

# Christ our Hope

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 29 December 2024

Preacher: Henry Dyck

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, good morning, everyone. It's a special morning this morning, and it's always good to see people being added to the church.

When we think of the early church in the book of Acts and how, you know, at the start there was thousands coming to Christ at one time when they heard the gospel.

And how exciting that must have been, you know, the excitement that we have today when one person comes to the Lord. And I think the excitement is the same, whether it's one person or a few thousand.

And thank you as well for that special number. It was well done.

And just the line, Whom the Son sets free, He is free indeed. How true that is. That freedom comes in Christ alone.

[ 1 : 1 6 ] Freedom and the peace. This morning I have titled my message, Christ Our Peace. And so I just thought it would be fitting as we've just come through the Christmas season and we've heard these messages of peace through word and through song.

We've heard the prophecies of the coming Messiah about Him being the Prince of Peace. We've heard of the angels proclaiming it.

And then as well this morning with the baptism coming up at the latter part of the service, you know, how often we hear in these people's testimonies how they've struggled, there's voids in their life, nothing seems to fill it, and they're seeking answers and they don't find what fills that void until they find Christ.

And then that void is filled and they express the peace that they felt in that moment. And so with our text here this morning, I had two questions that I want to answer.

Out of this text, and that is, first of all, how is Christ our peace? And what did He do? Now that He is our peace.

[ 3 : 0 9 ] Our text starts off, the first part of verse 14, for He Himself is our peace. So Paul makes that statement.

As the statement for his audience, the Ephesian believers, that He Himself is our peace. So Paul makes the statement, but how do we know it?

Well, we know that Christ is a part of the Trinity, that He is fully God and fully Spirit as well.

And we know that God is all-powerful and that He is all-knowing and that He can give peace. I thought this morning we could look at a couple of Old Testament references that speak of God being peace or giving peace.

Let's turn first of all to Numbers chapter 6. Numbers 6, verses 22 through 26.

[ 4 : 3 1 ] It's the Lord speaking to Moses, giving him instruction regarding the priesthood. So Numbers 6, starting in verse 22.

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them, The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace. So a blessing for the children of Israel.

And his very familiar words, we often hear these in benedictions at the end of church service, but the Lord saying that the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

It is the Lord who can give us peace. Next, let's look at 1 Chronicles. 1 Chronicles 22.

[ 5 : 43 ] Just looking at a couple of different examples. A couple of different scriptures. 1 Chronicles 22, verse 9.

Here we have the Lord speaking to David, King David.

He says, Behold, a son shall be born to you who shall be a man of rest, and I will give him rest from all his enemies all around. His name shall be Solomon, for I will give peace and quietness to Israel in his days.

So the Lord promising David that He would give him a son. And while his son Solomon reigned in Israel, there would be peace and quietness and rest in Israel in Solomon's day.

And the Lord fulfilled that. Next, we'll look at Jeremiah. Jeremiah 29.

[ 6 : 53 ] Jeremiah 29, verses 10 and 11. Jeremiah 29. For thus says the Lord, after 70 years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform my good work, my good word toward you and cause you to return to this place.

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not evil, to give you a future and a hope. So prophecy regarding Israel as they're in captivity, that after 70 years are completed, the children of Israel being captive in Babylon, the Lord would visit them.

He would cause them to return to their homes. And He says, For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not evil, to give you a future and a hope.

So the thoughts of the Lord toward His people, He wants peace for them and not evil. He wants to give a future and a hope.

All right, and then one last one out of the Psalms. Psalm chapter 29. Psalm 29 verse 11.

[ 8 : 37 ] A psalm of David And the words that he writes in verse 11. The Lord will give strength to His people. The Lord will bless His people with peace.

Just an encouragement there as well, that the Lord will bless His people with peace. All right, back to our text.

So we've seen in these examples that the Lord is peace. He is the author of it. And the peace that comes from God is a different kind of peace.

It is a true peace. He can and He does provide external peace. But much more, He gives internal peace.

We see in the world around us, here locally, we seem we're at peace. But so much of the world has anything but peace.

[ 9 : 48 ] And yet, the Lord is in control. And things are going according to His plan. to His end purpose. And yet, for His people, there is peace.

There is internal peace. Even if maybe not outward peace, if there is conflict around. Think of the nation of Israel. The conflict going on there.

The external peace is not there. And yet, for those who are in the Lord, there is still that internal peace. Knowing that God is in control and that He is watching over us.

And so, if we follow the Israelite history in the Old Testament, you know, when they were living in obedience to the Lord, they had peace.

Things went well. It was when there was rebellion against God that the peace was removed. And they had problems. There were issues there.

[ 10 : 58 ] And even before the Israelites, there were Adam and Eve. We don't know how long they lived in the Garden of Eden.

Scripture doesn't tell us how long they were in the Garden of Eden before they fell in sin. And yet, we know from Genesis that God came and He walked and talked with them in the Garden.

It was a sin-free world at that time. There would have been a kind of peace there that almost we can't grasp it. and the Lord was there with them and He walked and talked with them.

What peace they must have known at that time. We also know that Adam and Eve did fall in sin and that peace was broken and mankind was separated from God.

We have inherited that sin nature. we are born with that nature and it separates us from God our Creator.

[ 12 : 11 ] We are born not knowing what real peace is. What it feels like to be at rest. To be at peace with our Creator.

that was an issue that God had to remedy. We couldn't even begin to fix that problem.

In fact we weren't even trying to fix it. We didn't care to seek God to restore that relationship. It was out of God's love for His creation His love for mankind who were created in His image that He stepped out and He did something about it.

And so when Paul makes a statement about Christ for He Himself is our peace referring to Christ where He stepped in where He came in He came in His Father's will to become our peace.

The Old Testament prophesied His coming that He would bring peace that He would be peace and those prophecies we've heard them this season we'll just quickly look at them again Micah chapter 5 Micah chapter 5 we'll also read verse 2 and verse 5 But you Bethlehem Ephrathah though you are little among the thousands of Judah yet out of you shall come forth to me the one to be ruler in Israel whose goings forth are from old from everlasting and then the start of verse 5 and this one shall be peace prophecy prophecy of the Messiah to come and He would come out of Bethlehem a small town and this one is to be the ruler in Israel whose goings forth are from old from everlasting speaking of

[ 14 : 31 ] Christ that He has always been that He is fully God and yet He would be sent as a baby to become human to walk among us and that He shall be peace the second prophecy is in Isaiah chapter 9 Isaiah chapter 9 verse 6 again a very familiar verse familiar prophecy for unto us a child is born unto us a son is given and the government will be upon His shoulder and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor Mighty God Everlasting Father Prince of Peace again the prophecy that He would be the Prince of Peace and so

Christ came from His Father from Heaven at the appointed time when the timing was right according to His Father's will He came as that child as that baby that was prophesied He was born into a sinful world and He came to bring peace to sacrifice Himself so that we might know that peace as well so how is Christ our peace well Christ is fully God and we saw the different examples of the Old Testament God giving peace proclaiming that He would give peace and the prophecies that Christ when He came that He would be peace and He would bring peace

Christ is our peace but in order to continue answering that first question how was Christ our peace we need to answer the second question as well what did He do what did Christ do and so in our text the remainder of verse 14 and then through verse 16 I'll just reread all of 14 there for He Himself is our peace who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of separation having abolished in His flesh the enmity that is the law of commandments contained in ordinances so as to create in Himself one new man from the two thus making peace and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross thereby putting to death the enmity so we know that Christ

He came to earth as a baby that He grew into a man and He gave His life because it was His Father's will but what did that accomplish what did Christ do in going through with God's plan verse 14 again whom has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of separation Paul's theme in Ephesians is unity and this passage brings that out as well talks of two things here in this verse that Christ did He made both one and He broke down a separating wall and so making both one what Paul is referring to here is He's speaking of the

Jews and the Gentiles and we know as well from the Old Testament there was division between these two groups Israel the nation of Israel they were God's chosen people they were set apart the Gentiles were everyone else who was not a Jew they were a people who for the most part did not seek God God's favor rested on the Israelites they were His chosen people group they were set apart to proclaim to the rest of the world that there was one true God and He was the God of Israel and so that means a problem for the Gentiles how could a Gentile worship and serve that one true God well in those days they had to become an Israelite to become a Jew not by blood but in other ways the Old

[ 19 : 48 ] Testament would call these Gentiles who become Jews they would call them proselytes they had to give up their ways and to convert to Jewish customs so imagine that we are still in Old Testament times it's at least 2000 years back even more Christ hasn't come yet just imagine that for a moment all of us in this room are Gentiles is there anyone here who is of Jewish descent I don't see any hands going up so yes we would all fit into the Gentile world the Gentile group we would not be God's chosen people we are different we would be worshipping pagan gods going along with the wickedness of the rest of the world and yet we see the Jews out there in the world and we notice differences in them they're keeping themselves separated from us

Gentiles they act differently they it just seems everything they do it's done differently there's something different and that one main difference that it always keeps coming back to the main difference between us and them is the God that the Israelites worship they don't worship like the rest of the world does they have these commandments that they stick to commandments that have been given to them by their God and known as ordinances as our text talks about or rules that they abide by and as we observe these Jews over a period of time and we see as long as they are faithful to their God and to his commandments they prosper and so the Jews ways of doing things they're attractive their God blesses them prospers them and we notice that we too want to be as prosperous as they are we want to do well too and yet they keep themselves apart from us so what is the only way that we can share in these blessings that they are blessed with to prosper as they are we need to become like them we have to give up our way of life everything we've been taught from childhood on we have to give all of that up and adopt the Jewish ways we must abide by the laws of their

God so how easy is it for us to give something up that we have been taught from young on that has been ingrained into us how easy is it to give that up it's not that easy is it everything we know everything we've been taught we would have to give all of that up do things completely differently and even contrary to what we have been taught and so it would be hard for a Gentile to give up his or her ways and to become a Jew and yet that was the way it was in the Old Testament and so it makes sense that as we read the Old Testament we don't hear very many testimonies of these things happening yes they did happen but it wouldn't have been the norm there are

Gentiles who did take up the Jewish ways and became Jews became proselytes but by far the majority of Gentiles stuck to their ways and so in those days you know the Jews had their way of doing things and the Gentiles had theirs so right there we have division and you know even for for a Gentile coming into the holy city of Jerusalem the Israelites prized city even there there would be division with the temple that was built in Jerusalem there was a separate courtyard for the Gentiles when it came to the Jewish God the Gentiles could only come so and so close there was a wall keeping them away so even there it reflected division there was a division between

God's people and the rest of the world and our text tells us that Christ has broken down the middle wall of separation there was that division between Jew and Gentile and Christ made an end to that division yes there was the physical wall that the Gentiles could only come so far into a certain courtyard I think it goes deeper than that oh when Christ was hung on the cross and he gave his life how in the temple that curtain dividing the holy place from the holy of holies it was torn in two that everyone who came before God had access to him Christ came to break down that middle wall of separation how did he do that verses 15 and 16 having abolished in his flesh the enmity that is the law of commandments contained in ordinances so as to create in himself one new man from the two thus making peace and that he might reconcile them both to

[ 27 : 19 ] God in one body through the cross thereby putting to death the enmity so it says that Christ abolished meaning he annulled or he destroyed in his flesh the enmity or the intense hostility Christ abolished it he put an end to it in order in order to offer salvation to all of mankind not to the Israelites only to both Jew and Gentile that law that had been given to the Jews you know that was contained in ordinances as Paul writes here it had to be abolished it had to be done away with Christ accomplished this by sacrificing himself by giving his sinless body of flesh to be bruised to be beaten and then to be hung on a cross and he did that so as to create in himself one new man from the two thus making peace not conforming one man to the other not conforming a

Gentile into a Jew as had been the way in the Old Testament but to create one new man out of the two to make one new creation it's no longer I'm a Jew or I'm a Gentile now it's I'm a believer in Christ and what he has done for me so Christ created one new man out of the two as well Christ also reconciled them both to God brought them back into a right relationship with God the Gentiles were not seeking God and the Jews were rebelling against him and so by sacrificing himself on the cross

Christ opened the way to reconciliation with God God you see that it wasn't mankind making a move towards God it was God initiating things he provided a way to make things right between us and him to restore that relationship that was broken in the garden of Eden in verse 17 of our text and he came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near for through him we both have access by one spirit to the father and so Christ came with a message of peace he preached peace he offered a peace like we've never known to you who were afar off referring to the

Gentiles and to those who were near the Jews the message was not limited to a specific race or to a specific people group this message we could also call it the gospel message it was for all and it has not changed today it's still for everyone the Messiah the prince of peace had full authority to preach peace for it was by him and through him that peace was extended to all of mankind and to all who graciously accept that free gift that Christ offers it means peace knowing that through our

Lord Jesus Christ we have full access night and day to our heavenly father by the Holy Spirit that indwells us just to close off this portion of scripture I thought I'd also bring in a couple of New Testament verses on how Christ is our peace and so we'll wrap up this portion of the service with that let's turn first of all to John chapter 14 John chapter 14 verses 25 through 27 these things

[ 32 : 57 ] I have spoken to you while being present with you but the helper the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you peace I leave with you my peace I give to you not as the world gives do I give to you let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid here Jesus is speaking with his disciples and he's telling them that the Holy Spirit would be coming sent from the

Father in the name of Christ and that he would come and indwell them and teach them all things and he would bring to remembrance the things that Christ had taught them and so you can tell Christ is sharing with them that he will physically be leaving them and yet in verse 27 he says to them peace I leave with you my peace I give to you not as the world gives do I give to you let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid though Christ would physically be leaving them his peace would remain with them another verse in Colossians Colossians chapter 1

Colossians 1 19 and 20 for it pleased the father that in him that is in Christ all the fullness should dwell and by him to reconcile all things to himself by him whether things on earth or things in heaven having made peace through the blood of his cross shed for us on the cross another verse in

Romans Romans chapter 5 verse 1 therefore having been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ speaking of us being justified by faith things are made right between us and God through faith in Christ so again as Paul talked about in Ephesians of the abolishing the enmity that is the law contained in ordinances that that was done away with now we are justified by faith we are not justified by keeping the law we are justified by faith salvation comes by faith alone and that being justified by faith we have peace with

God and it is through our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ and one final verse in Philippians Philippians chapter 4 verse 7 and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus so again just another verse expressing that the peace that only God can give peace it's a peace that surpasses all understanding we cannot even fully grasp that peace understand it and yet it guards our hearts and our minds through Christ Jesus so

[ 38 : 06 ] Christ is our peace peace let's close in a word of prayer heavenly father we come before you again this morning lord we thank you for this day lord we thank you for your word for your son for sending him to be born as a baby to come to this world as we come to it as a little baby and to grow up just as we do Christ came he was born and he grew up here in this world as a man he went through all of the things that we went through and he remained sinless and he came to fulfill your plan your plan of salvation and he did that so that we might know peace lord we thank you for the sacrifice that you made on that cross that through your blood as it washes over us and cleanses us we are saved it brings us a peace that surpasses all understanding though there may be unrest all around within our hearts we are at peace and we thank you for that lord just again this morning as we hear

Elda's testimony proclaiming how she has found you that you have drawn her and that she has responded and found you and that she too is now experiencing that peace that comes from you lord we praise you and we thank you for that and for each one that comes to you and again this morning we just again ask that you would just again flood Elda with your peace just give her a calmness and a quietness from within as she comes and she shares her testimony with us she publicly proclaims that she stands with you that she is no longer on the outside that she is a Jew or Gentile but that she has become part of the family of

God that she has become one of the new creation that Christ came to make he made one out of the two and that she has joined that family and so this morning just again grant her peace and quietness and calmness and just be with all the congregation in Jesus name amen all right at this time we'll have you come up and share your testimony and following that we have some questions for her she will answer and then that is done we will proceed with the baptism so if you would come up and share hi everyone makes me a bit nervous being up here but I will try to do it as best I can and as clear so everybody can hear me my name is

Alda Martins and I grew up in a Christian family we always went to church my mom read me bedtime stories taught me from the bible and from very small I've always known what God and his plan was for everybody but I never accepted him I started school when I was five years old we did five years homeschool and then five years in school we come up and down from Mexico quite a bit for the winters we started in 2016 we've been doing it for the past eight years we usually go to Mexico to harvest and and then we come up here for logging in the winter when I was 16 years old I had a big car accident it gave me a lot to think about my cousin that was also in the accident died and I didn't know why

God would take him and not me why he would spare me and for what I didn't have I didn't accept Jesus right away I had to think about it first some verses that really helped me through that were John 3 13 through 19 they were very special to me during that time I saw how much God did in my life but I never fully gave him my heart I always thought I didn't need him for some things like I didn't fully give it to him I was like I can do this myself but I heard a message that that just made me think I don't know how to do all this myself I can fully trust him with my heart and that made my life so much more easy after hearing that message I just knew what to do

[ 44 : 22 ] I had to give Jesus my heart accept him as my Lord and Savior and take his precious gift for myself believe in him and trust him with everything I am so happy and blessed to be living for him I would like to thank Henry for all his time doing the baptism classes and I would like to thank this church for making this possible but most of all I would like to thank God for giving his son to die to to die on the sins thank you applause applause applause applause applause could I maybe have someone maybe bend or someone come up and help move the pulpit out of the way so that everyone can can see better just move back here move this then can we move the table up a little closer as well somewhere over here thank you all right so at this time we we do have a couple of questions that we ask our baptism candidates as well so do that now so the first one do you acknowledge your sinful nature and have you repented of your sins and have you accepted

Jesus Christ as your personal savior and do you promise not to part from this truth as long as you live second one do you believe that Jesus Christ the son of God who was crucified died and rose again and according to acts 4 verse 12 is the only one through whom you might be saved and have all your sins forgiven and lastly Jesus speaking to Martha said in John 11 25 and 26 I am the resurrection and the life he that believes in me though he were dead yet shall he live and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die baptize you in the name of the

Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit all right at this time could have the congregation just rise and let's just again bow in a word of prayer heavenly Father we come before you again this morning Lord we thank you for this day we thank you for Elda that she has seen her need of you and that as you drew her you were knocking on her heart's door that she responded and that this day would come that she would publicly proclaim her love for you and that she is your child and that she is walking with you and living for you

Lord we know that you are blessed and glorified by that by each one who makes that commitment that stand for you and so Lord we just again praise you and thank you for your goodness to us for extending your peace to us through your son the Lord Jesus who came and gave his life for us Lord we just ask that you would go with Elda Lord as she has made this stand Lord we know the enemy will resist this and that he will attack and Lord we know that we have need of you daily that we must come to you daily for strength to stand Lord we pray that we pray for this strength for Elda Lord that she would daily seek you and that as she stands with you clothed in your armor that she will have the strength she needs to stand and to resist the attacks of the enemy and that her faith from this day forward will only grow and strengthen as she goes out and serves you wherever that may be

Lord again we just thank you for this morning we pray in Jesus name Amen man