

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday December 12, 2021. "Advent (Joy). "What's in a Name: Prince of Peace"

I Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message this Sunday. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. We're now in the season of Advent and Christmas is just around the corner. We hope you will join us either in person or virtually as we celebrate this season. A great group of familiar and new faces join us each Sunday. Our children's, youth areas and coffee spot have been fully open also, and we're seeing a good response. We're so encouraged by your love and presence when you gather with us. If you're still joining us online, we love and so appreciate your presence also. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family, and if there is ANYTHING you need, prayer, ideas or suggestions, please pass them our way. We know the future is still uncertain, but we are committed to making our virtual congregation as central to NCC as our in person group.

II Recap.

This was our third Sunday in our Advent series; **"What a Name"**, looking at the names given to the coming light. The messiah from Isaiah 9. The first week we looked at; **"Wonderful Counselor"**. We broke down each word, and then combined them to come up with this understanding of how we can benefit from a Wonderful Counselor. When you attach Wonderful to Counselor- a source of wisdom, insight, and truths that are helpful in everyday life, you then have incomparable truths to help you out in your daily life. How could that not bring hope and meaning to your life. Last week we talked about **"Mighty God"** and through some deeper study came to see that Mighty means greatest when compared to others considered the same. And God is an unusual, human attempt to 'name' what Moses discovered is actually unnamable. God simply cannot be contained in a name. Moses was told God will be whomever God chooses to be. So, a Mighty God would be an incomparable, matchless, unnamable above all.

III Sunday.

And this Sunday we skipped ahead to **"Prince of Peace"**. We're going to do like we've done the past several weeks, and that is have you play with each of these words a bit, and then go back to the same scripture we've been using to give us some scriptural understanding of each of those words.

What is your understanding of a title like "Prince"?

Dig deep...how would you define peace?

If you're up for it, reread **Isaiah 9:2-6**, and answer the following questions.

What jumped out to you from this passage?

Did this passage affect your understanding of both prince and peace? Why or why not?

Let's do some scriptural study of each of these words and see if we can gain a full and useful understanding of what "**Prince of Peace**" means. And how we can find peace in our own lives from it. And we have to push through our cultural notions of each that most likely don't reflect accurately the nature of what "**Prince of Peace**" meant to the Israelites 2,700 years ago, or accurately describe what this coming messiah would do.

1. Prince. In my study, and our conversation about the use of the word 'prince', we came to discover that Isaiah was not talking about God setting up some theocracy, an official government, in which Jesus would rule over an earthly kingdom. When Jesus was arrested he said "*my kingdom is not of this earth*". So, prince has to be interpreted in a different way than we tend to think. In our study we discovered that the Hebrew word for prince actually means 'one who has power'. So, prince actually means that the power, authority, (another giant conversation), of the coming one would be used not to construct an earthly government, but to use this power informally to create a world of peace.

2. Peace. Now let's dig into the word 'peace'. We have to hit the obligatory understanding that peace isn't just the absence of conflict or war. We have heard this before, but it bears repeating. True peace, especially as the scriptures teach it, is an actual thing on it's own. There are a lot of words that fill out our understanding of peace. In the Hebrew scriptures we see the familiar word '**shalom**', which is a big, full, word. It means complete, whole, united, what was torn apart separated, is now brought together. So, there is this very large and full understanding of peace. It is this active work and presence of continually bringing people and things into unity.

3. Prince of Peace- when you add these two ideas together, you get the teaching, understanding that this coming one, the light, would build his work upon the idea of bringing together what has been torn apart. This would be the focus of his ministry. You see that all through the teachings, and life of Jesus. We also see in The Sermon on the Mount, that Jesus begins that message with a series of blessings. In one of them, Jesus declares that those who '*work*' to make peace, that is about this same work Jesus was promised to do, they would actually be called "*the children of God*". You can't help but believe those who join in this work of bringing wholeness, completion, this understanding of salvation, join in a very special relationship with God. Doing what this coming messiah was to be about.

What would a 'prince of peace' look like in our day and age?

IV Challenge.

So, the challenge feels fairly obvious. In this understanding of how the coming messiah would be the prince of peace, we realize it means his ministry would be an informal work of building a community of peace. Where division, disunity, tribalism, are replaced with this sense of oneness.

So, what would a community built on peace look like?

What specific things would it take to build a community of peace, unity, shalom?

And what do we, you, need to do to make this kind of community a reality?