

Summary: Jesus brings lasting peace (*shalom*), forgiveness, and freedom from sin—peace that goes beyond holiday cheer and transforms your life.

Main Ideas:

Christmas gifts are great, but they don't usually last.

Christmas is the promise of real lasting peace.

We are imprisoned by sin, but the King came to set us free.

Darkness can never extinguish the light, and death can never defeat life.

Real peace is a gift.

God loves you, and he's inviting you into his family.

Peace isn't just a feeling. It's a gift. And it's yours to open this Christmas.

Transcript:

ME: Raffle

WE: There's something magical about Christmas gifts, isn't there

- The anticipation.
- The excitement.
- The moment before you unwrap it.

But if we're honest, even the best gifts don't last forever.

- Some break.
- Some wear out.
- Some are gone before we know it
- Christmas gifts are great, but they don't usually last.

Tonight, I want to talk about a different kind of gift

- A gift that doesn't wear out, doesn't run out, and doesn't let you down.
- It's a gift that was announced on that very first Christmas night.

Let me show you...

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.”

The angels promised “peace on earth.”

But what kind of peace is this?

- Is it just a warm feeling?
- Holiday cheer?
- A hopeful wish?

When the angels said “peace,” they used a word packed with meaning: shalom.

Shalom doesn’t just mean quiet or calm.

- It means wholeness.
- Life as it was meant to be
- Nothing missing.
- Nothing broken.

Imagine finishing something you’ve built, a Lego set, a puzzle, and every piece fits, nothing is missing.

- Or think about that amazing, rare moment when your room is actually clean, everything is in its place, and it just feels right.

That’s “shalom.”

And this is the peace the angels announced:

- Peace with God
- Peace with each other
- Peace deep inside us

Christmas is the promise of real lasting peace.

But if that’s true... If this peace was announced 2,000 years ago... why does it feel so hard to experience?

Because something powerful has been working against it.

The writers of the Bible call it **sin**... not just individual mistakes, but a force that twists us inward, fractures our relationships, and separates us from God.

Sin doesn’t just make us feel bad... it keeps us captive.

We see it in our world.

We feel it in ourselves.

We try to fix it, manage it, outgrow it... but it keeps pulling us back.

Left to ourselves, peace remains out of reach.

Maybe you've tried to find peace in a hundred ways. We all have.

- But something deeper always seems to get in the way, in our world and in our hearts.

Sin is like a prison we can't break out of.

- No matter how hard we try or how many good things we do, we just can't set ourselves free.

But God did not leave us trapped.

About 55 years after the first Christmas, the Apostle Paul explained what happened...

GOD: Romans 5:1 (NLT)

Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.

Peace with God doesn't begin with our effort.

It begins with God's action.

At Christmas, God stepped into our world in the person of Jesus.

We are imprisoned by sin, but the King came to set us free

Jesus didn't come to give advice from a distance.

He came to confront everything that was stealing life and peace.

- He healed the broken.
- He welcomed the excluded.
- He challenged systems that crushed people.
- He announced that God's kingdom had arrived.

Jesus entered fully into the darkness of our world

- Into suffering, injustice, betrayal, and even death itself.
- Not because he was defeated... but because he was invading the darkness to rescue us.

On the cross, the powers that enslave humanity did their worst

- But on the third day, Jesus came back to life, shattering sin and death forever.
- Like a stick of dynamite exploding a pumpkin from the inside out.
- Darkness can never extinguish the light, and death can never defeat life.

Death was defeated.

- Sin lost its grip.
- The powers of darkness were exposed and overcome.

This is the victory of Jesus.

And because of that victory, Paul can say: We now have peace with God.

- The relationship that was broken has been restored.
- The chains that held us have been broken.
- A new way of life has begun.

And here's the beautiful thing: this peace, the shalom Jesus won for us, is already ours.

- God has already given it.
- Jesus said, "My peace I give to you"
- This is his peace in the midst of chaos, stress, and life's storms.

But... the gift often remains beautifully wrapped under the tree.

- We can admire it, hope for it, even long for it... but we don't experience it fully until we choose to open it.

Every day, every moment, we are invited to pick up that gift and let it work in us.

- When selfishness rises, we can choose to pause and step into the peace Jesus offers, instead of reacting from SELF.

What that means is... the fruit of the Spirit—peace, patience, love—is ours, but it flows through us as we cooperate with God's gift, moment by moment.

It's like Jesus kicked down the prison door and said, "You're free! Come on out! And live your new life!"

This is what God's peace looks like.

- It isn't just a good feeling, or a short-term "Christmas spirit."

It's peace with God:

- You are no longer distant or excluded.
- You belong.
- You are welcomed into God's family.

It's peace with others:

- Because Jesus has broken the power of sin, we no longer have to live trapped in resentment, rivalry, or fear.
- Healing and forgiveness are possible.

And it's peace within:

- Even in a chaotic world, we know who we are and whose we are.
- We live from security, not striving.

And this peace doesn't wear out.

- It doesn't depend on circumstances.
- It doesn't disappear when life gets hard.
- And it keeps getting better and deeper the more we use it.

Because it's grounded in the victory of Jesus.

That's why we can't earn this peace.

- We can't clean up our own hearts or pay God back.
- Imagine being given the world's best Christmas present and insisting, "No, let me pay you back, just a little!"
- That would ruin the whole point.
- A real gift is meant to be received, not earned.

It's the same with God's gift of peace... Real peace is a gift.

Jesus already broke the chains... with his life, death, and resurrection.

But every day, we get to step out of that old prison and live in his freedom.

Sometimes it takes practice for our hearts to catch up, but the door is open wide.

YOU: So what does this mean for you and me, right here, tonight?

Maybe you're here tonight just looking for a little Christmas cheer.

Maybe you're here because someone invited you, or your parents made you come.

Or maybe... just maybe... You came here looking for something deeper.

- Maybe you came because you're tired.
- Worn down.
- Longing for real peace.

Tonight, God is offering you more than a feeling.

- He's inviting you into a new reality.
- A restored relationship.
- A life shaped by his peace.

God isn't angry with you.

- He isn't disappointed in you.
- He's calling you out of captivity and into freedom.
- God loves you, and he's inviting you into his family.

This Christmas, you don't have to wish for peace or try to earn it.

If you're ready, you can respond... not by achieving anything, but by trusting Jesus and joining your life to his victory.

You can pray quietly in your heart:

- Jesus, I trust You.
- I receive the life You offer.
- Free me from what holds me.
- Lead me into Your peace.

WE: This Christmas can be the Christmas you receive the gift of real lasting peace.

Just imagine... waking up each day knowing, all the way down in your soul, that you are loved and safe because God himself claims you as his child.

Imagine your family, your friendships, your classrooms, your workplace... changed because God's peace is flowing through you.

So this Christmas, don't settle for holiday feelings that fade, or for gifts that eventually break and disappear.

Accept the true gift that lasts... Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

- He offers a peace that fills your heart and can never be taken away.

Peace isn't just a feeling. It's a gift. And it's yours to open this Christmas.