

The Promise of Peace

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[0 : 0 0] skill skill All right, if you have your Bible, go to Luke chapter 1. Luke chapter 1 is where we're going to be this evening. Last week, we kicked off our Christmas series called The Best Christmas Ever.

This year, I'm actually playing by the rules. Those of you that came from maybe more of a liturgical background, you know that the four weeks prior to Christmas is kind of the kickoff of Advent season, and most churches will usually kind of follow that four-week calendar. We don't always do that, but this year, I thought, yeah, why not, you know? And so we're doing the four gifts of Advent, which are celebrated one each week. Those gifts of Advent are known as the gift of hope, the gift of peace, the gift of joy, and the gift of love. Last week, we started this series by looking at the gift of hope from Isaiah chapter 9, where out of a time of anguish and darkness and gloom comes this promise of a son, a child that would be born, a son that would be given, and that child would bring with him the gift of hope. This week, we turn our attention to the gift of peace, and I want us to look here at Luke chapter 1, very familiar passage this time of year, but let's look at Luke 1, beginning at verse 39, and I'll ask you if you're able to stand, to please do so as we honor the reading of God's Word. Luke chapter 1, pick it up in verse 39.

Now, in those days, Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country to the town in Judah. She entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And she exclaimed with a loud cry, Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believes that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord. And Mary said, my soul magnifies the Lord. My spirit rejoices in God, my Savior, for he has looked on my humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on, all generations will call me blessed. For he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is for those who fear him for generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm. He has scattered the proud and the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate. He has filled the hungry with good things. The rich he has sent away empty. And he has helped his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever. And Mary remained there with her for about three months and returned to her home. This is God's word. Pray with me and for me as I really believe God has a word of comfort for us this evening. So God, thank you for this gift of your grace to be together and to now be under your word. And Lord, I'm so thankful how your word comes and speaks into our life. Each and every time we gather, each and every time we look to your word, you speak to us. So would you come and do that tonight to the glory of Jesus, we pray and God's people said, amen. Amen. You can be seated.

Whatever happened to tidings of comfort and joy? That was a question that was asked by a New York Times article that was addressing the shift that has taken place over the last many years in Christmas movies. You see, once upon a time, back in a very far away land, Christmas movies were these kind of heartwarming, feel-good stories. Things like It's a Wonderful Life with Jimmy Stewart or movies like A Miracle on 34th Street, just to name a few. But over the years, if you've noticed, Christmas movies have actually become more ill-tempered. And some of them are even downright cynical about everything Christmas. You have movies, for example, called Surviving Christmas or Christmas with the Cranks.

[5 : 5 1] You even have Bad Santa. When you have Billy Bob Thornton as Santa, you are in a really desperate situation, all right? Or movies even like last year like Violent Night. It's a whole new genre

of anti-Hollywood movies that look at Christmas as something to endure rather than to celebrate. Film historian David Thompson writes, quote, nowadays you make fun of Christmas. Christmas is this dreadful family occasion where relatives who don't like each other come together, get drunk, and start fighting, close quote. And that gets portrayed through all these films. Even back in the 1989 classic Christmas Vacation, which is, I have to admit, one of my favorite Christmas movies. Even there, what's that movie about?

It's kind of mocking the holidays and the dysfunctional family relationships that we experience. Then that's followed up by the 1990 blockbuster Home Alone, where Macaulay Culkin spends his whole Christmas fighting thieves. So much for holiday cheer. And then along comes a movie that actually addresses this very shift that had taken place over these years. It was the 2003 Christmas hit Elf. Any Elf fans?

Okay, I thought so. Starring Will Ferrell. It's a story, if you've not seen the movie. I don't know how you couldn't see the movie. It's on everywhere at Christmas time. But it's about a human who's raised by Christmas elves, and he returns home to New York City only to meet his birth father and family.

And as he's there, he begins to notice very quickly something that's very odd to him, and that's everywhere he looks, people have lost their Christmas spirit.

Buddy, is that you? Are you okay? Boy, am I glad to see you. The clausometer suddenly just dropped down to zero.

[8 : 05] There's just no Christmas spirit anymore. The strain was too much. The engine broke free of a bunch. I need an elf's help.

Everywhere he looks, people have lost this Christmas spirit. They've lost this sense of sentimentalism and peace. And so through a series of events, a buddy, the elf, is able to get people to turn from their Christmas cynicism and return to a place of Christmas bliss.

Well, still no sign of Santa, but some spontaneous Christmas caroling has broken out right here in front of Central Park. Let's have a listen in. You can sing while you're sleeping. He knows if you're awake. He knows if you've been bad or good. So be good for goodness sake.

You can sing while you're going. You better watch out. You better not cry. You better not pout. I'm telling you why. Hello! Santa Claus is coming to town. Just a little more!

And now all of a sudden everything is right again. The people have turned from all their dysfunctional family relationships and the stress and deadlines at work and all the hardships of life and Christmas spirit has been restored. Now let's be honest. There is something about Christmas that makes us long for that kind of sentimentalism. That sense of that life is calm and bright. If only for a few moments.

[9 : 53] In fact, my guess is earlier when I asked how many of you like that we're singing all Christmas songs and almost every hand went up. Why is that? Because it kind of puts you in a Christmas mood, right?

You get this feeling that you don't always get throughout the rest of the year. This sense of sentimentalism and peace. And it is all over our Christmas music. Not just the worship songs we sing at church, but Christmas music you hear everywhere you go this time of year. For example, here we are as a prayer. It's peaceful. Or what about sleigh ride? There's a happy feeling nothing in the world can buy when we pass around the coffee and the pumpkin pie, right? You got to pause. It'll nearly be like a picture print of courier and Ives. These are the wonderful things that we'll remember all through our lives. Or I would be remiss if I left this one out. It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas everywhere you go. There's a tree in the Grand Hotel, one in the park as well. The sturdy kind that doesn't mind the snow. It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas and soon the bells will start. And the thing that will make them ring is the carol that you sing right within your heart. It's sentimentalism on steroids. And we love those songs that they give us this Christmas mood and Christmas spirit. Nobody wants to be around a Scrooge. And all God's people said, Amen. You don't want to be around somebody that's anti-Christmas because deep down every one of us wants peace. That's why there's something so special about this season. We do not want to be fighting with family members. We do not want to be alone at Christmas. No, we want to be cuddled by the fire with our family enjoying all the surroundings.

We don't want other people to be alone at Christmas. So we reach out and we're generous. We don't want to deal with all the anxiety of all the Christmas gifts. Here's what we want. In fact, this is one of my highlights every year. One of the things I cannot wait to do every Christmas season is

come to church and sing Silent Night so that at least for a moment all feels calm and all is bright. Amen?

Are you tracking with me tonight? I know the cold has made you sleepy, but come on, right? You're tracking with me. We want peace. In fact, maybe more than any other feeling, we associate peace with Christmas. And there's a reason for that. There's a reason why everything I'm saying is true here in terms of we want that peaceful feeling at Christmas. And that is because God, throughout the Old Testament, promises that in the coming of this child, we would experience the gift of peace. You go back to the passage we looked at last week in Isaiah chapter 9 and verse 6.

For a child be born to us, a son will be given. The government will rest on his shoulders and his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal or Everlasting Father. Say it with me. [13:43] Prince Prince of Peace. And what? Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end.

Isaiah chapter 55 and verse 12 says, For you will go out in joy and be led forth in peace. And the mountains and the hills before you will break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Notice the imagery that Zechariah uses in Zechariah chapter 8 verse 4. Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of the great age.

And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets. It's Christmas. A time of no worries. Where everybody's playing together and is coming together. Zechariah chapter 9 verse 9.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem. Your King is coming. Righteous and having salvation is He. Humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, on a foal of a donkey. I will cut off the chariot of Ephraim. The war horse from Jerusalem. And the battle bow shall be cut off and He shall speak peace to the nations. His rule shall be from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the... The Old Testament is full of this longing for peace. And not just the New Old Testament, but as we come into the New and the passage that we read to kick off the service, look at what is said in Luke chapter 2 verse 11.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you. And you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of heavenly hosts praising God and saying, glory to God in the highest. And on earth, say it, peace among those with whom He is pleased. Throughout the Old Testament, God is promising this coming gift of peace. And can you imagine a better gift to have? Can you imagine a better gift in your life right now than the gift of peace? Are you... I know I said that last week about the gift of hope, and I'll probably say it next week with the gift of joy. But can you imagine a better gift than the gift of peace? In all of your personal conflicts, in all of your daily stress and anxiety, in all the pressures of work and kids and money, can you imagine a better gift in your life right now than the gift of peace? It's the very gift that Mary experiences in Luke chapter 1, verse 29.

[16:50] But she was greatly troubled at the saying and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.

In Luke chapter 1, Mary is greatly troubled. She's so troubled that an angel has to tell her, do not be afraid. And the reason why Mary is so troubled, the reason why she's so afraid, is because Mary is in a situation that she cannot even imagine how it is going to turn out. Look at verse 34. And Mary said to the angel, how will this be, since I am a virgin? In other words, Mary feels like she is in an impossible situation. Do you know why she feels like she's in an impossible situation?

Because she's in an impossible situation. Humanly speaking, she has no idea how this is going to turn out. This is wrecking her life, and she is greatly troubled. In fact, so much so, when she does actually submit to this outrageous plan of God, she does not submit to it very enthusiastically. Verse 38.

And Mary said, behold, I am the servant of the Lord. Everybody say it with me. Let it be. Just let it be. Just let it be to me according to your word. In other words, that's it. Just let it be.

There's no like, hooray! This is exciting. This is awesome. I'm going to be able to start my own line of nativity sets. There's going to be candles on Amazon with my face right there on the front. It's going to be the best. In fact, they're going to name a football pass after me. This is amazing. This is the best day of my life. I never thought something so amazing could happen. No, that is not Mary's response. Mary's response is one of a quiet submission. I'm your servant. Let it be.

[19 : 04] And then she gets out of dodge as fast as she can. The text says in verse 39, she made haste for Judah.

Listen to me, faith family. Mary is a frightened woman. She is scared to death. There is a song from the late Christian artist Rich Mullins. You would know many of the songs that he wrote. He was one of my favorite artists growing up. And he wrote a song. I used to listen to it so many times called Hold Me, Jesus. And in that song, here are the lyrics. He says, sometimes my life just doesn't make sense at all. When the mountains look so big. And my faith just seems so small. So hold me, Jesus. Jesus. Because I'm shaken like a leaf. You have been the King of my glory. Won't you be my Prince of peace? That's where Mary is. This announcement of Christ's birth is a life-altering reality for Mary.

She is scared to death. And we should not blame her. There is a lot for Mary to be worried about in this moment. Her mind is racing a million miles a minute. She's thinking about all different types of scenarios because she's worried about all different types of things. First of all, she's worried financially. Mary is betrothed to a day laborer. Mary and Joseph are dirt poor. Do you remember the offering that Mary and Joseph gave in Luke 2 in the temple? It was two turtle doves and pigeons. That's the poorest offering you could possibly give. It would be like someone putting a pack of gum in the offering bag. It was the poorest thing they could give because they didn't have anything.

[21 : 13] And if you don't have anything to survive on your own, how do you think you're going to survive now with a child? And not only is she worried financially, she's worried relationally. Somehow she's got to break the news to Joseph. And you know how this story goes. You've read it many, many times.

When she does tell Joseph, he considers leaving her and everyone would have been on his side. Everyone would have supported him. And Mary is facing the real possibility of spending Christmas all alone. Listen to me. Her life, however she originally dreamed it, has now been changed forever. And she is worried financially and relationally, but not only that, she is worried socially because everybody in town will think she's a whore. She'll be a sexual outcast.

She will not be able to walk the streets anywhere in town without someone seeing her as a scarlet letter. And if Joseph walks, she will be a single mom in a society where there is no welfare and God only knows what's going to happen to her. You just go back to the book of Ruth when Naomi loses her husband and loses her sons. Again, this is in an ancient Near Eastern context where family is everything.

And Naomi knows her life is over. She'll be a beggar the rest of her life. And Mary knows that's going to be her story as well. And so she is worried, no doubt, financially.

[22 : 53] And she's worried relationally. What about Joseph? And then socially, what everybody else is going to think about me. And on top of all of that, there's the spiritual anxiety of the message she's just heard. On top of all these other pressures, she's just been given the responsibility of raising the Son of God.

Try leading the mealtime prayer with Jesus at the table. In my Son's name, Amen. Right? Or try doing the family devotion at night when present is the creator of the world.

You thought raising your little angel was hard? Imagine raising the one who's worshipped by angels. What's the point? It's too much. It's all too much.

Mary's life is anything but peaceful. It is why it is said she is greatly troubled. To put it this way, Mary has gone from It's a Wonderful Life to just trying to survive Christmas.

This announcement has caused financial, relational, social, and spiritual crisis in her life. And I wonder if there is anybody here tonight who can relate.

[24 : 13] Have you fallen asleep? Are you with me? Can you relate to Mary? Now let me be very, very clear. Notice it on the screen. No one can relate to Mary's situation.

But I bet everyone can relate to Mary's emotion. What I mean is you don't know what it's like to mother the Son of God. But you know what it's like to be anxious.

And to be scared. And to worry. The kids, the bills, the relationship, the job, the health. What do other people think about me? What does God think about me?

What will life be after college? Life after divorce? Or life after death? It's this feeling. You know it.

The restlessness of the soul. When there's anything but peace.

Mary does what many of us do in a personal crisis.

[25 : 26] She reaches out to a friend. A relative. In this particular case, Elizabeth is a relative of hers. And why would she reach out to Elizabeth?

Well, a couple of reasons. First of all, Elizabeth has also received a very special announcement as well. You know she's pregnant with who? John the Baptist.

That's right. And so Elizabeth has a little bit of an understanding of what it's like to receive a kind of message or calling that feels a bit overwhelming. But not only that, Elizabeth in the same way has known what it's like to struggle with the plan of God.

Have you ever struggled with the plan of God? Have you ever wondered, God, what in the world are you doing? And how could this ever possibly work out? Well, Elizabeth knows what that's like. Because up until six months before, Elizabeth has been completely barren. And in the ancient Near East, as I've mentioned, if you're barren, it's believed that God is somehow punishing you.

[26 : 27] Family is everything. If you don't have family, you have nothing. And so Elizabeth has lived with this stigma all of her life. In other words, Elizabeth could relate to Mary.

Of knowing what it's like to worry. Of knowing what it's like to have all kinds of stress and pressure put on you. Of wondering about all of these things over and over and over again. And I tell you, I won't do it because I don't have the time.

But I could preach a whole other message right here on the importance of community. Of coming to others who have also been through similar things to find encouragement and comfort.

Amen? And so Mary goes to Elizabeth because Elizabeth understands. She knows what it's like to have this kind of a calling placed on her life. And she knows what it's like to struggle with the plan of God.

And what Mary is going to see in Elizabeth is she is going to see a woman who has the peace of God in her life.

[27 : 26] Look at verse 41. When Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

And she exclaimed with a loud cry, Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb. For why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.

I think that's amazing. And here's why I think that's amazing. Is I think that Elizabeth could have responded a different way.

She is full of the Holy Spirit and she responds the right way, which is what? Elizabeth's response was filled with excitement for Mary.

[28 : 25] Now why do I say that's amazing? It's amazing because for Elizabeth, if you think about it from her perspective, her young relative who has never known the suffering of barrenness.

She does not know what it's like to go through everything Elizabeth has gone through. Now, Mary has a child more blessed than her child and more miraculous than her child.

In other words, Elizabeth has gone from barren to blessed and now overshadowed by a young relative. In other words, I think if we're seeing the real life of this moment, it would have been very easy for Elizabeth to say, Yeah, I'm really happy for you.

As she walks away, clenching her fist. But that's not Elizabeth's response. Elizabeth's response is one of genuine joy for Mary.

Why? Look at me. She has learned to accept the plan of God for her life. Elizabeth has learned to accept that God's plan for me is not his plan for everybody else.

[29 : 39] And I wonder if we have come to the place of accepting the same. When someone else gets better news, when someone else is used in greater ways, can you rejoice or do you drown in self-pity and unrighteous jealousy?

Notice it on the screen, Faith Family. Until we embrace that God's plan for our life is not always our plan for our life, you will never experience the gift of peace.

Amen? But Elizabeth is able to give this encouragement. Elizabeth is able to rejoice in this way because she accepted God's plan for her life.

And not only that, she speaks into Mary's life the grace of God. Verse 42. She exclaimed with a loud cry, Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.

That word blessed simply just means graced. That God's grace, God's favor is upon you. Here's essentially, I think, what Elizabeth is telling Mary. Listen, I know that you're troubled.

[30 : 46] I know that you're worried. I know that you're anxious about a lot of things. You have a good reason to be. There would be a lot, humanly speaking, to be worried about. There's a lot of things that you're going to have to figure out.

And I know it seems crazy, but here's what I want you to do. Don't. Don't. Don't. Don't. Don't miss the grace of God in your life.

Don't. Don't miss the grace of God. I know you're troubled. And you're freaking out on how all this is going to turn out. But God has been gracious to you.

And you say, well, that's easy for Mary. She's got the Son of God inside of her. Can I give you just like a mind-blowing moment? Listen. Yeah.

Mary has the Son of God in her. And so do you. If you have trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior, notice this on the screen.

[31 : 48] What is true for Mary physically is true for you spiritually. Namely, Christ in you is a miracle of grace.

Which means in all the chaos and all the anxiety of Christmas, what you can see, what Elizabeth is trying to get Mary to see, is the grace of God that has come to you in this baby named Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen. Amen. And this reality, this reality that Elizabeth speaks into Mary's life brings peace into all this chaos and all this anxiety and worry.

Because I want you to see how the woman we saw in chapter 1, verse 29 is a different woman in chapter 1, verse 46. Do you see the difference?

Do you see how Mary's heart has turned from greatly troubled, completely stressed out, how in the world is this ever even going to work, to I magnify the Lord and I rejoice in God my Savior.

[33 : 27] Mary's heart turns to God and she worships Him with a song. I think this teaches us a very valuable lesson, Faith Family, and this is a lesson that I have learned repeatedly throughout my Christian journey, and it's this.

Are you ready? Maybe you're here tonight just for this. When life is not at peace, sometimes your only way out is to praise. When life is not at peace, sometimes your only way out is to praise.

Because there is something about the praise of God that sets the heart to peace. Amen. And look at what Mary does as she goes through.

There's six very brief things that we're going to see in Mary's song that allows her to rest and be at peace with this whole situation. First is the sovereignty of God.

Mary rests in the reality that even in all this chaos of the first Christmas, God really is in control of her situation. Do you believe He's in control of yours?

[34 : 36] That with all the things that you could worry about, you can be confident in this? God's going to take care of you. God is going to deliver you.

Amen? I'm about to throw a snowball at some of you, all right? God is going to deliver you. He is sovereign over your situation. And this is a note for my dear Catholic friends.

I do love you, but it's very obvious from this passage that Mary needs a Savior just as much as anybody else. There's no perfection here in Mary. No, the praise is not to Mary.

The praise is to God for His sovereignty over her crisis. Verse 48, He has looked on my humble estate of His servant and behold, from now on generations will call me blessed.

She speaks here of the compassion of God. God looked on my humble estate. God was aware of my situation. God looked down when I felt alone and reminded me that He is right there with me.

[35 : 44] What a compassionate God who enters into our lowly estate. Verse 49, For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name.

She speaks next of the character of God. She begins to sing about the great things that God has done, that God is good, that God is holy. Listen to me, faith family.

Every situation you're in will seem impossible until you factor in God. That's a good place for an amen, but that's okay. It's a drowsy Saturday night.

I forgive you, right? I'm going to say it again because it's really good and you need to hear it again and God told me to tell you it again, right? Every situation you're in will seem impossible until you factor in God.

Mary's situation is impossible, but God. And you will be in situations that you feel like, this is impossible. There's no way I'm going to make the bills.

[36 : 43] There's no way I'm going to get out of this. There's no way I'm going to survive this, but God. But God has done great things for you, and His name is holy.

And so she sings of His sovereignty and His compassion and His character. And verse 51, He has shown strength with His arm. He has scattered the proud and the thoughts of their heart.

Now she speaks about the power of God, the strength in His arm. There is a direct connection between your peace and the recognition of God's power.

There is a direct connection between the peace that you have in life and your recognition of God's power over your life.

If you know that God is with you and God is for you, there is no crisis that can overtake you. Verse 53, He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich He has sent away empty.

[37 : 50] Now she sings of the grace of God, how God shows mercy to those whose lives are falling apart. That He fills the hungry, but the rich He sends away empty.

That God's grace comes to those who realize they do not deserve what God is doing. He is the one that takes peasant girls and gives them a name that will be remembered.

And criminals on a cross and gives them paradise. And fishermen who establishes a brand new kingdom. God is the one that takes the lowly and lifts them up.

All because of His grace. And finally, verse 55, He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.

Oh my, there's so much in that verse we don't have time for. But it's all about the faithfulness of God. She ends this song speaking about Abraham and the offspring.

[38 : 49] Why? Because she's recognizing something. Are you with me? Here's what Mary's recognizing. Wait a minute, wait a minute. This was promised long ago.

When God through Abraham said that there would be a coming offspring. A coming seed. Keep in mind, there's been 400 years of silence since the Old Testament ended.

Longer than that, back to Abraham. And now God is bringing that promise to fulfillment in the announcement to Mary. That she will bear the Son of God.

What's Mary singing about? She's singing about the fact that when God promises, He always delivers. God made a promise all the way back to Abraham.

And He has not forgotten. That's a Christmas song. Amen? Listen, this is a Christmas song.

[39 : 56] This Christmas song is the Christmas song you need. If you want to experience the gift of peace in your life. Listen to me, faith family. I love you as your pastor. But here's what you don't need.

You do not need chestnuts roasting on an open fire. You don't. Here's what you do need. A God who reigns. And is compassionate towards you.

And holy in everything He does. And can do the impossible. And will lift you up out of your lowly estate. And be faithful to you even when you're scared to death.

That's the song you need. And you won't hear that playing at the Mall of America. But you're going to need that song in the dark hours of the soul.

To rest in this gift of peace that is found not in hoping tomorrow will be better. But feeding your soul on the promises that God has given you in the person of Jesus Christ.

[41 : 07] And so my prayer is that this Christmas you will experience the gift of peace. That all will be calm and bright.

Not in the circumstances of your life. But as you rest in the promise of what God has given you in Jesus. And that you will like Mary. In all of your worry you will worship.

And in all of your panic you will praise. So if you're here tonight and you're asking the same question that the New York Times was asking in that article.

Hey whatever happened to tidings of comfort and joy? Not in the movies. I'm talking about in reality. Because if you're honest. If we're honest.

We look around our world and it seems a lot more like surviving Christmas. Than it does a wonderful life. What I want you to leave tonight knowing is that 2,000 years ago there was a scared to death little teenage girl who felt the same way you do.

[42 : 10] And somehow in all the chaos of that first Christmas. She found the gift of peace. And so can you. Because listen.

Your families are still going to fight. And life is still going to have conflict. But there is. Oh my. There is a relationship this Christmas that isn't hostile.

Look at Romans 5. Therefore since we have been justified by faith. We have. Say it with me. Peace. With. God. Through our Lord. Jesus. Christ. Because of what Jesus has done for us. Regardless of the chaos of life. We are at peace with God. And that's all the comfort and joy you need.

[43 : 14] To have the best Christmas ever. And God's people said. Amen. Let's pray. Lord I have no doubt that there are some in this room that understand what Mary's going through.

Not because we will ever be in that situation. But because we know that emotion of worry and anxiety. To have that restlessness of the soul.

And yet Mary found that first Christmas the gift of peace. And her eyes were turned. From a heart greatly troubled.

To a God who is sovereign over all. And in her worship and in her praise she found peace. And I pray we would too.

And I pray now that we would turn our minds towards. Not just the birth of Jesus. But his death on the cross. For through his death for our sins.

[44 : 13] We have been reconciled to God. And we have peace with you. And that peace. Trumps all chaos. Of life.

So let us now remember and reflect. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Thank you.