



**Prince of Peace - Isaiah 9:6**  
**Advent Week 4- Peace**  
**Recorded 12/7, Scheduled to Preach Live 12/20/20?**

We are continuing our look at Isaiah 9:6 today. This is the Divine birth announcement, written 700 years before the coming of Christ, to tell us about a child who would be born as the answer to the deepest needs of humanity.

Isaiah 9:6:<sup>6</sup> **“For to us a child is born,  
to us <sup>v</sup>a son is given;  
<sup>w</sup>and the government shall be <sup>x</sup>upon<sup>4</sup> his shoulder,  
and his name shall be called<sup>5</sup>  
Wonderful <sup>y</sup>Counselor, <sup>z</sup>Mighty God,  
<sup>a</sup>Everlasting <sup>b</sup>Father, Prince of <sup>c</sup>Peace.**

We’ve seen Jesus as the wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting Father, and now the last of the four names here, “Prince of Peace.”

Right at the core of who this baby would be and what this baby would do is that He would bring peace.

This was the announcement to the shepherds in Luke:

**Luke 2: 8 And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. 10 And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 14 “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”**

So the shepherds are trembling with fear at the sight of the angels and the glory of the Lord, and into that trembling fear the angel says “don’t fear,” and “on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased.”

The announcement of the coming of Jesus was an announcement of peace in the midst of fear.

### **So what kind of peace are we talking about here?**

Sometimes when we talk about Jesus bringing peace, we can think that that means, first and foremost, He came to take us to a zen-like state of peacefulness and tranquility. But Jesus didn’t come to be a really good yoga instructor. This is much better news than that.

So we’ll talk about the kinds of peace He brings - and this is really great news. So we’ll talk about Jesus as bringing peace with God, peace of God, and (go big or go home) world peace.

The reason that the shepherds trembled when the glory of the Lord was shining was that they had an accurate sense that to get near to God would mean death.

And that idea is all throughout the scriptures: when God had his people build a temple, the inner-most part of the temple where the glory of God would dwell was curtained off - you didn’t look at it, you didn’t get near. Because He is holy, we are sinful, and you’re just not buddy buddy with that God. To draw near would mean annihilation.

We aren’t, by nature, at peace with God.

Ever since the fall in the garden, mankind has been at war against God.

The relationship is not naturally warm, but hostile - we are hostile to Him in our sin. He is very composed, but is resolute in His holy wrath against our sin. Our natural state since the fall is not a state of peace with God, but of hostility. We’re against Him in our sin, He, in righteous response, is against us in His wrath.

C.S. Lewis wrote, ***“Fallen man is not simply an imperfect creature who needs improvement: he is a rebel who must lay down his arms”***<sup>1</sup>

So the story of our history with God is that we throw our rocks and stones at God, and God pulls back his bow in response.

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<sup>1</sup> CS Lewis, Mere Christianity. (New York: HarperCollins, 1952/2001), 56.

And then, God lets the arrows of his wrath fly, and the camera pans to follow them, and we are shocked and surprised to see that they fly into the heart of Christ on the cross. The pent up wrath of God was released, but the arrows didn't hit their deserving targets, they hit Jesus on the cross.

And now there's no more arrow to shoot for those who trust Jesus. He took those arrows for us. He is now not hostile to anyone who accepts Christ as that shield.

So now for Christians, hostilities have ceased.

That makes all the difference in the world. The hostility was put to death. That veil in the temple tore from the top to the bottom. And when Jesus appeared to his followers after His resurrection in John 20, He just kept saying, "Peace be with you."

Paul says this in Romans 5:

**Romans 5:1-2 "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God."**

## **Peace**

When Paul talks about us having peace with God in verse 1, he isn't talking here about a zen-like state, or an inner-calm or a therapeutic peace.

But about peace *with* God. The hostilities are over. We have laid down our weapons, He has satisfied his wrath, and now we have real peace. There's a treaty that has been signed.

This isn't the kind of peace we always feel, it can be true for us whether we feel it or not, it's the kind that's a legal reality. The US is at peace with Canada (for now, we're watching those guys) but we don't always feel that. It can affect our feelings. If we heard Canada was attacking we'd feel that internally. (There would be a little bit of a nervous response that would probably just give way to laughter.) Our peace with Canada can create some peaceful feelings if we ever think about it, but it's an outer peace, not an inner one.

It's the legal reality that we are not at war with them.

We have been justified (verse 1), which means we have been declared just, and now we are on His side, no longer at war.

This is what the angel announced with “peace on earth, good will toward men.” It wasn’t the promise of all the warmth of Christmas, it wasn’t the promise of better relationships and less drama and peaceful circumstances. It wasn’t a Hallmark peace that he came to guarantee.

In fact, Jesus even said **“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.(Matthew 10:34)**

Becoming a Christian can actually create some drama and expose us to some drama that we might have avoided otherwise. To be a Christian is to be called toward less peaceful circumstances. Don’t think Christianity brings “ease” to your life, that’s not the kind of peace it brings.

But the long war against God has ended for Christians.

We are no longer enemies, and we can coexist peacefully with a God whose mere presence could have melted us in the past.

But it’s better than just a peaceful coexistence and cordiality.

This time of the year some of us have some awkward family get togethers. And maybe you’re driving there, and your spouse is saying, “Just don’t say anything (about whatever the big issue is), just keep your mouth shut, don’t rock the boat, let’s just have a peaceful Christmas.” And maybe you can make it through those gatherings without disruption, but it feels very fragile, like at any moment with one wrong word some hostilities could erupt. It’s a fake peace.

But what Christ has purchased for us is not a fragile fake peace. It isn’t cordiality. It isn’t that He got the Father to just keep his mouth shut about our sin and tolerate us in his presence.

It’s far better news than that.

**Access**

Verse 2 ***“Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”***

We now have access.

“Access” can be translated “an introduction.”<sup>2</sup> Not only has the King given us a peace treaty, but we’ve been introduced to Him. We’ve been brought near. Jesus knew the Father, Jesus knew us, and Jesus brings us near to the Father. And now we aren’t outsiders that He has reached a tentative peace with, but we are right there with Him in His throne room. We are near. We’ve been brought near by the Prince of Peace.

God hasn’t changed - He’s the same God whose presence inspired fear on Sinai and had to be kept from our sight in the temple. But because of what Jesus accomplished, we are brought near without being incinerated. And it’s not a fragile peace that could blow up anytime, because He has defused the bomb.

And because God’s wrath has been appeased, we no longer need to appease Him. It’s not a fake peace, but a real one. We are near.

This will certainly change how and if we pray.

If we think we are still enemies and need to appease God, if we think we are still far off, then we will look for ways to earn a hearing for our prayers.

We will wait a long time after sinning to pray, thinking that enough time in our rooms will earn the peace again.

Or we will try excessive fasting, and feel that our prayers are only heard if we are brought low. Or that we have to really feel something to have that access. Or we will think that more words, more passion, more tears will get the prayers there.

Or maybe we have to make a deal: so we make all kinds of promises about how we’ll do better in the future, like “I’ll be real good if you answer this prayer.”

That’s different than our approach if we already have access and He’s already appeased.

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<sup>2</sup> Timothy Keller, *Romans for You* (Round Hill: The Good Book Company, 2014), 110.

In the Old Testament, there was a time when the prophet Elijah set up a contest with the prophets of a false god, Baal, to see whose God would answer their prayers with fire to consume a sacrifice. And look at how the prophets of Baal prayed:

**1 Kings 18:26-29** “And they took the bull that was given them, and they prepared it and called upon the name of Baal from morning until noon, [they prayed long enough] saying, “O Baal, answer us!” But there was no voice, and no one answered. And they limped around the altar that they had made. [they seemed broken enough] **27** And at noon Elijah mocked them, saying, “Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened.” **28** And they cried aloud and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them. [they afflicted themselves, they offered their god blood] **29** And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice. No one answered; no one paid attention.

They prayed like they weren't near. Like they didn't know him. Like they had to gain access. Like he needed blood before he'd hear. There was no peace with God, and they had to somehow earn a peace to be heard.

This is different than already having access, already being near. We don't need to pray many words or pray just right to get our prayers heard. We don't need to sacrifice and somehow afflict ourselves to be heard. We don't need to offer him something first so he'll hear our cries. We are already near. We already have peace.

This is the beauty of the Gospel message: not that we work our way to God, but that He came to us to make peace. He took the punishment, he took the affliction, he did the work.

And now, risen from the grave, he takes us by the hand and brings us into the presence of His Father where we stay near forever.

But I'm such a disaster! He hears me?

Those are the only kinds of people He does hear!

***“He comes to us in the brokenness of our health, in the shipwreck of our family lives, in the loss of all possible peace of mind, even in the very thick of our sins. He saves us***

*in our disasters, not from them. He emphatically does not promise to meet only the odd winner of the self-improvement lottery. He meets us all in our endless and inescapable losing.*<sup>3</sup>

**Robert Farrar Capon**

We could never dare to approach God on our own, no matter how low we bow or how much blood we spill or how high we climb on the self-improvement ladder. But Jesus has made the introduction.

So, Hebrews says:

**Hebrews 4:16** “Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

We can run to him in confidence all the time. This verse says we run to Him not only for help but for mercy.

We need mercy when we've sinned. When we sin, we can still approach Him in confidence that He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. So often we run away from Him in shame and fear. We think we have to wait long enough or at least be doing well enough for awhile before we approach Him again. Like we only have cordiality and a fragile peace at best. But the peace the gospel brings is robust and sturdy, we can't topple it over with our failures. It is not fragile.

Jesus is a friend to sinners, not an enemy. He is a God who has been appeased by the suffering of Christ, we don't need to make ourselves suffer for sin to earn his love and attention.

Even when we've failed *again*.

This is something we often miss. We have a standard narrative for the Christian life that many of us believe. It goes like this: in the past I was a sinner. I was a rebel against God. Jesus came and paid the price for my sins. I believed, I repented, I was cleaned. (GOOD SO FAR!) And ever since, I've been a good person and walked closely with God without big failures - those are in my past.

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Farrar Capon, [The Astonished Heart](#). (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996). 15.

And as churches, we're pretty good at forgiving past sins, and welcoming those who failed back before their conversion. But if someone fails big since conversion, we almost don't know what to do.

Capon again writes:

***"... don't tell me the church welcomes sinners. I know better. It welcomes only sinners who repent and then never seriously need forgiveness again."***<sup>4</sup>

**– Robert Farrar Capon**

The idea that we never seriously need forgiveness again isn't the Christian's story. It's more like a Marvel superhero origin story. Before I was one way, but then I got bit by the radioactive Jesus spider, and ever since I've been slinging webs and fighting bad guys.

Our sins are all in the past, our transformation happened, and we've been OK and not in need of grace anymore.

But that isn't our story. We continue to fail and sin. Which is why we confess our sins to God individually and together. It's why we need to hear the Gospel preached again and again.

To remind us that our sins, even the recent ones, do not take away our peace with God. They can rob that peace of God, we can feel the guilt and shame and the not being on the same page with Him. But Christians don't lose our access. If we confess He forgives, and does not need us to appease Him. We approach him boldly, even for mercy.

Take a second and take that in: think how ridiculously and scandalously forgiving He is, and how he grants in the place of hostility and abiding peace. He has been so good. He has granted us peace with God and access.

The fact that He is the Prince of Peace means He is God who reconciles with people:

***Colossians 1:21 "21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,"***

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<sup>4</sup> Robert Farrar Capon, Kingdom, Grace, and Judgment. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002). 128.

He is describing polar opposite realities: we were hostile enemies and made like a reconciled bride. We've gone from terrorists fighting against God to being His wife.

It's a completely new reality:

**2 Corinthians 5 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;**

We are made new in Christ and the relationship with God is new.

God is a gracious and merciful God who takes His hardened enemies and makes peace, gives access, promises to always be with them, and in a sense marries them. This is what God is like.

For those of you who are not Christians today, maybe you haven't been interested in Him because you've had a totally different idea of who He is. That He only wants to shoot the arrow at you. Or that the way to get to Him is to appease Him by your doing all kinds of religious works. And that the best you could ever hope for is an icy silence and fragile peace and a "maybe I could get to heaven someday."

But God came to you in love. You shot your weapons at Him, but He died on the cross to absorb his own counterstrike. And what He calls you to today is to repent: to lay down your arms, lay down your resistance, lay down your right to control your own life, and turn to Him believing in what He did for you. And when you do, without your paying a dime, you are given a lasting peace, and access, and His Spirit, and the closest of all possible relationships.

He isn't Baal, He's Christ.

And because of that peace with God, we also have access to the peace of God. There is a kind of inner peace that is available to Christians:

**Philippians 4:4-7 "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. 5 Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; 6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."**

There is a peace of God that can be ours by prayer. A calming and confidence that He's got this. Christians can seek that and find that - it's a real thing for us to pursue. "Casting all your cares on God because He cares for you..." So when you're troubled and anxious and afraid and needy, there's a real peace to be had by bringing those things to God. He cares, and He'll take those things, and answer those cries.

And because you have peace with God and can approach him as a loved and forgiven son or daughter, you can cast every burden and need and care upon Him and he will bear them. He can bring a real contentment into your life, even in a year of discontent like this one.

So He comes to give peace with God, He comes to give the peace of God, but in Isaiah it is talking about even more than that.

Isaiah 9:6:<sup>6</sup> **"For to us a child is born,  
to us <sup>v</sup>a son is given;  
<sup>w</sup>and the government shall be <sup>x</sup>upon<sup>d</sup> his shoulder,**

Jesus will have the government upon his shoulder. He will bear the weight of governance.

**Isaiah 9:7 will go on to say, "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."**

Jesus came to give us peace with God. Understanding that peace that we have can give us the peace of God, the contentment and inner-peace of casting our burdens on Him. But He also came to bring about, one day, world peace, by ruling this whole thing well.

Jesus came to bear the weight of governing the world. And Isaiah 9:7 says his government will do nothing but increase.

So what Christians believe by faith is that Jesus came to rule and reign. He does rule and reign now, He is the King. He is the Wonderful Counselor who reigns with wisdom, the mighty God who reigns with power, the Everlasting Father whose reign has no end, and the Prince of Peace who brings real peace on earth. He is already reigning.

But His kingdom has not yet fully come.

1 Corinthians says this is what He is up to:

**1 Corinthians 15:20-26 “But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. 24 Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.**

Jesus is reigning now. His government is increasing as more people come to know Him. They grow in Him and apply His gospel to every area of life, with strongholds and enemies of Christ falling left and right. His government keeps increasing as He works behind the scenes to put every enemy under his feet.

Then he returns and finally destroys the last enemy, death. And the end state of things will be the Prince of peace, ruling and reigning on a paradise earth where every enemy of his has been cast down. Where there is no more hostility toward God. There's nothing left to be anxious about so the inner peace is perfect. And sorrow and death are no more, there is only peace for His people, forever.

Receive the peace of Christ today.