

## Rediscover Christmas: Finding Peace in Our Struggles

### Luke 2:8-20

Christmas is kind of a big deal in Finland. And there's a great tradition there that happens every year. In fact, it has happened almost every year since the 1300s. That's a serious tradition, going on for more than 700 years. It's called the Declaration of Christmas Peace. Each year at noon on Christmas Eve, the Christmas Peace is declared in the city of Turku. The proclamation is read, usually by a city official, from the balcony of a historic mansion at the center of town in the Old Great Square.

### The Declaration of Christmas Peace:

**Tomorrow, God willing, is the graceful celebration of the birth of our Lord and Saviour; and thus is declared a peaceful Christmas time to all, by advising devotion and to behave otherwise quietly and peacefully, because he who breaks this peace and violates the peace of Christmas by any illegal or improper behavior shall under aggravating circumstances be guilty and punished according to what the law and statutes prescribe for each and every offense separately. Finally, a joyous Christmas feast is wished to all inhabitants of the city.**

### The Shepherds: Peace \_\_\_\_\_

- First, the shepherds remind us that the \_\_\_\_\_ of Israel were shepherds and nomadic animal tenders, roaming ranchers of the ancient world.
- But the shepherds were \_\_\_\_\_ every man.
- These shepherds also signify Jesus's future \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

I think the shepherds also lead us into several insights about our own intersection with God's peace.

### 1. Peace Comes in the Middle of Life's \_\_\_\_\_.

I don't know every hardship you are facing today, or every wince of pain you are feeling. But God does. He is there, bringing peace to calm your heart, peace that defies your circumstances.

## 2. Peace Defies Our \_\_\_\_\_.

The apostle Paul describes the process like this:

**“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”.** (Philippians 4:4-7, ESV)

## 3. Peace is Found in a \_\_\_\_\_.

It all comes back to a person. Peace is a person. Peace is Jesus.

**“For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility”** Ephesians 2:14 (ESV).

And long before His arrival on earth, the prophet Isaiah called Jesus the Prince of Peace.

**For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.** (Isaiah 9:6-7, NIV)

**“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”** (Matthew 11:28-30, ESV)

**“Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all”.** (2 Thessalonians 3:16, ESV)