

# A Little Different Message Today

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[0:00] There we go. Thank you. Okay. I know we've got some visitors here, and we do things a little weird, so I like to tell people about that.

! We start with the preaching because later on we're going to have a time of question and answer. So if something comes up during the message and you want to ask questions, that'll be the time to do it.

And you're more than welcome to do that. I don't need this microphone. For what it's worth, today's message is, it's not intended to be this great discovery of spiritual truth.

I'm not here to guide you through incredible nuances of God's Word. What we're going to do today, especially for the believers, is we're going to celebrate. We're going to spend some time on some stuff that we know.

We're going to lift our hearts to God in praise. If you don't know the Lord, then maybe today would be a good day for the Word of God to impact you, and we'll see.

[1:17] If you've got your Bibles, I would like to encourage you to open it up to the book of Ephesians 2. That's a typical Christmas passage, Ephesians 2.

Yeah, I'm pretty certain. I've heard lots of Christmas stories there. But we're going to read Ephesians 2, verse 11 through 22. So let's start off there.

Therefore, remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh called the uncircumcision by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands.

Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now, in Christ Jesus, you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

[2:50] And he came and preached peace to you who are far off and peace to those who are near. For through him we both have access in one spirit to the Father.

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. I picked this passage because as we're going through Advent, this week it's all about peace.

And we wanted to talk about peace today. And so here in Ephesians chapter 2 we talk about true peace.

And as we take a look... Hello. Click, click, click, click, click, click.

[4:07] Bingo. Thank you. I'm not going to say he was distracted, but apparently that was a pretty good ham sandwich. All right. The key idea here today is that Jesus came and made peace possible for all.

Did you catch the title though? Pervasive Peace Possible. I like that. You know, it really sums it all up. But here we go. Jesus came and made peace possible for all.

Now, if we were reading in Luke chapter 2 verse 14, I think that's what I had read earlier. Anybody hear that? Luke 2 verse 14.

Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace. If you read that in the King James, that's where it ends. Peace, you know, it just ends right there at peace.

But if you read it in like some of the... Basically every other translation, it says, Peace among those with whom he, that is God, is pleased. And I think it's kind of important.

[5:16] So let's take a look at this. Let's take a look at this peace. And the first thing I want to talk about in the peace that Christ provides is that it is pervasive. Pervasive normally is used in a negative connotation, like some sort of pervasive infestation into the lawn.

You know, it just kind of works its way all the way through. But here we're just using it in the biggest sense of pervasive means that it spreads everywhere. But when we're talking about peace, how much peace do we see in the world?

Really? Not much? You guys are kind of shaking your heads. No, not a lot of peace going on in the world, is there? In fact, there's a lot of division in the world, isn't there?

You know, there's 190-some different countries. There's like, depending upon how you describe it, 14,000 different people groups.

And if you describe a people group as a group of people who not only have the same language but who think similarly, it's 12,500. There's a lot of differences out there, okay?

[6:41] In fact, if we just look around here, we've got the good people that live in the Upper Valley and we've got the bad people who live on the wrong side of the hill, right? We've got the good people, you know, who root for Washington and root for the Seattle Seahawks.

And we've got the bad people who root for Washington State and the Steelers. You know, I happen to be one of the bad people. I like the Seattle Seahawks, don't get me wrong, but Washington can go pound sand.

You know, we like to draw lines and we like to make distinctions. In fact, how many of you ever heard of the difference of races, right? What are some of the different races out there?

Black, white, Asian, Hispanic, Moroccan. That's all moronic. Yeah, Moroccan, moronic. Works for me.

There's only one race, the human race. In fact, all of humanity is united before Christ. In many different ways we can cover this. There is no such thing as diversity of races.

[7:48] We're all part of the human race. We all descended from Adam. And then who did we all descend from? Noah! We're all related.

There's not a whole bunch of different races. There's one human race. And that human race is completely and totally united before Christ.

Romans 3:23 says, For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. That is the defining characteristic, is that everybody's a sinner.

Everybody has a sin problem. It doesn't matter if you're rich. It doesn't matter if you're poor. It doesn't matter if you're tall, young, old, fat, light, whatever. All of humanity is united in one problem. And that problem is sin. And Christ came to make an offer of peace available to all.

[8:51] In fact, Gospel of John chapter 1, verse 14. I'm sorry, verse 22.

Says, Is it 14? 12. Why did I put 22?

Thank you very much. It's the one that's highlighted in my Bible. It's not 22. It's 12. Thank you.

What? I got to talk to my secretary.

He does a terrible job typing some of this stuff up. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born not of blood.

This is verse 13. Not of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Thank you very much. I appreciate it. You know, what could I do without you? Nothing. Look, we all have a problem.

[9:52] And that problem is that we are sinners. And because of that, we have no peace. And we certainly don't have the important peace. But Jesus Christ came.

And he made this offer of peace open to everyone. Ephesians chapter 2 says, Therefore, remember that at one time, you Gentiles in the flesh called uncircumcision by what is called circumcision.

There was this division. There was this separation that they thought. Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ. We had this split. But Christ came.

And he made an offer to deal with that. And that offer is open to all. And in all reality, whether or not we've taken part in Christ's offer is the only offer that matters.

Hebrews chapter 4, verse 12. We like to make distinctions.

[11:05] We like to say, you know, well, we're from the Pacific Northwest. And you're from the Midwest. Or we're from the North. You're from the South. We like to make distinctions.

And separate. And put people in cubby holes, right? But there's only one distinction that makes any difference. And it's not a distinction that we can see, measure, feel, test for.

Are you a believer or are you not? Only God can make that distinction. But it is a really, really important distinction. It is the important distinction.

All right. So here's the thing. We all have a problem. And we're all united, not only in our genetics, not only in our position before Christ of being sinners, but we are united in the fact that he says for everyone, he's given this opportunity.

He made the way open for everybody. It's pervasive. It's not just the people that have money. It's not just the people that have, you know, education. It's not just the people who are really nice.

[12:25] It's open to everybody. The peace that Christ provides is for all. So that's what pervasive about. But let's talk about peace. Peace.

Luke 2.14. Christ is born. The angelic host breaks out. Peace on earth. Goodwill towards men. Here in Ephesians 2.

He is our peace. The idea is that Christ came to settle things, to get rid of the conflict. Keep your finger in Ephesians if you're there.

Turn over to the gospel of Mark. I just, I'm wondering what it, Matthew, Mark, chapter 10.

I think that's it. Yeah, chapter 10, verse 34. Go ahead and take a look at Mark 10, 34. I've got a hair there.

[13:35] That's a real peaceful reading verse, isn't it? A lot of joy and happiness in that. What is Mark 10, 34?

We're going with this theme of Ephesians. It says, oh, it's Jesus is talking. That is not the verse.

I am doing 100% today. Can't be Luke, can it? Oh, my gosh. Where is the verse that says, I did not come to bring peace?

Is it 10, 34? Oh, this is like one of the key verses. And I totally bollock. This is two for two, right?

Is it? Yeah, 10, 34. Matthew 10. I don't have my notes with me. Is it Matthew?

[14:39] I don't know what it is. This is fantastic. Is Matthew 10, 34? There it is. I'm only off by a book or two.

Do not think I have come to bring peace on the earth. I have not come to bring peace but a sword. That's the verse I'm looking for. It's a great day, isn't it? Just lovely.

So we're talking here today about the fact that Christ has come to make peace possible. The angels sang out in glory, you know, peace on earth, goodwill to men.

Ephesians chapter 2 says that he is our peace. But yet, what does it say here? Do not think I have come to bring peace? For I have not come to.

For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be of his own household. That's not very peaceful sounding.

[15:41] That sounds rather conflict sounding. The peace Christ came to give us is not peace in the earth.

There are those on the earth who can have peace. But it's not this peace. It's not peace between men. It's not peace between countries.

It's not even peace among family members. The peace that Christ comes is way more important than that. The peace that Christ brings is way more important than that.

It's more lasting and it's more vital. It's the peace between individuals and God in glory. It's between sinners and the judge.

When Christ came the first time, what we're celebrating this month with the birth of Christ, and what they were singing about is not the end of war.

[16:54] End of war will come. When Christ returns for his second coming, that's when they're going to be beating their shields into plows, and there's swords into pruning hooks and all that.

That's down the road. What God came today to provide is peace between a sinful human and his judging God.

Because remember, we're united in sin. We're reunited in our problem before God. But Jesus Christ came to make peace, and that's what it's all about. Whatever our distinctions.

Anybody here ever lied? Don't raise your hand.

I don't need everybody waving at me. Anybody here ever stolen? Anybody ever cheated? Anybody ever sped? Anybody ever driven without their seatbelt?

[17:59] Committed adultery. Committed adultery. Committed murder. Cheated on their taxes. No matter what your sin.

It could be as huge or as seemingly insignificant. Jesus Christ came to pay so that you could have peace with God.

Because what are the wages? What's the wages for murder? You guys know this one. What's the wages for murder? Death. What's the wages for stealing your dad's favorite snack?

Death. What's the wages for lying? No, that doesn't make you look fat at all. Death.

Death. Death. Death. Death. Death. For the wages of sin is death. But the gift of God is eternal life.

Because Christ came and paid the penalty.

[19:08] And he made peace. Take a look at Ephesians 2.16. What does it say here? Verse 14 says, For he himself is our peace who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall.

Verse 16. And might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross. Jesus Christ came and in his flesh paid our penalty.

So that we don't have to worry and we don't have to be afraid. We don't have to dread standing before God. We can have peace with God.

It doesn't matter who you are, what you've done. You can have peace with God. And it's for everybody. How many of you have ever heard...

There's preachers out there that they're saying, God wants you to be happy, healthy, and wealthy. Have you ever heard that? You'll see them on TV. You know, they're like, send in your \$5.

[20:16] Make that donation. Send it in. And God's going to bless you. God doesn't really care how happy you are.

God knows that you're going to lose your health. God knows that most of us are poor. Can I get an amen? He ain't worried about that.

What is He worried about? The fact that there is a day of judgment that all of us will stand before. And He wants us to be prepared for that.

He doesn't just want it like I want to win a million dollars. He wanted it so much that He left glory, took upon Himself humanity, lived a sinless life, died a substitutionary, sacrificial death on a cross to pay our penalty so that we could have peace with God.

He is our peace. He is our peace. So, it's for everybody. It is not peace on earth, but peace with our Father.

[21:29] And it's possible. Anybody can have it. Ephesians 2, verses 17 and 18 say this.

He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who are near. For through Him, we both have access in one spirit to the Father.

If you remember, when we started this passage, it talked about the Gentiles and the Jews and how there was this distinction between them. The Jews, the Gentiles. You know, we have the law.

We know who God is. You're a bunch of dogs that don't know anything. Jesus Christ came and He broke that wall of division down because He paid everybody's penalty, whether Jew or Gentile.

He took care of that. We have equal access to God. For through Him, we both have access in one spirit to the Father.

[22:26] So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens. It's for everybody. There are some people that are really nice people.

Have you ever met a really nice person, somebody who's just kind, generous, thoughtful? I married one, but the rest of us in our family are knuckle-dragging troglodytes that you just don't want to meet in a dark alley, right?

But that's okay. God loves even us. You don't have to be special. You don't have to have it all together. Those who are near to God and those who are a long ways away from God, He brings them together by His death on the cross.

God loves us. This peace that we can have, we can't take it. We can't earn it.

We can't pay for it. It's not something where you... I remember going to school and bringing in your cereal box tops. And you bring in enough box tops and, you know, your school gets more library books or whatever.

[23:38] Or you eat enough boxes of Captain Crunch and you send it in and you get the secret decoder ring which says, Captain Crunch is not good for you. Whatever. Whatever. Salvation and the hope that we get from Christ is not like that.

Take a look at Ephesians 2, verses 8 through 10. For by grace you've been saved. That saved is that peace that we have with God.

It's that act that takes us from sinner destined for judgment to saint looking for glory.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God. Not a result of works so that no one may boast.

For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works. Which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. All the way back in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were hanging out.

[24:53] Satan showed up and things went sideways. And ever since then, we have all had an issue with sin. Ever since then, the condition of humanity has fallen.

And the only way for that to be taken care of is to pay the debt. The debt is death. Jesus became a man and lived without sin.

So that He could die in our place. And His righteousness could be applied to our account. So that we could be redeemed.

And that's what it's all about. We all had a need. And Jesus Christ came to create the possibility of us having peace with God.

It's not something that we earn. It's something that we receive. And it's received when we humble ourselves before God.

[26:04] 1 Peter chapter 5. Love this. Humble yourself, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time He may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on Him because He cares for you.

That's what we're talking about today. Look, you can go out and you can worry about how much money you make. You can go out and you can worry about the taxes.

You can worry about... I worry about my vehicles. I changed the oil this week. Right? I worry about my house. I take care of it.

I worry about my family. I watch over them. I worry. I worry. I worry. But there's only one worry that's really important. What's going to happen when we face God?

I look around this room and I see a lot of people who have already taken care of that, right? Can I get a praise of the Lord? Some of you are... We've got to work on this.

[27:18] Some of you we might need to talk to and get some... In reality, those of us who have come to the Lord and recognize that we are sinners, recognize that He has every justification for condemning us because He gave us everything and we turned our back on Him.

We humble ourselves before Him and say, Father, forgive us. Those of us that have come to that point who have humbled ourselves before the Lord have peace with God. And that is something that we're celebrating today.

That's what this is all about today. It's celebrating the fact that even though people like me, who deserve judgment, receive forgiveness.

And if you are in that group, then praise the Lord. If you're not in that group, if you're still wondering about God, if you're wondering about all of this, let's talk.

Because I'm going to tell you something. There is peace available. There's peace available. Not peace that I create. Not peace that you achieve or earn.

[28:27] But peace that God can give. And I'd love to talk to you about that. Let's pray. Father, I thank You for the fact that Jesus Christ came.

I thank You for the fact that He paid the penalty for sin.