

Sermon – December 24, 2024 – Christmas Eve      Pastor Ventura  
Prince of Peace  
Isaiah 9:1–2, 6–7

Dear Friends

Tonight is a wonderful night! Isn't it. So much light in the midst of darkness. So much cheer, and above all so much peace. Peace, you say. Well, we need peace! The reality is that we do crave peace. And if only for a night we have some peace, then this is the night of peace! We wanted to arrive here today. After all you have been on the go... Truth be told that for some to arrive to this evening you went through a lot... lots to prepare, shopping, wrapping presents, food, cleaning, on, and on, you went... that you need some holidays after Christmas. But tonight, we want to enjoy some peace. Yet others don't see much peace around today, no peace in the world. It said that we live in an era called Permacrisis.

“Permacrisis” a word the *Collins English Dictionary* revealed back in 2022, that refers to how the nations across the globe reel from one crisis to another. It is by definition “an extended period of instability and insecurity, especially one resulting from a series of catastrophic events.”

Sure enough, we have seen a portion of that, the ongoing wars in Ukraine, the Middle East, Africa and other places. Climate change challenges, political and economical instability. There is a lot going on, indeed.

However, nations are not the only ones who are at war. There is hatred in many people in this world, even acts of violence toward others for various reasons. Different skin color, or because people belong to a different religion or to a different political party. Still others hate and hurt others simply because they covet what others have. No wonder society seems to be at war with itself!

There is even war among people who should love one another. Many husbands and wives are at war with each other, marriage vows are often broken. Many parents and children are at war with each other, we see that in dysfunctional homes filled with tension, strife, and violence. Even fellow Christians who ought to love one another are

often filled with hatred for one another. Works of places are filled with politics and betrayals. We need peace and harmony all over. We need peace in our families, we need peace in the community, we need inner peace.

And if you are looking for that peace. Then you have come to the right place. I'm glad, we are glad you are here tonight! Because we have good news to offer and share and invite you to receive.

And this wonderful news is found in no other than in the Prince of Peace! As it was prophesied long ago that a baby who was going to be born of a virgin would bear the title of "Prince of Peace" for this is what he was going to be and do.

This is what God had spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined." And a little later we hear these words: "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 Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup> 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 for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this."

Did you hear that, his name will be the "Prince of Peace." It is his title, it is his name, for this is what he came for. To give us peace. Peace that surpasses all understanding.

As you see dear friends, peace is found in Jesus Christ alone, not in the things the world offers. Peace is not so much the absence of wars.

No, peace is not found through many forms of escapism either... drugs, alcohol, immoral relationships, or constant entertainment. No, it is not found in any of the pleasure, or self-satisfaction and positive thinking we pursue. No, we will never find true peace in the world one way or another. No, it is not pessimism, just being real.

True peace is found in no other but in Jesus, in Jesus alone. He is the prince of peace.

This is good news indeed. Because if peace were up to us, we'd be doomed to an eternity without peace. Scripture teaches that we are by nature enemies of God. The problem is not that God doesn't love us. No! The problem is that we don't love God, nor do we trust Him. The proof is that we constantly sin against God by our desires, thoughts, words, and deeds—by the evil we do and the good we fail to do.

And because of our sin, Scripture clearly teaches that we deserve God's eternal wrath, and there's nothing we can do to change the situation. Not only we can't get rid of our guilt and avoid the punishment we deserve but the real problem is that we can't change our own hearts. We can't give ourselves the peace we so desperately need.

But we need to understand that things have been this way ever since Adam and Eve declared war against God! And we are the sinful descendants of Adam and Eve. God's Word teaches that we are conceived with their sinful nature. Therefore, it is natural for us to be at war with God. In fact, the reason there is so much war among people is that we are at war with God! Until we have peace with God, there will be no peace on earth. All we would find is war and strife at all the various levels of human relationships.

But that's why we need to pay very close attention to the true message of Christmas. Because the true message of Christmas is the arrival of the Prince of Peace. And that peace is for you. God's Son came into this world to give you peace.

But to receive that peace, you must start with him bringing you into a loving relationship with God. We need to be at peace with God if we are going to be at peace with others and ourselves.

And the peace the Prince of Peace gives you is everlasting. Just as the Prophet said: "Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end" (9:7). It is not a momentary peace, but a peace that goes beyond this night, even to eternity.

Now, for that peace to be yours, Jesus, God in human flesh, this little baby of Bethlehem, chose to live a life of humility and service. And one day allowed Himself to be beaten and nailed to a cross.

The same prophet Isaiah also foretold how this was going to be: “But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His wounds we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:5)

Did you hear that? Just as Isaiah speaks of Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem, he also speaks of Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross.

And what makes it very special for us, is that Jesus did not have to endure this shame and suffering. He could have made war against us and wiped us out. But he instead allowed us to wipe him out with our sins so that we might be saved from our war against God and be rescued from the punishment we deserve.

“For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.” The Scriptures say, “For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—<sup>8</sup> but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us...<sup>10</sup> For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.” (Romans 5:6–8,10)

Isn’t that amazing?! Jesus was born to die for us! He was born to die for us to give us peace with God. Earlier in Romans chapter 5, Paul says, “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”.

My friends, because of Jesus’ death and resurrection you are at peace with God. The war God could have justly waged against us he instead waged against His Son, whom He punished in our place, so that through faith in Him we might be reconciled with God. That’s what the Prince of Peace has done.

Your sins are forgiven. You are no longer God’s enemy. You can live at peace with God.

Remember what the angels said to the shepherds? “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!” (Luke 2:14). Do you want God’s peace? Then let His favor rest on you. In other words, repent of your sin and trust in the Prince of Peace who died for your sin and reconciled you to God.

Sadly, God’s favor does not rest on some people in this world—not because God doesn’t want His favor to rest on them but because some refuse to repent of their sin and trust in the Prince of Peace.

Maybe you know someone who is running from God and trying to find peace in his or her life of sin. Maybe you’ve been guilty of this foolishness. Well, God doesn’t want you to be at war with Him and other people. God wants His favor to rest on you so that you can receive peace from the Prince of Peace. And he wants to do that today.

Tonight, God’s favor rests on you as he calls you to repent of your sin and receive peace through faith in your Savior, who is Christ the Lord. That’s good news, indeed.

But there is more... The same Prince of Peace who has reconciled you to God can also heal the broken relationships you have with others. As the love and mercy of God fills your heart, you will be moved to show love and mercy to others—even forgiving those who have hurt you.

Because of Jesus, we can begin to have peace on earth. Because of the Prince of Peace, husbands and wives can begin to forgive, love, and serve each other. Because of the Prince of Peace, parents and children can begin to forgive, love, and serve one another. Because of the Prince of Peace, all humans who trust in Him can begin to forgive, love, and serve one another. There can be peace on earth when people are at peace with God.

However, as wonderful as that news is, we must remember that we will never have complete peace on earth until Jesus returns again in glory. Nevertheless, even though we will never have perfect peace on earth until Jesus returns, we believers can

still live in peace and have certain hope for the future! We can live in peace now because we know that our sins are forgiven and that we are reconciled to God through Jesus. We can also live with certain hope for the future because one day Jesus will return, as He promised, and then He will put an end to all war and all evil.

That's right! One day Jesus will establish His government in the new creation which he will give us on the day he returns in power and glory. On that day we believers who rest in God's favor will be ushered into the new creation where we will live forever in perfect peace.

So tonight as that hold Hymn reminds us, we say "Glory to the newborn King; peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled."

With those words in your heart and mind, let God's favor rest upon you and your homes, and make the Prince of Peace the center of your marriages and families—and then you will experience the peace of God that passes all human understanding.

Amen!