

Advent Week 4 – PEACE

Text: Luke 1:39–56

Theme: *The Peace of Christ That Carries Us Through Obedience, Waiting, and Worship*

Introduction: The Longing for Peace

Peace is one of those words we use often but experience rarely.

We talk about peace as the absence of conflict, the quiet after the noise, the calm once everything finally settles down. We tell ourselves, *“Things will be peaceful once this season passes... once this diagnosis is clearer... once this relationship stabilizes... once Christmas is over.”*

But Scripture presents peace differently.

Biblical peace—OT Hebrew concept and word *shalom*—is not the removal of disruption. God does not take away all of our problems and all of our disruptions and then all that is left is peace. No. Peace is the **presence of God that steadies us in the middle of our problems and disruptions.**

And nowhere is that more beautifully displayed than in the story of Mary.

Mary does not find peace *after* everything works out.

She walks in peace **while the story is still unresolved.**

Context & Exegetical Framing

Let’s consider Mary’s account here. Luke tells us:

“Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah.”
(Luke 1:39)

That sentence moves quickly—but it represents an enormous journey.

Nazareth to the hill country of Judah is roughly **80–100 miles.**

This is not a short visit and certainly not a convenient trip.

- It would have taken **several days**, likely on foot.

- The journey is **south and uphill**, through unfamiliar and difficult terrain.
- Mary is **young, pregnant, unmarried, and vulnerable**.

Luke is showing us something essential:

Mary does not stay still after God speaks. She does not withdraw in fear. She does not wait until everything feels safe or clear. She **moves forward in obedience**.

Luke will relate to us what Mary finds as she moves forward in this narrative. She will find:

- **Confirmation** — someone who will recognize what God has done
- **Community** — she does not walk alone
- **Courage** — faith that is expressed in motion
- **God's unfolding work** — before she understands how it will all end

This sets the stage for everything that follows:

- John's leap in Elizabeth's womb
- Elizabeth's blessing for Mary
- Mary's song of praise – The Magnificat

And here is the quiet truth Luke is teaching us:

Peace begins before the miracle is visible.

Peace is born in trust, not outcomes.

1. Peace Is Found in Trusting God's Word Before the Outcome Is Clear

(Luke 1:39–40)

Mary has no guarantees—only a promise. She has not yet felt the child move. Joseph has not yet spoken. Her reputation is uncertain. Her future is unclear.

And yet, she goes.

Biblical peace is not emotional calm. It is **relational confidence**.

Mary trusts the God who spoke more than the circumstances she faces.

Peter and the Net

Do you all recall the story in the Gospels when Jesus called Peter, Andrew, James and John to become his disciples? Jesus compelled Peter to cast out again and drop his fishing nets after a full, long, hard session of catching nothing. Peter has no way of knowing what Jesus has planned – how the massive haul.

You see, even though Jesus compelled Peter to go back out in the boat, it wasn't Peter's boat that Jesus wanted to borrow. Jesus wanted to borrow Peter's *life*. And eventually that is what Peter would surrender to Jesus. His entire life.

When God calls us to obedience, he is not asking to borrow our bank accounts. He is not asking to borrow our grills or our dining rooms. He is asking to use our entire lives – which includes all of those things and more. Peter had no idea what Jesus in mind. Mary had no idea what God had in store. And yet, the Peace of God (which surpasses everything we understand and comprehend) carries and covers us.

That means we can be obedient with our entire beings. Mary had no way of knowing how these circumstances would play out. But she trusts God to be bigger than the circumstances. She also understands something that each one of us would do very well to learn: the danger of disobedience. The danger of disobedience is in the fact that we simply do not know what God has in mind for us.

Sometimes God asks something that is very insignificant of us – a little bit of time, a little bit of talent or skill, a little bit of commitment – but that little ask as huge, eternal implications. There are significant, long-reaching things on the end of your small, insignificant act of obedience today.

Now, imagine what God can do with your obedience in the larger, significant calls. When God calls you do take on something larger, bigger. Your first reaction may be, "That is just a bigger time commitment than I can give right now."

Let someone else do it. Someone else will take care of it.”

But what if God has a plan for YOU to do this thing rather than someone else. We minimize what we think the outcome will be because we simply do not take the time to comprehend what will come of saying “yes” to God in the moment.

Mary understands that obedience is her job. The outcome is God’s job. It is the same with us. Obedience is our responsibility. Be obedient to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Be obedient to the teaching of Scripture. And the results are left to the Lord. And the Peace of Christ will guard your hearts and minds throughout the process.

Peace does not come from knowing how the story ends.

Peace comes from knowing **who is faithful while you’re still in it.**

2. Peace Is Strengthened When God’s Promises Are Confirmed in Community

(Luke 1:41–45)

When Mary greets Elizabeth, something extraordinary happens:

“The baby leaped in her womb.” (v. 41)

Before Elizabeth speaks, before Mary explains herself—**God confirms His work.** The unborn prophet recognizes the unborn Messiah. The Spirit moves before words are exchanged.

Elizabeth does not fix Mary’s situation. She does something far more important. She **names God’s faithfulness:**

“Blessed is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill His promises.” (v. 45)

God often strengthens peace not by shortening the road, but by placing faithful people **along the road.**

I remember as a junior in high school feeling a call on my life by the Lord. It was prompting to give up what I thought would be the direction forward for me and instead to surrender to vocational ministry. I had kept this quiet, not telling a soul. And I was extremely reluctant to say yes.

And after about six months of ignoring or denying the promptings, God used some adult sponsors at summer camp to affirm and compel my obedience. While playing some cards during free time, one of the college students who had come along as a sponsor said I should be a youth pastor or a preacher someday. Which immediately brought a chorus from all of the other sponsors there. It was an overwhelming support for that idea. Those faithful adults, echoing their affirmation, only helped the Peace of Christ grow within my heart to completely obey.

Peace grows when God's promises are echoed by faithful voices.

3. Peace Is Rooted in the Presence of Christ, Not the Absence of Trouble

(Luke 1:44)

John leaps—not because the world is safe, but because **Christ is near**. Nothing has changed politically. Rome still rules. Herod still reigns. Injustice still exists. And yet—peace breaks in. Advent peace.

This peace is not fragile. Not sentimental. Not dependent on circumstances improving. Peace does not wait for stability. Peace **arrives in a person**.

The peace of Christ is not the absence of chaos. It is the presence of God within it. Consider the circumstances around the birth of the Lord. No room. Traveling from door to door, looking for ANYplace to stay. Shepherds being scared straight into praise, glory, and then worship in the presence of Jesus Messiah. It was a chaotic series of events. Peace arrives amid chaos, not in its absence.

4. Peace Leads Not to Silence, but to Worship

(Luke 1:46–56)

Mary does not respond with fear. She responds with praise. The Magnificat is not soft or sentimental. It is bold, theological, and disruptive.

Mary sings of a God who scatters the proud, brings down the powerful, lifts the humble, fills the hungry, and keeps His covenant promises

This is not passive peace. This is peace that **trusts God's justice and mercy**. Mary's peace does not numb her to the pain of the world. It strengthens her to believe God is redeeming it.

Theological Throughline

Mary teaches us that:

- Peace walks long roads of obedience
- Peace rests on God's promises
- Peace recognizes Christ's presence
- Peace sings **before** the story is finished

Peace is not found at the end of the journey.

Peace is what **carries us through it**.

The Candle of Peace

As we light the Candle of Peace today, we are not declaring that everything is calm. We will sing those lyrics on Christmas Eve. It won't be commentary on the state of the world that Jesus entered. It is describing this new, calming Spiritual Presence that has made the night Holy.

We are declaring that **Christ has come**. Peace is not the absence of unanswered questions. Peace is trusting the God who holds the answers.

Like Mary, we walk forward—not because the road is easy, but because God is faithful.

So if you are walking a long road this Advent...

If you are waiting without clarity...

If your song feels unfinished...

Hear the good news:

The Prince of Peace walks with you.

And His peace will carry you all the way home.