranquility, even when we're facing the bumps and unexpected turns on life's journey.

Friends, peace is submission. Peace is submission to a trustworthy authority. And it's not, in fact, the absence of activity.

[6 : 04] It's quite the contrary. A river is a body of fresh water that is fed by springs or tributary streams. So to experience that type of peace in our lives, we must be feeding our relationship with God.

Just as a river is continually renewed with moving waters of springs and streams, our peace comes from an active, ongoing, obedient relationship with the Prince of Peace.

Take pleasure in knowing that God, the God who inspired his word with great care and immaculate precision, chose every word with purpose and intention.

When God said that we would have peace like a river through Isaiah 48, verse 18, he wasn't making some kind of loose analogy, right? He actually meant what he said.

And that's actually always the case for God. He means, my friends, what he says. So what's it like to have that kind of peace?

[7 : 15] What does it take to achieve it? Well, it takes attention to God's commands. By obedience. But not under our own strength, remember, right?

It's through the power of the Holy Spirit at work within us. It's obedience to God's authority. And that not only brings peace like a river, but righteousness like the waves of the ocean.

And now hear me say this, not righteous perfection, we're human beings, remember, but righteous consistency as we seek God and seek to have him shape our lives.

I remember that true, I mean, I would suggest true peace is something we all want in our lives. Fair? Do you want peace? It's something that God actually promises to us. Peace like a river is also an active, moving peace.

[8 : 18] It's not still and stagnant. It's dynamic and powerful in our lives. Christmas is a time that reminds us that the arrival of Jesus brings a deep and abiding peace.

We're going to read a passage of Scripture together, and we'll see it on the screen so you can read as we go. So, this is written by an Old Testament prophet, perhaps you know him, named Isaiah. And he said this to the people of God. And it was as they were losing their way and in need of hope and peace. So let's read the words together.

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.

[9 : 37] The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. The word of the Lord. In Isaiah 9, verses 6 and 7, we find a prophetic promise.

Maybe you've recognized it before. And this predicts the birth of a child whose name is Jesus. This child that Isaiah is speaking to his readers about is described in terms that communicates, sorry, I'm stumbling, communicate awesome, awesome power and also reverence.

So this child will come, we learn, from God himself. He will have great power and authority. And he will have special and specific names that we just read.

Wonderful Counselor. Mighty God. Everlasting Father. Prince of Peace. Peace. This is a passage of scripture that we often hear every year during the Christmas season.

And within these festive verses, we uncover the profound significance of this title, Prince of Peace. Peace is a timeless concept.

[10 : 57] Peace is a timeless concept. It's something humanity has sought and desired and, ironically, even fought for throughout human history. Peace means a break, a respite from the

storms of conflict, of chaos, of discord.

Peace means a break, a break, of chaos, of the world.

But this peace that's promised in Isaiah 9 is not an ordinary peace. And maybe you were thinking we would get to that. It's a peace that transcends, that passes, that defies human understanding. It's the kind of peace that can only come from the Prince of Peace himself, Jesus Christ. The phrase, peace that passes understanding, it's shared and spoken over people in times of hardship. Peace that surpasses understanding is best viewed as the peace in our hearts that we feel when we're in a relationship with Jesus. What better time to celebrate that kind of peace than during the holidays as we head towards Christmas morning?

[12:20] The Prince of Peace was foretold hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus. Maybe you knew that. Maybe you didn't. Christmas is a time to celebrate that Jesus has, in fact, arrived.

We've talked about this before, that that is the perspective that we have that is special and unique. We know Jesus came. We know the promised Messiah came.

We live in that side of the prophecy. Christmas is a time to celebrate this. That Jesus has brought with him the promise of true and everlasting peace.

The promise that in spite of everything that's going on around us, we can access divine peace through Jesus. In the Gospel of John, we actually hear Jesus speak about this role that was given to him by God the Father.

John 14, verse 27 says, What an amazing message.

[13:43] Jesus there distinguishes his peace, the kind of peace that he offers, from the fleeting peace that the world can give us.

The peace of Jesus is grounded in eternal truth and grounded in the presence of a Savior. I'm going to start putting amens on the screen so that people...

Everybody's still quiet. I have to look periodically. Everyone's asleep. So we need to recognize that there's a difference, a clear difference between God's peace and the peace that the world offers. Can you imagine that that's probably true? And it's an important distinction because it's what we celebrate at Christmas. One form of peace will leave us wanting.

I love Chinese food. But have you ever found yourself, you stuff yourself and think, I'll never eat another bite. Two hours later, I'm hungry again. All the vegetables and things like that.

[14:48] But that's the point, right? Is that what the world has to offer doesn't always meet our needs. In the same way, it leaves us wanting. But then the other gives us a deep and abiding sense of satisfaction and fulfillment.

Have you ever stood on the shore looking out at the ocean, especially during a stormy time?

Choppy waves crash against the rocks.

The sea is a metaphor for the world in which we live, a place of constant motion, a place of uncertainty, and sometimes even, yes, chaos.

In this, I think we often seek solace, right? We desperately need a break. We seek tranquility. We're looking for peace amidst the storms of our lives.

And so in this stormy sea analogy, worldly peace is like a small boat that has been built by human hands. It's been designed beautifully, meticulously.

[15:59] It has polished wood and gleaming paint and ornate decorations. It is beautiful to look at. So this boat represents the various avenues that society may offer us to find peace.

They may include material wealth, social status, temporary pleasures. And all of these things are alluring. They may even promise us moments of pause from the storms of our lives.

So as we set out on that vessel, it provides this semblance of peace. It shields us from the immediate onslaught of waves.

It offers us a brief respite from the turmoil. So we may feel a sense of security and control. We may believe that we've found the answer to the chaos in our lives.

But maybe you can relate to this from a personal experience. I certainly can. That kind of worldly peace is fragile and fleeting.

[17:06] When the storms grow even more fierce, the boat begins to sway and creak under the pressure. Its ornate features start to fade, revealing its weakness.

We realize that its capacity to provide lasting peace is seriously limited. Ultimately, it leaves us unable to withstand the full force of all that life has to offer.

What about God's peace? In stark contrast, God's peace, I think, can best be understood as a lighthouse. It stands tall amidst the crashing waves.

It's sturdy and solid, maybe not as flashy as the boat. Its foundation is unshakable. It's rooted in the solid rock of God's unchanging nature.

The light shining from that lighthouse pierces through the darkness. It offers guidance and assurance and comfort to all who seek it.

[18 : 15] I think this lighthouse idea symbolizes that that kind of peace that transcends our understanding. A peace that isn't dependent on external circumstances.

It's a peace that flows from a deep and abiding relationship with the Prince of Peace. Just as that lighthouse stands firm amidst a storm, God's peace remains constant and unwavering in the face of life's most difficult trials.

As we navigate the seas of life, we're presented with a choice. We can place our trust in the frail boat of worldly peace, or we can seek refuge in that steadfast lighthouse of God's peace.

Yes, the boat may offer a temporary escape, but it ultimately leaves us vulnerable and adrift. On the other hand, God's peace provides a sanctuary of calm amidst life's storms.

It anchors us in his unchanging love and sovereignty. In the end, we're invited, actually, to exchange this fragile vessel of worldly peace for the enduring refuge of God's peace.

[19 : 38] As we heard, it's a peace that surpasses all human understanding. It's a peace that will sustain us through the fiercest storms and trials.

A peace that leads us safely to the shores of a relationship with the God of the universe, who, guess what, is in total control.

With that in mind, we may choose to anchor our lives in the unshakable lighthouse of God's peace, trusting that he will guide us safely through the stormy seas of life.

So this all maybe sounds good to you in theory, but how do we make it practical? Well, how can we live in peace, in peace with others, in peace with ourselves, and most importantly, in peace in our relationship with God?

Let's explore this a little bit, drawing some wisdom from the Scriptures, which is always a good place to return. Philippians 4, verse 7 says, And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

[20 : 53] The first thing we can do is recognize the source of peace. Is our peace, I'm going to make it about you, is your peace based on how your day went?

How you might be feeling about things? I even put it in quotes in my notes. How are you feeling about things today? Is your peace based on how traffic was on your way to work, or home from church, or how the weather is right now?

So the peace that we've been considering this morning, it really doesn't make sense in our normal way of doing things, does it? God's peace, we just heard, guards our hearts and minds.

And I don't know if you've ever thought about it, but those are the two most vulnerable parts of who we are, our heart and our mind. In Isaiah 9, we're reminded that Jesus is the giver of peace.

And so to live in peace, we must recognize that ultimate peace originates from him. He's the source of that peace. In Philippians 4, verse 7, we also heard that the peace of God is found in Christ.

[22 : 14] Maybe you caught that. It has nothing to do with us. Maybe that makes you feel good.

Maybe it makes you anxious. It has nothing to do with our worldly achievements, what we've done for other people, how great we think we might be, how we may be feeling in any given moment.

Those things are all irrelevant. It has everything to do with our relationship with Jesus. period.

Another way we can find the peace that we're craving is seeking and embracing inner stillness.

Maybe that sounds a little Oprah, but give me a moment. Jesus gives us access to the kind of inner stillness that we need when we draw near to him.

This can be achieved by practicing simple breath prayers. You've heard me do it before. Be still and know that I am God.

Right? Be still and know that I am God. I dare you to do it and not feel regrounded and connected again.

[23 : 30] It's helpful to have strategies that will calm your inner world and to find the divine peace that's offered in Christ.

We also need to trust God. It sounds like an obvious thing to say. Trust God and prioritize prayer.

Trust that God is, in fact, exactly who he says he is over and over and over in Scripture.

As we read in 1 Peter 5, verse 7, I love this. It's one of my favorite verses in the entire Bible. We can, in fact, cast all our cares on him because he cares for us.

Have you ever thought about that? Have you ever been in the middle of anxious worries and stress and things like that? Have you ever actually stopped and said, Lord, take this from me because I know you care for me and I know you can handle it and I don't, I know you don't want me to carry it on my own.

Through prayer, we can cast our cares on the one being in the universe who can truly help us in every way with every last problem or worry we have.

[24 : 50] There's your prescription. I think that's good news. I don't know about you. Especially in the holiday season when it can feel like we're just running around like crazy people trying to make it to every last appointment, get every last gift.

Do you feel a little crazy right now? Friends, to experience God's peace we must spend time with him. It's pretty obvious, I guess.

And there's no better time than the present to seek the presence of Christ, the Prince of Peace. In our fast-paced world, it's easy to become like busy bees, rushing through life from thing to thing, flitting from task to task, without taking time for the most important relationship of all, a relationship with God.

Just as bees find fulfillment in their deliberate moments with flowers, we too find fulfillment and purpose and peace when we prioritize spending time with our creator.

You know what? None of this matters. Feel liberated? None of what you're worrying about right now actually matters.

[26 : 16] others. Everybody's looking at me like, what? It's all going to be okay. Do you hear me say that?

Living in peace as outlined in Isaiah 9 verse 6 and 7 and John 14 27. It's a transformative journey. You've heard that theological word of sanctification. We're not there yet. It's an ongoing journey of growth and development.

But it involves recognizing, as I said, the source of peace, Jesus. Embracing the inner tranquility we can have and then trusting in God's sovereignty.

It also involves practicing forgiveness, pursuing holistic well-being, choosing contentment, and prioritizing prayer and meditation.

[27 : 23] That's a lot, right? You didn't come this morning thinking that you'd have to remember all this. So I know that I've given us lots to think about this morning. And I know that many of you haven't even started your Christmas shopping either.

I know more than you think. But against all odds, I trust that whatever of the principles that you've picked up this morning, you'll seek to apply them.

Because I promise you that if and when you do that, you will experience the profound and enduring peace that can only come from the Prince of Peace himself, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

So friends, let's seek to be intentional about slowing down. I want you to savor the moments that you have with God.

That's your pastor's homework for today. It's in these unhurried moments. They're not indulgences, so you know that I'm bad at relaxing.

[28 : 36] You know that I'm bad at unplugging from things. Maybe you didn't know that, but you do now. Soul bared. But it's in those unhurried moments that we take, where we do unplug and seek to connect with God, that we'll find the nourishment and guidance and purpose that our souls truly crave.

love. And it's also in those moments that we can truly enjoy the greatest gift of all, who is Emmanuel, God with us.

Amen. Amen. Thank you.