



Christmas Series: Peace  
From sermon 12.8.19

Read *Luke 2:10-14*

Questions, Answers, and Review from Sunday's sermon: peace is a very popular theme and desire at Christmas time. Sadly, the peace we long for eludes most this time of year. The world sells a false peace: the perfect gift, scene, table, circumstances. Biblical peace is not a feeling\*. It's a choice based on the truth of God's Word and His promises. There will only be worldwide, lasting peace when Christ rules the earth and in eternity.

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From Sunday: What is the #1 thing we have been saved from in biblical peace? Saved from God. His righteous wrath and from the hell we fully deserved. See *Romans 5:1 & 10*

Why is this such an unpopular truth today?

Does contemplating this truth add to or take from your Christmas experience?

Read *Luke 2:1*. Who was Caesar Augustus? Why did the Holy Spirit include his name in the Christmas account? How is he the model of how the enemy wants to sell counterfeit peace? Exalted emperor of Rome at the time of Jesus' birth. He was born with much fanfare into royalty. He was worshipped as "one from the gods" and "savior of the world". He ushered in a generation of peace through conquer, submission, and force. His peace was a false and fleeting peace. Rome forever tried to recapture those glory days.

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From Sunday (and brainstorming) what are some topics of false peace we can fall into?

I'll have peace when \_\_\_\_\_. Various personal answers. When someone else changes. When I make/have enough money. When I'm out of debt. When my health improves. Others stop making demands of my time/energy. When my boss is gone. When my guy/political party runs the country. Peace is this inner, warm, fuzzy feeling.

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How are all of these misconceptions and lies? See *John 14:27*

Even the modern, western church has been selling a false peace. What are some things they claim God wants to save you from by bringing peace? Various answers. A life of meaninglessness. Poverty, anxiety, inequality, illness, ...

Read *Colossians 3:15*. How is peace a choice? What does the verse mention as a key component of real peace? Gratitude ("...be thankful"). See also *Philippians 4:6-7*

Is it wrong to desire the feeling of peace? Not at all. But, feelings change just like circumstances do. Biblical peace comes in my saving relationship with Jesus Christ. It is based on the unchanging Word of God. Therefore, I can be grateful and at peace in all things.

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Turn your paper over. Someone read the story behind the beloved hymn "It is Well with My Soul". Then, read and discuss the profound, peaceful lyrics.

This hymn was written after traumatic events in Horatio Spafford's life. The first two were the death of his two-year-old son and the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, which ruined him financially (he had been a successful lawyer and had invested significantly in property in the area of Chicago that was extensively damaged by the great fire). His business interests were further hit by the economic downturn of 1873, at which time he had planned to travel to Europe with his family on the SS Ville du Havre. In a late change of plan, he sent the family ahead while he was delayed on business concerning zoning problems following the Great Chicago Fire. While crossing the Atlantic Ocean, the ship sank rapidly after a collision with a sea vessel, the Loch Earn, and all four of Spafford's daughters died. His wife Anna survived and sent him the now famous telegram, "Saved alone ...". Shortly afterwards, as Spafford traveled to meet his grieving wife, he was inspired to write these words as his ship passed near where his daughters had died.

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll; whatever my lot,  
thou hast taught me to say, It is well, it is well with my soul.

It is well with my soul,  
it is well, it is well with my soul.

My sin--oh, the joy of this glorious thought-- My sin, not in part but the whole, is nailed to the  
cross, and I bear it no more, praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

And, Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight, the clouds be rolled back as a scroll; the  
trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend, even so, it is well with my soul.

It is well with my soul,  
it is well, it is well with my soul.