

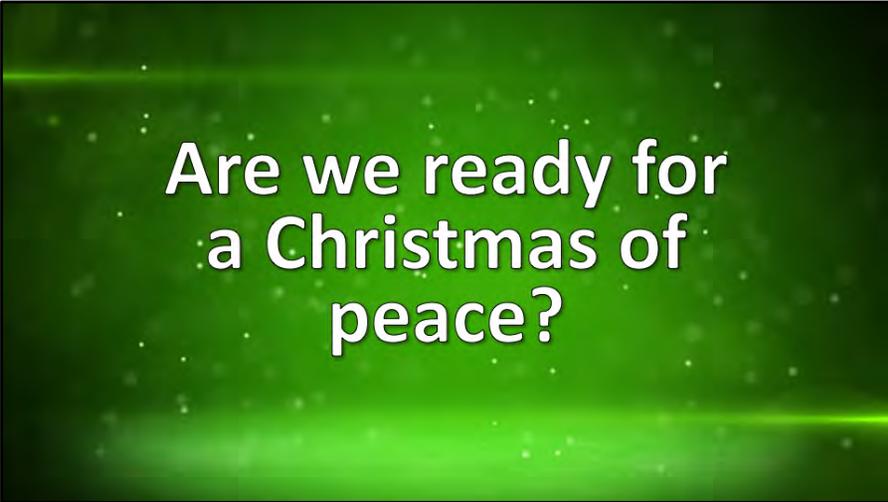


Sometimes a character in a movie just grates you, don't they. One film I watched had a scene where two men were about to have a duel with pistols. The one pistol misfired and now we wondered if the main character will kill him with his shot. Instead, he shot his pistol into the ground. What grated us was when the individual shown mercy was asked, "Are you now satisfied?" His face twitched a bit and he said no. Then he got another pistol and fired it, shattering the bone in the other guy's leg.

-- Doesn't something rile up in us when a person has been shown mercy but then does not show it in return?

TR: As we allow ourselves to feel that knot in our gut when we see such inconsistency, let's ask ourselves this question, which may initially seem disconnected from this story of dueling pistols

...



Are we ready for
a Christmas of
peace?

READ SLIDE

-- More than just having everything done . . . the matching pajamas sewn, the presents bought and wrapped, the second batch of fudge cut after the first batch turned into a patio block.
-- But, ready to head out on our mission as ambassadors of reconciliation and peace?

TR: These past weeks we've thought about Jesus as our Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 26:3-4

You keep him in perfect peace
whose mind is stayed on you,
because he trusts in you.

⁴ Trust in the LORD forever,
for the LORD God
is an everlasting rock.

ESV

We've been challenged by this verse . . . READ SLIDE

TR: We've wanted to know how the angelic declaration could be true, both when Jesus returns and now.

Luke 2:13-14

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,
"Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those
with whom he is pleased!"

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: If we are to be ready for a Christmas of peace in a world full of dueling pistols . . .

**BEFORE HEADING OUT, LET'S
MAKE SURE WE . . .**



**. . . we need to make sure we mind our minds,
-- and rejoice with fresh joy at being at peace with God so that we
can have . . .
-- . . . peace IN and peace OUT.**

**TR: With our mind stayed and our heart rejoicing, we need to
launch out a bit further in order to experience a Christmas of
peace.**

THE X-CHANGED LIFE

1 PUT OFF OLD SELF

2 BE RENEWED IN MIND

3 PUT ON NEW SELF

Ephesians
4:20-24

Colossians
3:1-17

The text that we want to focus in on today is from Colossians 3.
-- The broader context of this passage, and the related text of Ephesians 4, teaches us what I've called **THE X-CHANGED LIFE**.
-- There are three components . . . **READ SLIDE**

TR: In Colossians 3 we see a version of these three steps . . .

Colossians 3:1-2 p. 1088

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²**Set your minds** on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.



ESV

In the opening verses of the chapter we read . . . **READ SLIDE**
-- Which of the three steps is referred to here?
-- (pause) "Be renewed in mind"

TR: Jumping down to verse 5 . . .

Colossians 3:5-6

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶On account of these the wrath of God is coming.



ESV

READ SLIDE

- Put to death is another way of saying what?
- (pause) "Put off old self"
- There's a lot a great instruction in these two sections.

TR: But we want to focus on verse 12 and following.

Colossians 3:12

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,



ESV

It begins . . . **READ SLIDE**

-- This is the “put on new self” step.

-- For us to see lasting change in our lives, we need to . . .

REVIEW X-CHANGED LIFE STEPS

TR: But it is critical that we understand something very foundational . . .

The X-Changed Life
uses these three steps to
“be who we now are in Christ.”

They are not steps of religious
effort to earn peace with God.

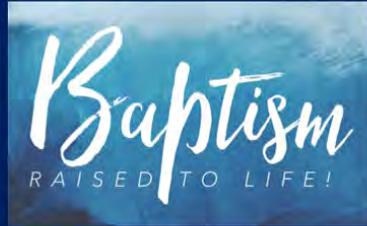
READ SLIDE

TR: We see that clearly back up in verses 3-4

Colossians 3:3-4

For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

⁴When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.



ESV

READ SLIDE

-- Baptism is that physical act that God has given us to help us welcome and declare that we died with Christ and have been raised to new life in Him.

TR: So, when we head down to Colossians 3:12 . . . we don't want to imagine that this is a list of religious works that we must do in order to get to peace with God.

Colossians 3:12

Put on then, **as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved,** compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,

ESV

- We are told to put on . . . but to do it as . . . READ SLIDE (Yellow)**
- We are secure, made holy through Christ's justifying work, and beloved.**
 - In order to be ready for a Christmas of peace, we move out from a place of security and significance . . . "all is well."**
 - We must have our mind stayed on our Savior and our hearts rejoicing in the peace with have with God through Him.**

TR: Reading this made me think of a passage an older pastor spoke to me when I was feeling anything but peaceful . . .

Daniel 10:19a

And he said, "O man **greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you;** be strong and of good courage."

ESV

What God said to Daniel through an angel . . . READ SLIDE

TR: So, from the place of security and significance, with our life hidden with Christ in God, minding our minds, and rejoicing in the peace with have with God . . . what's next?

**BEFORE HEADING OUT, LET'S
MAKE SURE WE . . .**

➤ GEAR UP

14

Before we head out seeking a Christmas of peace, let's make sure we first GEAR UP.

TR: Imagine getting dressed before you go meet others. Of course we should leave the dueling pistols behind. But what do we put on?

Colossians 3:12

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, **compassionate hearts,** kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,

ESV

We are told to put on . . . READ SLIDE

TR: Literally this could be translated “bowels of mercy”



It involves . . . READ SLIDE

- **compassionate mercy looks to the whole of the other person**
- **IT DOES NOT target the other person, zoomed in only on their faults.**
- **A person heading out for a Christmas of peace scans the context of those they interact with.**
- **They know that mercy triumphs over judgment, as James teaches us.**

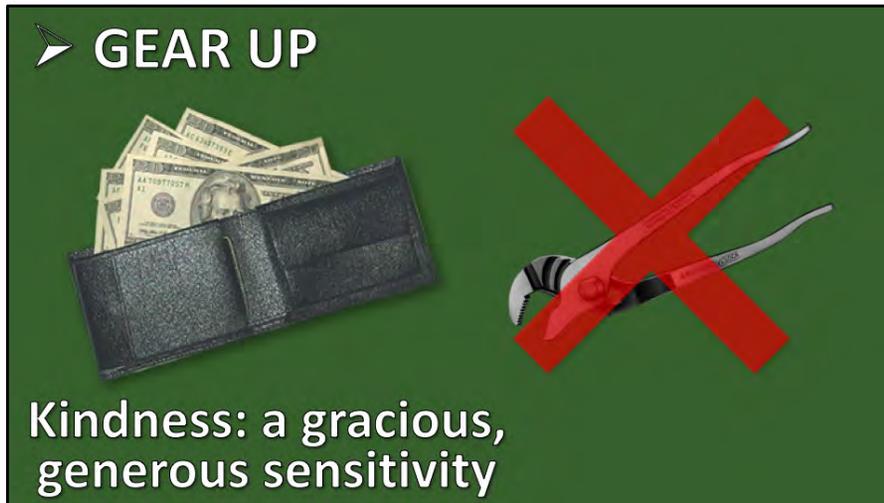
TR: A person of peace also puts on . . .

Colossians 3:12

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, **kindness**, humility, meekness, and patience,

ESV**READ SLIDE**

TR: This word seemed so general to me that I needed to probe if there was more texture to this article of clothing a peacemaker would wear.



I chose a wallet as a symbol, because kindness is a gracious, generous sensitivity.

-- IT IS NOT a pair of pliers that tries to extract from others whatever we can get for our benefit.

TR: As one commentator put it . . .

“a gracious, generous sensitivity
toward others triggered by
genuine care for their feelings
and desires”

D. Garland, p 210

**A person of kindness has . . . READ SLIDE
-- A person of peace has a sensitivity that notices, a generosity of
attention.**

TR: compassionate hearts, kindness, and . . .

Colossians 3:12

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, **humility**, meekness, and patience,

ESV

READ SLIDE . . . that's what the properly geared-up Christ-follower wears.

TR: In addition to our binoculars and our open wallets, we also need to put on . . .



. . . our knee pads of humility.

-- A humility . . . READ SLIDE

-- WE NEED TO LEAVE BEHIND THE MEGAPHONE that makes sure everyone knows what good things we are doing.

-- And bend our knees in service of others.

-- Do we need others to notice or is it enough to know that God sees?

TR: The peacemaker continues to gear up by putting on . . .

Colossians 3:12

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, **meekness**, and patience,

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- This could also be translated gentleness.

TR: We are called this Christmas to gear up with a . . .



. . . READ SLIDE

- We must put on kid gloves or perhaps surgical gloves.
- We must **NOT PUT ON** the boxing gloves, that try to protect our fists as we pummel others with our words or actions.

TR: A German theologian's thoughts were paraphrased as saying .

. .

“the power which, in a situation of conflict, gentleness enables us to criticize another’s conduct so that they experience it as help and not as condemnation.”

Lindemann in D. Garland, p 211

Gentleness or meekness is . . . READ SLIDE

- Some people will experience all criticism as condemnation, but the gentle person is able to help most people to receive it as help.**
- If there is a trail of people behind us who feel condemned, perhaps we’ve slipped on the boxing mitts.**

TR: There’s one last article of clothing that put on as we gear up . .

.

Colossians 3:12

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and **patience,**

ESV

And that is PATIENCE.

-- The person that is ready to have a Christmas of peace will be patient.

TR: They will put on . . .



**. . . a watch that doesn't have second and minute hands . . .
-- but rather reminds them of the imminent return of Jesus.
-- We don't need a timer that demands with an urgency . . .
-- because we have put on a patience . . . READ SLIDE
TR: SAME SLIDE**



SAME SLIDE

- We all put on different clothes and accessories depending on what we're heading out to do.
- If we gear up with a rifle scope, a pair of pliers, a megaphone, boxing gloves and a timer we are not ready to be agents of peace, are we?

TR: In addition to gearing up with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, Colossians 3 tells us to . . .

**BEFORE HEADING OUT, LET'S
MAKE SURE WE . . .**

➤ **GEAR UP**

➤ **LIMBER UP**

READ SLIDE

-- Even as we warm up before we exercise, so now we must limber up before we go out as agents of peace.

TR: Our passage now moves from telling us about the qualities we are to put on TO the actions we are to take.

Colossians 3:13

bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- [bearing with one another] = putting up with each other's idiosyncrasies
- As one long time married man may have exaggerated, "Don't sweat the small stuff . . . and it's all small stuff."
- It may not ALL be small stuff, but a lot more of it is than we imagine.

TR: Lived-out peace with others, including other believers, rarely comes to the person who hasn't limbered up . . . stretching so they can bear with.

➤ **LIMBER UP**

**BEARING
WITH**

Not
oversensitive,
touchy



The contrast is the overly sensitive person, who is touchy and quickly annoyed.

-- One New Yorker Cartoon defined an Oversensitive Car Alarm: "Please step away from the car. I'm sorry, but I . . . I just need a little space right now."

-- Always needing space means that there will be no real biblical peace, wholeness and harmony.

TR: But, the Apostle doesn't imagine that everything that could hinder our practice of peace, our Christmas of peace, is caused by hyper-sensitivity.

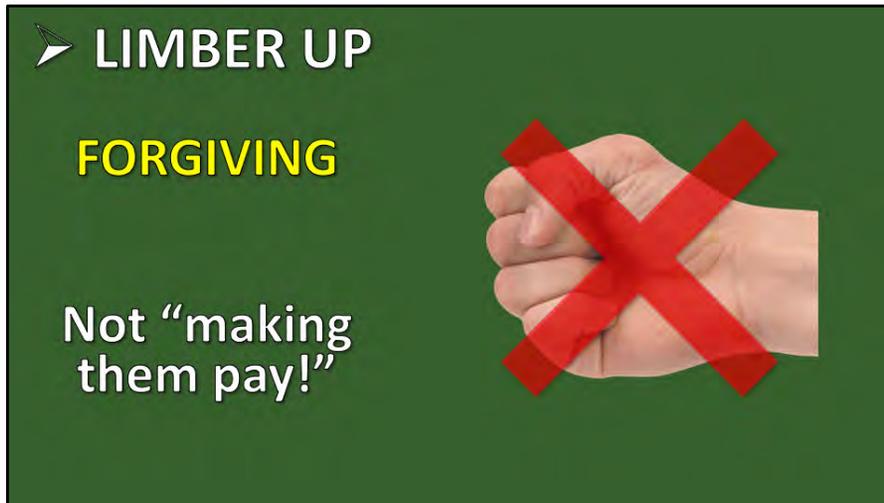
Colossians 3:13

bearing with one another and, **if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other;** as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

ESV

... because there are valid complaints ... charges of sin.

TR: But the peacemaker has stretched before heading out ... to bear with and to be ...



. . . FORGIVING

-- A forgiving person is one who is not bent on “making them pay.”

-- For some, it seems that their hands have cramped up as fists . .
. exacting a price out of most everybody’s hide.

TR: The standard for this forgiveness is very high, as the end of verse 13 shows us . . .

Colossians 3:13

bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; **as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.**

ESV

READ SLIDE (yellow)

-- The very definition of what true forgiveness is and is not comes from the example of God's offered forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

TR: So, the Christian heading out to pursue a Christmas of peace, knowing that they are chosen, holy, and beloved will . . .

BEFORE HEADING OUT, LET'S
MAKE SURE WE . . .

- GEAR UP
- LIMBER UP
- **BIND UP**

READ SLIDE

TR: We bind up our relationships with other believers and extend grace to not-yet believers through love.

Colossians 3:14

And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- [above all] could picture a coverall that ties all the qualities together, like a uniform that all teammates wear.

TR: . . . but many think that what is bound together is not . . .

Colossians 3:15

And above all these put on love, **which binds everything together in perfect harmony.**

ESV

. . . the qualities, but the relationships within the church of Colossae.

-- Love binds things together

-- There is a perfect harmony, when all the different parts go together to form a greater whole.

-- A greater whole than just the sum of the parts.

TR: As we prepare for a peaceful Christmas, we must be ready to . . .

➤ BIND UP



37

- . . . bind up . . . by taking our medical kits with us.**
- All relationships will have wounds. Many of those wounds will be caused by sin or at least insensitivity (people who forgot to put on their kid gloves).**
 - Forgiveness can remove the infection of those wounds. But only love can bind things together again.**

TR: Those of us who will pursue peace, a Christmas of peace will need to be sure we get dressed and equipped properly . . .

BEFORE HEADING OUT, LET'S
MAKE SURE WE . . .

- GEAR UP
- LIMBER UP
- BIND UP
- **REPORT UP**

We will need to READ SLIDE

TR: We report up by reporting in to Jesus, our Lord.

Colossians 3:15

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- Jesus called us in **ONE** body, to be at peace. We are not meant to be chopped into pieces.

TR: For that unity, the kind that makes the world believe that the Father sent the Son, will only come when we . . .

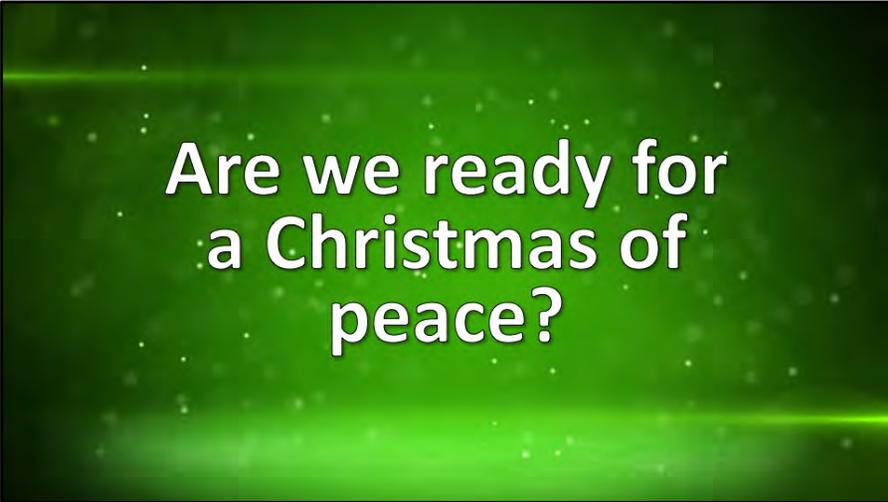
➤ REPORT UP

Submit to
the rule of
the peace
of Christ

. . . READ SLIDE

- Our rebellious hearts will want to be riled up and angry, punching others out with our words, or stabling them with our silent withdrawal.**
- But the person whose mind is stayed on the Prince of Peace, whose life is saturated with the joy of now being at peace with God . . .**
- . . . will submit to Christ and do the hard things that make for peace.**
- We will let Jesus, the Prince of Peace, be the umpire over our decision making AND our emotions.**

TR: So the question of the day remains . . .



Are we ready for
a Christmas of
peace?

READ SLIDE

-- I hope we'll get dressed for Christmas in more than a festive sweater. I hope we'll be ready for peace.

TR: But, what does all this have to do with our opening story about . . .



. . . dueling pistols?

TR: The connection comes at the end of verse 14.

Colossians 3:14

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. **And be thankful.**

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- We are called to gear up, limber up, bind up, and report up . . .
.
-- . . . so what does that have to do with being thankful?

TR: This is the question that people who practice religion often ask because they have forgotten or never really understood . . .

Colossians 3:12

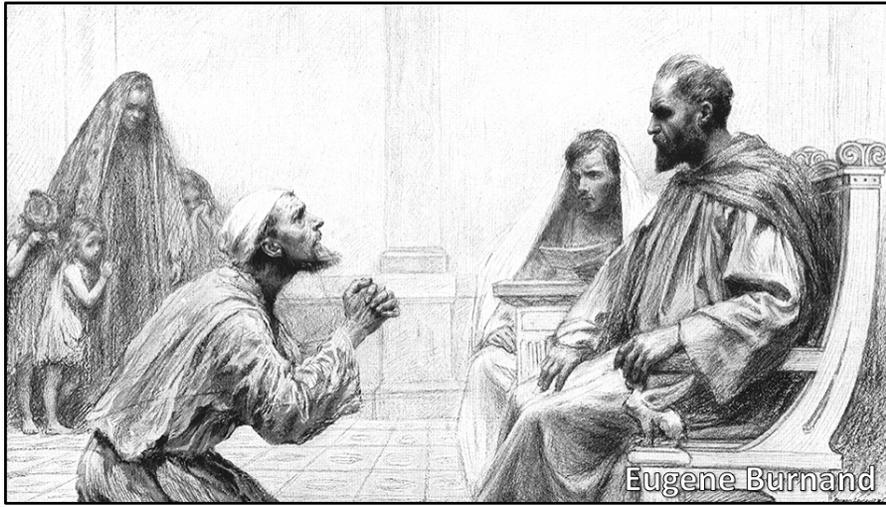
Put on then, **as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved**, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,

ESV

. . . that this getting ready for peace with others comes out of peace with God.

-- We are chosen, holy, and beloved.

TR: Today, while there is practical instruction that could so help our relationships, the really big idea is that . . .

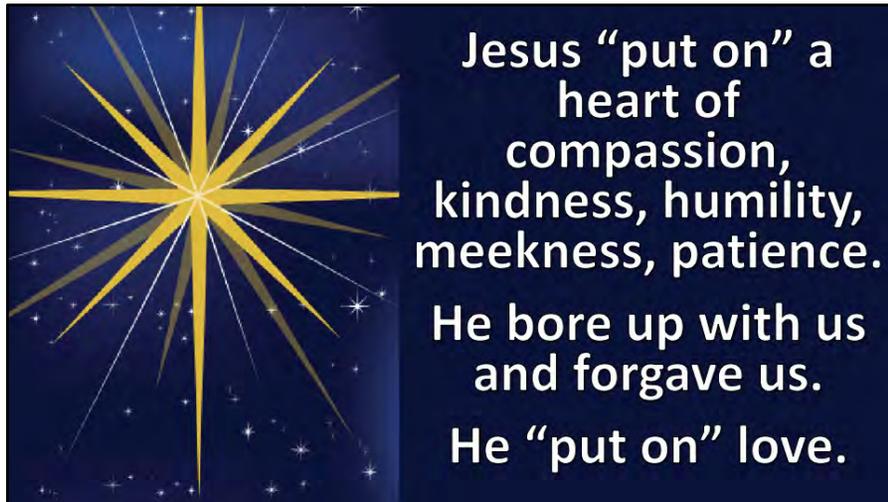


. . . at Christmas we received the gift of God's mercy.

-- If we are like the man in Matthew 18 who is forgiven his unpayable debt only to then exact judgment on another man who owed him . . .

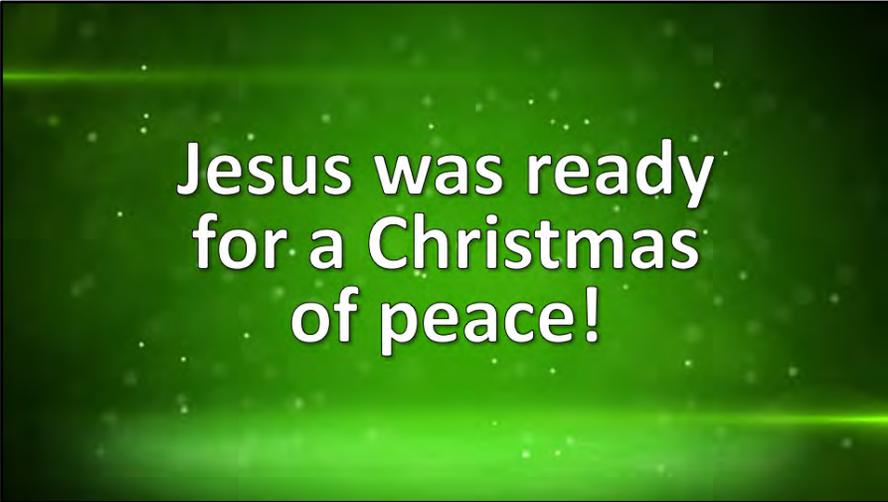
-- then we are like the characters in movies that grate on us . . . they have been shown mercy but they do not in turn show it.

TR: All that our passage instructs of us is really to reflect what we have been shown in Christ.



**As the Son of God took on, let us say "put on," humanity . . .
-- . . . so He could live among us, being tempted in all ways as we
are yet without sin, becoming our sympathetic High Priest,
-- . . . so He could as the God-Man die as the mediator between
God and Man,
-- . . . so that He has shown patience in His promised return so
you could today turn to Him in faith.
-- READ SLIDE**

**TR: If we really want to be ready for a Christmas of peace, it
begins by realizing by faith that . . .**



Jesus was ready
for a Christmas
of peace!

READ SLIDE

TR: True worship at Christmas is realizing that what was true of Daniel is also true of each of us who have trusted Christ . . .

Daniel 10:19a

And he said, "O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage."

ESV

READ SLIDE

- We have been shown compassion, generous kindness, humble service, the gentleness of truth in love, the patience and forbearance of God in Christ.
 - Jesus has borne up with us, forgiven us. He has bound us to Himself in perfect harmony through His covenant-faithful love.
 - Having received such mercy and peace, ought we not to put our pistols down?
- TR: How can it be that a child who has received . . .**



. . . 6 billion jelly beans would refuse to share a few with his brothers and sisters.

-- Hold up gallon jar . . . imagine under the tree there were 6,450,000 jars of jelly beans . . . and we wouldn't share.

-- Those who have been shown mercy and have truly received it .

. .

-- show compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with and forgiving, binding it all together with love . . .

-- . . . because they let the peace of Christ rule in their hearts . . .

-- . . . and they are ready for a Christmas of peace.