

"NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES: PRINCE OF PEACE."

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First Christian Reformed Church, Lynden

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Text for the Sermon: Isaiah 9:6-7; John 14:25-27; John 16:33

Introduction.

We listen to the news and read the headlines all week long and then come here and sing "peace on earth and mercy mild" and "silent night, holy night ... all is calm, all is bright."

It creates a sort of dissonance doesn't it? We live in a world full of wars and rumors of wars and then we celebrate Christmas. Our world is so desperate for peace you would think the world would be more drawn to someone who claims to be the Prince of Peace.

Ted Turner and World Peace.

Ted Turner, the multi-billionaire founder of CNN, has certainly been a champion for world peace. He established the Goodwill Games, he gave a billion dollars to the United Nations for peace and humanitarian work. In 1993 he offered a huge sum of money for any book that could give a workable plan for world peace. He received 10,000 manuscripts and not one plausible plan for a sustainable, peaceful future. His competition was a bust.

I guess no one turned in a Bible. He forgot to read his Bible. Jesus has a plan.

Jesus' will.

I don't know if you are aware of this but when Jesus died He had a will. He bequeathed a number of things to different people. I ran across this in Matthew Henry's wonderful commentary which should be in your home and put to use.

Jesus bequeathed His soul to His Father.
He left His body to Joseph of Arimathea.
His clothes went to some Roman soldiers.
He left His mother in the care of John.

So what did He leave to His disciples? They left everything for Him? What could He give back? Silver and gold He had none. No riches, no worldly honor, no fame and fortune. He bequeathed to them one thing, *peace*.

Jesus said, "my peace I give you. My peace, the peace that I purchased for you with my blood. The only peace that will give you true peace. The peace that is my gift to give to whom I will."

He left them something far better than anything this world could give, something far better than anything on any of our Christmas lists. This gift is nothing like anything the world offers. The world can only offer physical, temporal, trivial gifts. What does this world offer that would quiet a troubled heart or remove all fear?

The world cannot give inward peace, peace of mind, peace of conscience, freedom from fear, pardon from sin, hope of eternal life.

Names of Jesus.

As we have worked our way through the four titles for the Messiah in Isaiah 9:6 and all that they reveal concerning the nature and character of God and His Son, we have seen already that He is all wise. Coupled with His wisdom is great power, Mighty God.

If He is God then it follows of necessity that He is also eternal, but what is most remarkable is that He is not just some powerful distant deity, but He is a Father-like God. He is personal and present who does good to His children.

If He is a Mighty God who uses His divine power to do good for His children for all of eternity, then He is also a Prince who removes all the peace-disturbing and peace-destroying powers in us and around us.

Jesus came down to earth to wage a war that will lead to a perfect peace. We still see the battles being waged in us and in our world. But the victory is certain, the outcome has been attained and is guaranteed.

He will eternally rule in peace, “of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end” (Isaiah 9:7).

Prince of Peace

Prince means a leader or commander; a captain or chief. In this context a prince is a sovereign ruler over a large territory.

In the days of kings and kingdoms, a people’s peace and safety and security depended completely on the king. He was their protector and provider, their defender. Without a king there was no peace. Life without a king was miserable and restless.

In the Christmas story when King Herod heard from three distant traveling kings that there was a new king of the Jews born, he was troubled and when the king was troubled, all of Jerusalem was troubled with him. An anxious king makes for an anxious people (Matthew 2:3).

And to have a king for an enemy is a real recipe for no peace. To have God as your enemy, or to be at enmity with God is the greatest definition of lack of peace.

That there is a need for peace is without question. Jesus came into a broken, chaotic, war-torn, violent world. The disastrous effects of sin are absolutely everywhere.

Just how vast is the extent of Jesus’ rule and authority is seen in the kind of peace He is able to bring and how well He is able to establish His peace.

The Prince of Peace makes possible four kinds of peace.

Peace with God.

The first and most important peace is peace with God. Someone has said, “It is not possible to have the Peace OF God without Peace WITH God.”

For there to be true peace on earth there must be the removal of the cause of lack of peace which is sin. Only after sin is dealt with can there be true peace.

Sin must be removed in order for God to be reconciled with us. It is human sin that has broken the relationship and created a dividing wall. By nature we are God's enemies.

Jesus is the Prince of Peace because Jesus is the only one who has come to establish peace between God and man by removing the dividing wall, the barrier of sin.

He canceled the debt that stood against us with its legal demands and nailed them to the cross (Colossians 2:14).

He perfectly and fully satisfied the wrath of God and the demand for absolute justice making it possible for a sinner to stand in a right relationship with a righteous God.

Jesus made peace between God and sinner possible, so that God can pardon our sin and see us as imputed with Christ's righteousness and obedience.

Isaiah 53:5 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.

Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our peace with God has been bought and paid for by Jesus Christ. Peace is a divine gift. It comes from God, it's given by God. Jesus didn't come just to restore peace or preserve peace, He came to make peace, to create peace. He is the author and giver of peace.

The true peace came into the world as a child. When that child was born, peace was born. If you want peace you will have to go to that child to get it. No one else on earth has it.

Being born again won't make everything all better or solve all your problems. It won't make you richer or skinner or smarter, but it will solve your biggest problem, peace with the creator God of the universe who alone holds in His hands the key to eternal life. Gamble everything on this and if you lose everything for this one thing, you have lost nothing.

Peace with our circumstances.

The second kind of peace that the Prince of Peace brings is peace within ourselves and peace with our circumstances.

John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

John 16:33 I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The parents in Newtown, CT who are the strongest are those Christian parents who can rest in the quiet confidence that though Satan himself should come and snatch their children out of their hands, God will preserve them and deliver them to heaven.

One of the little girls killed at Sandy Hook is shown in a video singing, "Come, Thou Almighty King."

Another family shared that they don't feel anger or hate toward their child's killer. That's a place only achieved through peace with God and confidence in God. To be able to leave all our fears and worries and needs in God's hands is peace.

Real peace is best displayed in the midst of chaos, turmoil or confusion. Think about the ocean when it is stirred up by a storm. On the surface it looks violent, but the deeper you go below the surface the calmer it is. Like the old saying still waters run deep. The heart that has the peace of God is calm even when all hell is breaking loose around it. Our health or finances or life may be crumbling but our anchor is the peace of God.

Yesterday at Todd's and Emma's wedding I talked about how our marriage vows are a call to suffer in the midst of difficult circumstances, but we don't suffer alone, God is with us.

There is no physical thing on this earth that will give you true peace or joy. There is nothing in our earthly circumstances that if it changed you would have true and lasting peace and joy.

True and lasting peace and joy is not out there, it starts with God and then settles in an attitude of the heart. It surpasses all understanding. Are you anxious about anything?

Isaiah 26:3 You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.

Peace with each other.

The third kind of peace the Prince of Peace makes possible is peace with others.

Romans 12:18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

How?

Romans 12:14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. 17 Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.

When we see each other as forgiven sinners, when we realize how much God has forgiven in us and how much He has done for us and how big a work in progress each of us are, we make allowances for each other. We repent quickly and we forgive quickly. We don't take up offenses, we kill the critical spirit in us. We let go of grudges and bitterness and hate.

We make peace with others, we become peacemakers.

Peace among nations.

The final kind of peace the Prince of Peace will make is peace with all nations. At His first coming He brought peace with God. At His second coming He will bring peace among nations.

Micah 4:3 He shall judge between many peoples, and shall decide for strong nations far away; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore;

Isaiah 9:7 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 zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

There cannot and will not be peace on earth until there is peace in each human heart. No surprise that Ted Turner found no sustainable plan for peace. If it doesn't start with God through Jesus Christ it is doomed.

How will the Prince of Peace accomplish all four of these kinds of peace?

The zeal of the Lord will accomplish this.

What does that mean? Would it help you if I translated it, "The jealousy of the Lord will accomplish this"?

The zeal or the jealousy of the Lord means the fire of His love and His wrath will accomplish this. The Lord loves His people with a deep and passionate and compassionate love. He is not a God who doesn't care, He is a Father who cares very, very deeply. His intense love flares up in a fiery wrath that consumes all that opposes Him and hurts His children.

He is jealous and zealous for the best interests of His people. It's impossible for God to be blasé or disinterested or for Him to say, "Whatever." He can't not care.

His jealousy for His honor and His name and His glory and the glory of His grace shall prevail. The promise is guaranteed by His zeal.

But this will not happen until the darkness has reached its deepest point. The darkness will gradually deepen. The sins of humanity must fill up until the fullness of time.

A fullness of time was reached when God sent His Son to be born of a woman to bring redemption. A fullness of time is yet coming when the sins of mankind have reached their final fullness and Jesus will return to the earth a second and final time to bring judgment and deliverance.

Newtown, CT is just a small glimpse of the horror of sin and evil yet to be revealed. And when it reaches its apex, the glory of God's wrath and justice will be revealed. The glory of God's power and might will be revealed. The glory of God's redemption and deliverance will be revealed.

What has happened in the past has been given as a warning and a call to repentance and faith.

Summary and Application:

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!” (Luke 2:13–14).

God has two purposes in sending Christ. To reveal His glory and to give us His peace. He is glorified and we are satisfied. Or to say it another way, we can only be satisfied when we see and know God’s glory and when we give Him glory. Both are accomplished when we believe.

Romans 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

The Prince of Peace. “In a world full of brokenness He brings shalom. In a world full of strife and bitterness He brings love. In a world full of disease and sickness He brings healing. In a world that hates and fears God He brings reconciliation” (Rev. Adrian Dieleman, in a sermon preached December 23, 2001).