

Simeon and the Prince of Peace

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[0 : 00] Those who dwell in a land of deep darkness, on them as light shine. You have multiplied the nation. You have increased its joy. They rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil.

For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken, as on the day of Midian. For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult, and every garment rolled in blood, will be burned as fuel for the fire.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace, there will be no end. On the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it, with justice and with righteousness, from this time forth and forevermore, the seal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

On Saturday morning, we looked at this passage and used it to illustrate, or seen it illustrated, in John's Gospel in Chapter 9, the healing of the blind man.

[1 : 40] Here is Jesus the King, the wonderful Counselor, and he gives such amazing, unexpected instruction, both to the disciples and to the blind man himself, asking him especially, go and wash in the pool of Siloam, having put mud on his eyes.

And he went and washed, and he came back saying, when the wonderful Counselor asks you to do something, when the King gives his instruction, it may be something you've never heard from anyone else, but you must do it.

And for those of you who haven't yet turned to the Lord, when he says to you, repent, believe in the good news, that's something you must do.

He commands it. It's a wonderful Counselor. And then we notice this morning, he's the mighty God. He's one that shows his might in the way he opened the ears of the blind man, so that he actually heard a message and was willing to obey it.

Then he went on to open his eyes, so that he could see for the first time ever. And then he opened his understanding, so that he began to learn about Jesus, that he was a prophet, that he was one who worshipped God, one who did the will of God, and one to whom God listens.

[3 : 11] And then he was introduced by Jesus to Jesus as the Son of Man, the one who looks after the suffering saints of the Most High.

And he took it all. He believed it. He worshipped him. And then at the Lord's table, we saw Jesus as the Father, the everlasting Father.

The kings of Israel were meant to care for the people. Jesus is the one king who really does care. He is the one who is the Father, who is there to protect his people, defend them, care for them. For how long? For as long as his mood lasts? No. But forever and ever and ever, he is the everlasting Father.

And that's what the blind man knew. Here was the good shepherd, who came looking for him, when everybody else had cast him out of the synagogue.

[4 : 15] And then tonight, finally, we want to look at this wonderful king as the Prince of Peace. The Prince of Peace.

We're told here to us, a child is going to be born, a son is given, and he will reign. He has a government on his shoulder. And one of the things he will be called, known for, is that he is the Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and of peace, no end at all. He's going to rule in such a way that peace will result.

Peace in the sense of wholeness, well-being, everything feels just right, secure, safe. Wherever the person who knows peace looks, he feels absolutely safe.

Whichever direction he looks, whether it be up towards God, he says, all is well. Whether he looks out among the people among whom he lives, he says, all is well.

[5 : 21] When he looks into his own soul, he says, all is well. That perfect peace is what the king, the Prince of Peace, has come to give us.

That's what we want to explore tonight for a little. And I would like us to do it in reverse, if possible. First of all, I want us to think of this king, our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Prince of Peace in eternity. You know, there are people who once worshipped here, and they're no longer here. They're actually, we say, they've gone home. They've gone home.

People tell me when I'm away on the mainland, and I'm heard saying, I'm going to go home this summer. And they say, why is it that island people talk as if they have two homes?

One with their loved ones in the mainland, and one in the island where they came from. That's the way we tend to think, though, home. But you know, for the Christian, there is a home beyond all other homes.

[6 : 37] And our loved ones, people with whom we worshipped in this life, people whom we used to watch walking to the prayer meeting, people whom who told us wonderful things about the Lord, people who cradled us on their knees and shared with us and wept with us as they told us of Christ, people whom we knew loved the Lord Jesus Christ, who respected the holiness of God.

And then they were taken away by the Lord himself as flowers were snatched from a garden, and he has taken them into his own presence.

If you were asked tonight how many believers have been brought home to glory, I think even already you would be tempted to say it's a multitude greater than man could number.

If I were to ask you how do they feel tonight? Do they feel safe? Do they feel at home? Do they feel all is well?

I am absolutely sure that they would say yes, all is well. and those of your loved ones who trusted in the Lord in this life, that's what they are enjoying this very moment in eternity in the presence of the Lord who loved them and gave himself for them.

[8 : 15] They see the Prince of Peace and for them it is beautiful. They could speak of the language in Isaiah 9.

You have multiplied the nation. You have increased its joy. They rejoice before you as with the joy of harvest. They're glad as those who divide the spoil.

See, for them, you see, the battles are over. The tramping boots can be burned in the fire. They are rejoicing greater than they would be at any harvest time.

It's as though all their prayers have been answered and more. It's as if the Lord has done for them more than they could have ever asked or thought.

They have really been brought home. Joy is theirs and a sense all is well and the Prince of Peace is the one who made it all possible.

[9 : 17] No one can ever disturb that peace again. We would all agree with that. If you're a believer, that will one day be your experience.

If you go home before the Lord returns, that will be your experience. And those of you who haven't yet trusted in the Lord, it's not what you would love.

That when the time comes for people to speak of you in the past tense, he once lived here. That was his house. There are his children and his grandchildren.

But today, he, she, is in glory. They know that all is well. The battles are over. Peace, the Prince of Peace in eternity.

But then secondly, working back the way, the Prince of Peace at death. That's why we read, you see, in Luke's Gospel, the Prince of Peace, we are told, has been born there.

[10 : 26] Remember, when Jesus was born, he came in such a way that it might have seemed so silent. The Son of God became flesh. But then God, as it were, sent all the angels of heaven down to earth.

There was an angel, a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased.

When the angels sang at the birth of the Saviour, they knew that the Prince of Peace had been born and they sang glory to God. Why? Because there will be peace for his people on earth.

The angels were absolutely thrilled to know that there would be that peace. The angels know peace themselves. The angels who never fell into sin, they know that perfect peace.

They don't have hearts that flutter with fear. They know what it's like that all is well, even though they do not understand all of the Lord's purposes.

[11 : 34] but they know that peace. But to know that on earth there will be peace, this is something so wonderful. And then the narrative tells us there of this man, Simeon.

Simeon, what are we told about him? This man was living in Jerusalem, he was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

Here is somebody who is already a believer, somebody who had spent his life, it seems, righteous and devout, but not trusting in his own righteousness, not trusting in his own devotion, but looking to the consolation that the Lord alone would bring.

Consolation. It's another beautiful word for comfort. Looking for the comfort that the Lord would bring. You see, God had promised comfort in the prophecies of the Old Testament.

Do you remember Isaiah promised? Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, says the Lord. Yes, there would be a time when the child would be born, that there would be comfort, consolation given, and this man Simeon waits for that consolation to come.

[12 : 58] The Holy Spirit was upon him. He knew the experience of God at work in his heart and mind and it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he wouldn't see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

He wouldn't die till he had seen the Lord's Christ. There were many, many believers in the Old Testament and they died without seeing the Lord's Christ.

Maybe they saw a sacrifice in Jerusalem. Maybe they saw the temple. They certainly would have heard the promises of God, but they never saw the Lord's Christ.

All they had was the word of God and it was enough for them. They believed it. Well, here's Simeon though, and he's given an added privilege.

In his lifetime, he would see the beginning of the fulfillment of the promises. The Lord's Christ would be seen by him.

[14 : 04] The Savior that would be sent, anointed by the Spirit, would be seen by him. And you can imagine him every day looking forward to this.

and he's getting older and older and older and he may sometimes maybe wonder, when will the Lord's Christ be seen by me? And here's this man, as an old man in Jerusalem, he sees the Lord's Christ when Mary and Joseph come in to present their child to the Lord.

When they come in, he takes the child. You sometimes wonder, what did Mary and Joseph make of this? Here's this man coming, taking the child out of their arms and cradles this child.

And what does this man say? Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace according to your word. For my eyes have seen your salvation that you prepared in the presence of all peoples. He's ready to die. He says he's ready to depart in peace. He's ready to depart knowing all is well.

[15 : 23] Why? Because he saw this little babe and you think, well, babes can make you happy. But there's a babe whom he saw and he believed that the promises of God were now to be really fulfilled and he's ready to die.

All is well. I don't know how long Simeon lived after this. Was it a day? Was it a week? Was it a month?

I don't know. All I know is that he was ready. He was absolutely ready to die. He could say, let your servant depart in peace.

Why was he ready to die? What is it that you would love at the moment when you are to leave this life? You would like to be sure that comfort was coming.

And for Simeon, that's what he knew was coming, comfort. But what's beautiful in this narrative is that Simeon is not thinking about himself only.

[16 : 37] What he's thinking about is all the other people of the Lord. He says, I'm ready to die because I know that your people will all be saved among the Jews and among the Gentiles.

I know that they will be saved. All is well. And you know this, there's something beautiful about seeing a believer not only at their own death, believing that they have peace and they're ready to die because they've seen Christ, but knowing that all is well for all the people of God.

You may know of some people yourselves, and they died without any of their family being converted. They prayed for them in life. They longed for these people to know the comfort of Christ,

but it didn't happen in their days.

And yet some of them said, I believe you know that the Lord will save such and such a person. I've seen that happen on occasion.

I've seen people dying absolutely trusting that the Lord will look after their loved ones. You've seen the experience yourselves, I'm sure.

[18:01] you've seen somebody in the last stages of terminal illness, and they're believers, and they speak about joy.

I still remember this lady in Aberdeen in Tornaday Hospital, went in to visit her, a lady from Stornoway actually, and visiting her in her last moments, and she said, Hallelujah, she says, praise the Lord, all is well.

and she was as ready to die. It was beautiful. So ready just to leave her body behind in this world, and just enter into eternity.

Absolutely sure that all is well. But I've seen other believers, and they're saying, not only do I believe all is well, but I'm able to trust my family to the Lord.

I'm able to trust my husband to the Lord. I'm able to trust my wife to the Lord. They don't need me, but they do need my Lord.

[19:09] All is well. And to be able to trust the Lord, not only for your own soul, but for others. How beautiful.

And that's what Simeon had. He's seen this child who's a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.

What about you? Your time will come of the place where once it was, it shall no more be known. Your life, like my life, will soon be a past. It'll be a history. It'll be a one line. It'll be done. But when you move from this life into the next, when you move into eternity, can you really say, all is well, because I know I have met the Prince of Peace.

See, that makes all the difference. Simeon, he only saw a baby. this babe hadn't yet died on the cross. This babe hadn't yet died so that Simeon's sins could be forgiven.

[20:32] And yet he's absolutely sure that this child will be the means of saving himself and all the people of God. Even though it was future, he has perfect peace.

For us, it's the other way round. We're living after the cross. we can look back to the death of Jesus. We can look back to the resurrection of Jesus. We can know that he died so that we may live. We know that he rose from the dead so that we will live forevermore. And those of us who are believers, we look back and we know that he died to take away our sins.

And it's great for us that we can look and say as we approach death, all is well with my soul.

I have met the Prince of Peace. Prince of Peace in eternity. Prince of Peace in death.

[21:36] But you know what's really hard is knowing the Prince of Peace in life. See, that's when your faith is really tested.

Not so much in eternity, the battles are over. Not even as you're going through the valley of the shadow of death, though the enemy in many ways is at his greatest, so much of the Lord's anointing is upon you that you're able to go through that valley in a way that Simeon does. All is well. But see in life, when you're living in life, can you know this peace? That's the real question.

Do you know the Prince of Peace in your own life now? You see, the people of God, there are three things I think they know because of the one Lord Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

The first thing is the peace of forgiven sin. In Luke's Gospel, chapter 7, what do we read here? there was this man, remember, and he invited Jesus to his house, a man called Simon.

[22:52] And while he was there in the house, a woman came in and she anointed him with oil and then wept over him and cleansed his feet and so on.

Simon, of course, is very angry. So Jesus tells a parable to him. A certain money lender at two debtors, one would five hundred denarii, the other fifty.

And when they couldn't pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more? Simon answered, the one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt. Well, he said, you've answered right.

Then he turned to the woman and said, do you see that woman? I entered your house, you gave me no water for my feet. She has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.

You gave me no kiss. She has not ceased to kiss my feet. You, Simon, did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment.

[23 : 52] Therefore, Simon, I'm telling you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.

And then he turns and he says to the woman words that she would have loved hearing, your sins are forgiven. And those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, who is this who even forgives sins?

He ignores them. He speaks again to the woman, your faith has saved you. Go in peace. Now Jesus says, see this woman, she has sinned so many sins.

That's exactly what he says. I tell you, he says, are sins which are many. Many, many sins. And maybe you're here tonight and you have ever so many sins.

More sins than you would like to admit to your wife or your husband or your children or your parents. You have a lifetime of sins. And oh, how the devil, as we said yesterday, can so easily come and make you focus on these sins and say, you, my friend, you can never ever know peace with God.

[25 : 14] You can never be accepted by him. You can never expect to go through the valley of the shadow of death knowing the peace of the Lord in your heart.

Why? Because you have sinned. No, no, no. Not because you have sinned, but because you have sinned so many sins. You're over the limit. There's just no way back for you.

You have reached the end. You've reached the limit of God's patience. You are the one who can never ever be forgiven.

And there may be somebody here tonight and they're absolutely sure that their sins are so many they can never ever be forgiven. You may even think that you're someone who has actually sinned the unforgivable sin.

You may think that you're somebody who has blasphemed the spirit and that somehow you can never be brought over the line. That your destiny is the darkness.

[26 : 16] That your destiny is to know bitterness in the soul. To know weeping and gnashing of teeth for an endless eternity.

Yeah. And the devil can pour all that into your heart. And Jesus still says to you your sins which are many I'm able to forgive them all.

Every single one of them. This woman I don't know what her sins were. You may imagine them but I'll tell you they were so many and yet the Lord forgave her.

And the way he forgave her he had forgiven her before this moment. He had forgiven her before she came and wept. He had forgiven her before she came with these tears of penitence.

He had forgiven her before she showed him love. Because Jesus says Simon do you know why she loves me so much? Do you know why she is weeping over me and wiping my feet with her tears?

[27 : 32] Because she loves me. And why does she love me Simon? Because I have forgiven her sins. Simon you find it hard to believe so listen to this listen to what I'm saying to you her sins which are many are forgiven done over with they're completely wiped out of the book they are forgiven they're sent away they'll never be brought up before God ever again they are forgiven and then after the grumbling of others he says to the woman again it's as if he's saying Simon listen to this your faith has saved you he says to the woman go in peace all is well and the woman walked out of the house knowing her sins were forgiven she knew it before but now she's heard it from the mouth of none other than the

Lord the King the Prince of Peace He actually wants to assure her your sins are forgiven there were many go now in peace I think she slept well that night I think she slept so well you know what she had for a pillow she had for a pillow the words of the Lord your sins though many forgiven go in peace isn't that beautiful of course you can have peace in this life of course the Prince of Peace can bring you right now to know that peace but there's more the Prince of Peace he can actually give peace to the troubled Christian in John chapter 14 you know the well known words read so often at funeral times let not your hearts be troubled believe in

God believe also in me in my father's house are many rooms if it were not so would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and take to myself that where I am you may be also and then he goes on to say in verse 27 peace I leave with you my peace I give to you not as the world do I give to you let not your hearts be troubled neither

let them be afraid you you heard me say to you I am going away and I will come to you here's the peace of the untroubled heart Jesus says don't let your heart be troubled don't let your heart be troubled why are you not going away from us are you not leaving us behind and Jesus says yes I am going away but don't let your heart be troubled all is well my peace

I give to you don't be troubled because I'm not here and you might be saying tonight all those listen you might say if the prince of peace were sitting in Stornoway Free Church tonight if he was up here in the pew then I could look at him and know that all is well and Jesus is saying in the upper room listen I am going away I'm going away and you know this in a few weeks he would be going away certainly going away at his death but even after his resurrection and 40 days later they see him ascend up into heaven and he goes away and you think surely the heart of the church will be so so troubled because Jesus isn't here with them the prince of peace isn't present and Jesus says no that's just not the way it is peace I give you peace

I give you not as the world gives do I give to you I give you my peace all is well because I am going to prepare a place for you because I am going things will be better for you I am going to make sure that there will be an eternity for you at your death and guess what he says I'll come back for you I'll come back and you know my friend that's beautiful there's the Christian his heart her heart does no need to be troubled because the Lord hasn't forgotten you for a moment you may say but I don't see him no you don't see him you don't see him physically with your eyes but he remembers you but that's only one part of this the other part is that

[32 : 55] Jesus says the helper the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name he'll teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I've said to you peace I leave with I'm going away he says but the paraclete the Holy Spirit will fill your heart listen every believer knows the experience of God's Spirit in their hearts if you're still here tonight and you're not a Christian you may be thinking see if I start following the Lord and if I start tonight if I give my heart over to him if I trust in his promises if I believe how do I know that I'll be able to keep going and the answer I give to you is you will not keep going you will be kept going you are the kind of person in whom the Lord will place his spirit he himself will come and live in your heart and it's as if he'll be whispering to you all all is well but there's something else here and that's where we come to the blind man of course the blind man in

John chapter 9 there's the peace of knowing that what God has begun he will bring to completion what God has begun he will bring to completion see that blind man all we read in that chapter in John 9 is one day of this man's life a day that began with him being blind ends with him seeing ends with him believing ends with him worshipping ends with him being one of Christ's people he had met the wonderful counselor he had experienced the might of God he knew that there was one person who loved him and loved him forever somebody who looked out for him healed him came back for him loved him ensured that he would belong to his people this was a great work that had begun in him and you know this

I'm absolutely sure that that man would have said to you he's such a wonderful counselor he's such a mighty God he's such an everlasting father I can only know that all is well he's the prince of peace see that's where the peace come from it's knowing that he has spoken what is right knowing that God has power to change his life and has already begun to do it and knowing that what God has begun he will continue to perform Jesus is his father and he will be his father tomorrow and the next day and the next day this man began to know God and he never stopped knowing

God he's been in heaven for over 2,000 years he's seen the wonderful counselor he's seen the mighty God he's seen his everlasting father and he knows in his heart the prince of peace and no one no one is speaking to him about his sin anymore nobody is asking who sinned this man or his parents that he was born blind no this man sees this man believes this man worships this man knows that all is well I would love the story of the blind man to be your story I would love everyone in this congregation to actually come to know the king the king who is wonderful in his counsel with the might of God at work in his reign cares as the everlasting father and can give you a peace that nothing in this world can take from you let us pray

Lord our sovereign God we we thank you oh how we thank you that you are the one who is able to do for us more than we can ask or think you are the one Lord who sets mountains before us and we don't think we have the strength to climb them and then we climb them you ask us to follow you and we don't think we have the strength to follow you and then we find that we have followed you for years you are the one Lord who asks us to serve you and we don't think at times we have the

strength to serve you and then we look back and we see that we have given our lives to you we've left our boats are and all that we have why is it

[38 : 53] Lord that we were able to keep going it's all because of you it's all because of your son and we thank you Lord this night that you are the one who builds your church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it you are the one Lord is doing a work and the zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish it through the king reign everlastingly may your kingdom come may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven may your name be hallowed tonight and may glory come to you we ask it for your honour and glory in Jesus Amen let's close now by singing the

God's praise from Psalm 23 23 if you had to choose Psalm 23 does it speak of the king as the wonderful counsellor the mighty God the everlasting father the prince of peace or does it speak of the king in all of these ways if it does and I believe it does then let's sing this as part of our confession Psalm 23 the Lord's my shepherd I'll not want the whole psalm let us stand to sing the Lord's my shepherd I'll not want He makes me come to lie In pastures in He He and He the quiet water dry My soul He can restore again And He to walk again Within the house of righteousness He bore His own His sin Yea Though

I walk in death star grim Yet will I fear now for love and love and love and shall make love for still My deep love has furnished in presence of my foe my head over with thy blood and my cup over home forever home goodness and mercy all my life shall truly follow me and in

God's heart forever more my world my world in glory shall be now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

[43 : 48] Amen.