

1. Introduction

- a. The angels sang to the shepherds: “peace on earth”
 - b. Peace, in Hebrew Shalom, is defined as “completeness, soundness, to make whole, to restore, welfare, contentment, friendship, tranquility;”
 - c. When used in the context of personal relationships, it refers to a “wholeness” of the relationship!
 - d. When two countries enjoy “Shalom,” it means more than the fact that they are not at war. It indicates that there is a relationship of alliance and cooperation. It indicates harmonious wholeness and unity.
 - e. When I look around the world today, I don’t see a lot of peace
 - i. Globally, Nationally, Families, Personally
 - ii. Even when we have everything we want, we still don’t feel at peace
 - f. **We are desperate for peace**, desperate to be made whole and well
2. [2] *The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.*
- a. A few weeks ago we talked about this darkness - this is something we can relate to, stumbling through life just trying to figure it out
 - b. But the darkness is deeper than just a general sense of “figuring it out”
 - i. It’s a curse from long ago
 - ii. We lost our piece w God → we were at *shalom*, were whole in our relationship, but then it was shattered
 - iii. On that day, we lost our peace and it was passed to all generations
 1. You don’t begin w/ peace and lose it
 2. This curse is evidenced in our pain, our hearts, our relationships
 - iv. But God promised that he would restore the peace, reunite creation to Creator → we would be harmoniously whole and one w/ God again
 - c. There’s a reason that we don’t have peace in our daily lives & it’s b/c we aren’t at peace with God
 - i. Ben Watson’s facebook post, “It’s not a skin problem, it’s a sin problem.”
 - d. We think if we just had XYZ, if people just could get along, if they would be a little more educated, more benevolent, then finally everything would be as it should be...but we’re wrong
 - e. As long as there is turmoil between us and God, there will always be turmoil between mankind and within ourselves
 - i. Our version of Christmas proves this: We buy more stuff each year hoping it will satisfy us, but it never does.
 - f. So how do we get peace with God?
 - i. Even the people who know that they need God or believe in God don’t know how to get that peace.
 - ii. Religion, Deeds, Sacrifice, Church Attendance
 - iii. None of it brings a severed relationship back together because it’s all peripheral → like trying to fix your broken marriage by mowing the lawn
 - g. **We are desperate for peace with God.**

3. *[6] 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 Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. [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.*
- a. But God didn't leave us stranded → he promised in the Garden hope and hope he brought. Specifically, in the form of a baby who would be called the Prince of Peace
 - b. This child would grow up to be a man and would bring about peace w/ his reign
 - c. To the peace he brought there would be no end
 - i. Unlike in our lives where we live for one moment of peace to the next
 - 1. Constantly counting down to the next thing, the next reprieve
 - d. He would bring about this peace with his zeal or passion - for what? For God
 - i. In obedience, this child, Jesus, would live the life we could never live - a life of peace w/ God
 - ii. In obedience, he would live a life without sin, without disobedience
 - iii. In obedience to God, he would bind the broken, heal the sick, give sight to the blind and set the captives free...
 - iv. Because in obedience he would choose to willingly die in my place and in yours as a substitute
 - v. In obedience he would bring peace between God and man by receiving the punishment that we deserve
 - e. Christmas is about Easter. Jesus was born to die.
 - f. We celebrate Christmas as Jesus' birth not so we have an excuse to give gifts, but because his birth, which ultimately led to his death and to our peace was the greatest gift that we could receive.
4. So on this Christmas Eve, you are offered peace
- a. I don't know your situation in life. I don't know if things will get better or if things will get worse. I don't know what may befall you.
 - b. But I do know this - in the midst of all the hardships, tragedies and turmoil, you can know peace with God.
 - i. Once you know peace w/ God, you can stand against the waves of any opposition b/c the only thing that matters is secure
 - ii. Once you know peace w/ God, you can rest in your situation of plenty or of lacking
 - iii. Once you know peace w/ God, you have a reason to celebrate even if this season is typically a season of great loss for you.
 - c. Jesus came into this world to bring peace on earth - specifically peace between God and man, which is the foundation of all other forms of peace