

Peace on Earth (Xmas 2025)

Part 1: Peace You Can Feel... Even in Chaos

Isaiah 9:5-6, Luke 2:8-14, John 14:27

Summary: Jesus offers a deep, unshakeable peace you can feel even in life's chaos, bringing wholeness, hope, and true peace this Christmas.

Main Ideas:

We long for peace in a chaotic world.

We think of peace as the absence of trouble, but what if it's the presence of something greater?

The true peace of God is the wholeness of his people.

Jesus is the Prince of Shalom who will bring shalom with no end

Jesus doesn't just give moments of calm... He brings true shalom

Thankful prayer lets us be honest with God and experience his peace.

God's peace can outlast and overcome any chaos the world throws at you.

Invitation:

Ask God: "Where do I need your shalom right now?"

Read Philippians 4:6-7 and thank him.

Discussion Questions:

1. When you think of "peace," what picture or feeling comes to mind... and where do you think that expectation came from?
2. Where do you feel the gap most between the "Christmas ideal" and your real life this time of year?
3. Which title of Jesus in Isaiah 9 (Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace) resonates most with you right now, and why?
4. What's one area of your life right now where you need God's shalom—not just an easier circumstance, but real wholeness?
5. Who in your life might need the peace of Jesus right now, and how might God be inviting you to be a source of calm, encouragement, or presence for them?

Transcript:

IN: Picture this: Weeks of joyful anticipation, smooth and easy shopping, fun parties with friends and coworkers... and zero drama.

- Enjoyable School Christmas programs... No last-minute stress
- Everything fits perfectly into your schedule.

And then, finally, you gather around the Christmas tree with your family

- Sharing hot cocoa, opening gifts, maybe singing carols, and reading the story of baby Jesus.

And, at 2:00 pm, for some reason, a delicious dinner.

- Laughter, stories, and holiday cheer
- Everyone pitches in to clean up, nary a harsh word spoken.

WE: That's the Christmas ideal...

But our reality is more like...

- Overloaded schedules, shopping stress, awkward family moments, money worries... the list goes on

And that's just our personal lives.

- Add in wars, disease, division... no wonder we long for peace in a chaotic world.

We're nostalgic for the "good old days," but has it ever really been easy?

GOD: One thing I love about the biblical writings is that they express the longings of people across thousands of years.

And 2700 years ago, the people of Judah were living with anything but peace.

- Threatened by the Assyrians... they longed for rescue.

And so, into a world much like ours... fearful, chaotic, longing for peace... God speaks through the prophet Isaiah...

Isaiah 9:1-6a (NLT) *Nevertheless, that time of darkness and despair will not go on forever. The land of Zebulun and Naphtali will be humbled, but there will be a time in the future when Galilee of the Gentiles, which lies along the road that runs between the Jordan and the sea, will be filled with glory.*

The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine...

For you will break the yoke of their slavery and lift the heavy burden from their shoulders...

The boots of the warrior and the uniforms bloodstained by war will all be burned. They will be fuel for the fire.

For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity.

Isaiah's promise gave hope.

A few years later, people saw a glimpse of rescue when Hezekiah became king

- He reopened and restored the Temple and destroyed idols.
- He made Jerusalem safer by strengthening its walls.
- And when the Assyrian army threatened Jerusalem, he didn't fear or try to fight; he prayed, and God miraculously saved his people.

Hezekiah brought peace for a time... but it was fragile.

- Soon, darkness returned.
- Enemies kept coming.
- The people still longed for a peace that lasts.

Isn't that how life is?

Maybe you've felt that, too. Just as things settle down, the chaos returns.

We all want to catch our breath and enjoy some peace...

- A quiet home, a calm mind, no drama at work or in relationships. Leaders who actually make things better.
- We think... "If I could just get rid of these problems/these people/this job... if I had just a few million more dollars... then I'd have peace."

But life never seems to cooperate...

- Every time we try to engineer peace by removing problems, a dozen new ones crawl in.
- Like bailing water from a sinking life raft.
- We wonder if lasting peace is even possible... for our families, for our world, or even for ourselves.

What if the peace we're chasing actually isn't out there?

- What if real peace goes deeper than anything we can grab for ourselves?

If peace isn't found in perfect circumstances or perfect leaders, where is it found?

- That's what God wants to show us this Christmas.

We think of peace as the absence of trouble, but what if it's the presence of something greater?

The ancient Jewish teachers and scholars knew Isaiah was pointing to more than just one good king or a generation without war.

- It was a promise for a peace that would change everything... a peace only God himself could bring.
- A peace deeper than any king, any movement, or any momentary calm.

And so, 700 years after Isaiah, in a quiet field under the stars, that promise broke into the world in the most unexpected way.

Luke 2:8-14 (NLT) *That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."*

Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

...Peace on earth.

That word, PEACE, in the original Greek text is a translation of the Hebrew word Shalom.

- Maybe you've heard it before... our city, Salem, is named after it.

But Shalom means so much more than just the absence of conflict or stress or noise.

Shalom is deeper and richer... it means completeness, wholeness, the way things should be.

- Think of the feeling of a house that has been cleaned after a chaotic kid's birthday party
- Putting that last piece in a puzzle after searching and searching
- A symphony where every instrument is playing its part perfectly

That's the peace Jesus brings: where everything and everyone is in its right place, nothing missing, nothing broken.

So when the angels announce "peace on earth"...they aren't just talking about an end to wars or family drama or workplace stress (though a day is coming for that!)...

They're announcing that in the birth of this child, God is offering to make us whole again, inside and out.

- To restore what's broken in us. To bring our chaos into order.

The peace God brings isn't just about removing what hurts... it's about restoring what's lost and making us whole, right here, right now.

The true peace of God is the wholeness of his people.

But there's more... Look at the titles God gave this child in Isaiah's prophecy...

"And he will be called:

- **Wonderful Counselor:** He knows our struggles and guides us with wisdom.
- **Mighty God:** He has the power to overcome everything that threatens us.
- **Everlasting Father:** He loves us with a constant, never-failing love.
- **Prince of Peace:** He is the very source and ruler of shalom.
- **His government and its peace** [its shalom] **will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity.**

Isaiah isn't describing just another king... This is God Himself come to earth as the Prince of Peace

The angels announcing the birth of Jesus are not just promising a peaceful feeling during the holidays, but an unending, unstoppable wholeness that starts within us and will one day fill the entire world.

- Jesus is the Prince of Shalom who will bring shalom with no end

Not just a brief break from conflict, but an everlasting, ever-deepening wholeness... shalom that lasts, that nothing can take away.

Jesus offers this gift to anyone who chooses to follow him with their lives...

John 14:27 (NLT) "I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid."

See, Jesus' peace is so much more than the absence of pain or difficulty...

- That kind of peace can be ruined in an instant... a phone call, an unexpected bill, a doctor's visit, or a careless word.

It's the peace of knowing you are loved and seen,

- The peace of being cared for, even if the worst happens.
- The peace of accepting that you are lovely because he loves you.
- The peace of knowing you have infinite worth because you are created in the image of God himself.

It's the peace of knowing that no matter what happens, even in death, you are not alone

- You are always in the hands of your infinitely loving Heavenly Father.

Jesus doesn't just give moments of calm... He brings true shalom

- Wholeness. Security.
- A life where even in the midst of chaos... we know who we are and whose we are.

Honestly, for me...

- When I'm living in God's shalom... I'm a better husband and a more patient dad and friend.
- I listen more and react less.
- When Liz and I are living in God's Shalom together... our relationship is strong, healthy, fun, and we handle an unexpected bill or work stress so much better

YOU: So let me ask you: What's the one place in your life that feels least at peace right now?

Are you looking for the absence of a problem... or are you open to the presence of Jesus, the Prince of Shalom?

This week, as you feel that Christmas longing for peace, let it move you deeper...not just for quieter circumstances, but for real wholeness. For His shalom.

Ask God honestly:

- "Where do I need your shalom right now?"
- Where am I just trying to escape my problems, instead of letting your peace fill me?
- Would you meet me here, bring your wholeness, your presence, your peace?"

Take what he's said to heart this week as you talk to him, and see what starts to change

Use **Philippians 4:6-7** as a guide this week:

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

Thank him that he's not far off... that even when things feel out of control, he's right there with you, bringing his peace.

Read Philippians 4:6-7 and thank him.

See, the key here is thanking him... praying with thanksgiving.

We can pray ourselves into a pit of despair...

- "Oh God help me... I'm in so much trouble, I don't see how I'll ever have enough money to get my head above water, oh this hurts so much, oh why me?"
- We end up more overwhelmed by our problems than when we started.

But praying thankfully puts our problems in perspective when compared to our God of peace.

We can pray with thanksgiving and pray ourselves into his shalom...

- God help me... thank you that you see me and are with me,
- I'm in so much trouble... thank you for never quitting on me
- I don't have the money I feel I need... but thank you for always providing for me so far.
- This hurts so much... thank you that you will end all pain someday
- Why me?... thank you that you have a plan for me, help me trust you even when I can't see the end of the storm.

Thankful prayer lets us be honest with God and experience his peace.

No matter what chaos surrounds us, his shalom can guard our hearts and minds.

WE: And since most of us here are adults... the Christmas season often means extra busyness and responsibility...

But it can also be our reminder... the Prince of Peace, the source of true Shalom, has come for us.

So as you go from party to program, interacting with both people you enjoy and people you tolerate,

- Remember... we don't have to be swept away by the chaos.

We can rest in the peaceful arms of our Heavenly Father.

- We can trust that he has us
- We can be honest and thankful and experience true peace.

And if we practice this kind of peace during Christmas, it is something we can begin to weave into everyday life long after the decorations are packed back up.

Imagine not falling prey to the worry, fear, and frantic anxiety around us.

- But being a source of calm to those around you...

We could teach our kids, by example, that life is more than running from one stress to the next.

What if our church community became the place people in Salem come to find joy and rest, even when life is chaos?

Imagine showing our friends and neighbors they are lovely because of who loves them,

- That they have infinite worth because they are created in the image of God.
- And that they, too, can find peace with the Prince of Peace.

So make this the Christmas you actually remember, not for the chaos, but the deep, quiet peace God puts inside your heart and mind.

Because God's peace can outlast and overcome any chaos the world throws at you.