

# Christmas Day 2019

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[ 0 : 00 ] That might help. Okay. Well, Christmas time has the power to bring peace, doesn't it? I'm amazed how willing strangers are to talk to me at Christmas time when any other time of year barriers are up.

But at Christmas, people seem to put them to the side and they're willing to chat. Neighbours down the road are much more willing to smile and give a wave, maybe even pause to have a chat.

But going through the checkout at Woolies, I have way more conversation than I do all year round. And for the record, I'm not speaking to the self-checkout machine.

Driving on Christmas Day itself, people flash their lights and beep their horns not out of road rage. Christmas has the power to bring peace.

In the workplace, whatever frustrations have happened during the year, people seem to put them aside and come together for the Christmas party. It's a time of bonding, team bonding.

[ 1 : 09 ] Even family often put long-standing arguments to the side and go to great efforts to be together at Christmas. Even on a world scale, Christmas can bring peace.

On Christmas Eve, through the Boxing Day in 1914, during World War I, many of the British and German soldiers put down their guns and put them to the side.

Trusting each other enough to meet in no man's land, to greet each other, to exchange food and even play soccer, apparently.

I wish that became a Christmas tradition, to play soccer. I love soccer. Cricket's pretty good as well. Christmas time can even bring peace during war.

That's incredible. We put aside our differences. We put to one side our arguments, even our guns.

[ 2 : 15 ] Christmas has the power to bring peace. And it's wonderful. But how long does it last?

Do strangers at the shops maintain their peace till the new year or is it wrecked by the Boxing Day sales?

Does your family make it through the Christmas meal before those arguments explode back onto the surface? The guns broke the silence come December 27th in World War I and the war blasted on for another four years.

Christmas does have the power to bring peace. It really does. And it's special for that. But it's fragile. And it doesn't last.

And we all crave this peace, don't we? I know I do. We crave peace because life is so good when in the home and in our world there is peace.

[ 3 : 21 ] It is so sweet. But putting our differences and arguments to the side for a few days just doesn't get to the heart of what's causing the division in the first place.

The very good news that God's heavenly messengers proclaim when Jesus was born is that the peace you crave, the peace we crave, God promises to give and much more.

I just want to focus on those words of the angels in verse 14. I want to say three quick things about this true and lasting peace that God offers you.

The first thing is that the main peace that you and I need is peace with God. When God's Son was born into the world, God who dwells in the highest heaven came near to us so that we can know Him.

No one was expecting God Himself to come. No one. No one was seeking God but He came to us. This gap needed to be bridged but God doesn't demand you to become a better person before He will talk to you.

[ 4 : 59 ] Christmas is celebrating that God came to us and bridged that gap. Have you seen the movie Lion?

Big spoiler alert here. The only time in the talk you can put fingers in your ears if you don't want the movie to be spoiled because I'm going to give the whole plot. I love the movie.

It's a powerful movie. It's based on a true story of Saru Brearley who was born in India but was accidentally separated from his family when he was only five years old.

Later he was adopted by Australian parents and grew up in Tasmania. Now even though he had a loving family in Australia, even though he did well at school and got into uni, even though he had friends and a girlfriend, during his twenties he was still restless on the inside.

He didn't have any peace inside not knowing who he was. So driven was he to find his biological mum.

[ 6 : 14 ] He devoted himself to scanning Google Earth online all over India which is no small place. All he had was memories of these landmarks that he was searching for.

He spent months searching and against the odds he found it. He found those landmarks and he travels across the world and the moment comes when he is reunited with his mum and his sister.

It's a powerful moment. When it comes to our relationship with God we all have a deep inner restlessness that can only be satisfied when we are reunited with God.

Nothing else will satisfy it. But unlike Saru it's not us searching for God. our lack of searching is part of the problem.

The good news of Jesus coming to Earth is that God humbled himself to search for you. The main peace that your heart and my heart needs is to be reunited with God.

[ 7 : 43 ] Second, God gives us peace not by putting our differences to one side but by dealing with the problem that stands between us. I don't know about you but I'm going to assume you're similar to me.

There's certain topics in our families that we all kind of agree that you just don't talk about. If anyone even comes close to that topic the tension in the room just builds until it either explodes or someone makes a joke to move the conversation on.

But God has a very different way of making peace. He doesn't ignore our differences. He takes on our differences himself. Born as a human being he deals with the barriers to peace.

He doesn't just leave us in ignorance of what God is like but he becomes a human being so that when you read the story of Jesus you can see God in action so that you can get to know him.

He doesn't just overlook our offenses the things that we've done that have offended God but Jesus himself deals with that offense when later as a man he chooses to die on a cross.

[ 9 : 14 ] Jesus alone can give you peace because he doesn't put the barriers to peace to one side he deals with them himself. He takes them on. The last thing I want to say about this peace is that when we appreciate God's love in sending Jesus to give us this peace when we love that when we cherish it that's the very power to bring true and lasting peace into our families and into our world.

Let me ask you what difference do you think it would make if in your family and in the world instead of fighting and instead of pretending the differences aren't there what difference do you think it would make if people humbled themselves even to the point of losing out themselves because they want peace so much what difference do you think it would make if we loved God's way of peace I think it would make all the difference in the world glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased this is good news the person

God is pleased with is the person who craves true and lasting peace peace it's the person who sees their own inability to create that peace who sees the inability of the world to create that peace it is the person who sees Jesus and celebrates that by this one man God freely gives this peace if you don't yet know this peace with God why don't you resolve in 2020 to ask God to show you to give it to you it's the best Christmas time does have the power to bring peace and it's really nice for what it is it's really nice but

Jesus alone has the power to give you true and lasting peace peace with God that overflows that will bring peace in our families and our world and that's a really good reason to celebrate and have joy not just at Christmas time but forever and our hearts long for peace please give it to each one of us here in this room today in Jesus name I pray Amen thanks for listening