

THE MISSING PEACE — WEEK 2

Inner Peace

SERMON SUMMARY

At Christmas, we hear a lot about *peace on earth*, but many of us feel anything but peaceful. In Christ, peace isn't just the absence of conflict—it's **shalom**: a deep, inner wholeness of mind, body, and spirit.

Jesus, the **Prince of Peace**, offers:

- **Peace with God** (through the cross)
- And, flowing from that, **inner peace**—a settled heart in a troubled world

The more we submit to His rule in our lives, the more of His peace we experience.

Peace is promised—but often feels missing.

Christmas cards, carols, and the angel's announcement in Luke 2 speak of peace. Yet our news feeds, schedules, finances, family tensions, and inner anxieties tell a different story. Peace can feel like a front parking spot at Target in December—you know it exists, but you rarely experience it.

Last week: Peace with God.

- Because of our sin, we do *not* naturally have peace with God.
- Our sin is a barrier between us and Him.
- Through Jesus—our substitute on the cross who paid for our sin—we can be forgiven, reconciled, and restored.
- **Peace with God** comes when we repent and trust Christ.

This week: Inner peace.

- Inner peace = a deep, steady **calmness and stability** regardless of what is happening around us.
- People chase it through exercise, entertainment, “self-care,” or mysticism. Some of those may ease symptoms for a moment (like a Tylenol for a fever), but they don't cure the infection.
- True inner peace comes from **God Himself**.

Jesus is the Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6–7)

- “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given...” – the incarnation: Jesus, fully God and fully man, entering our world.
- “The government will be on his shoulders...” – He is a **king**, a ruler.
- Titles given to Him:
 - **Wonderful Counselor** – He reveals God’s will and invites us into it.
 - **Mighty God** – He works powerfully on our behalf.
 - **Everlasting Father** – He cares for us like a perfect Father.
 - **Prince of Peace** – the chief, captain, and source of peace.
- “Peace” = **shalom** – not just “no fighting,” but *wholeness*; total health of mind, body, and spirit.

His government and His peace go together.

- “Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end.”
- His **government/kingdom** = the realm where He rules.
- Universally, He is Lord of all.
- Personally, His kingdom is experienced where people willingly submit to His lordship.
- **The more of your life you place under His rule, the more of His peace you will experience.**

Real world tension: In this world you will have trouble.

- Jesus promised trouble. James told us to expect trials.
- There will always be circumstances trying to rob us of peace.
- Because Christ *has* given us peace, we must learn to **fight for it**—not with aggression, but with intentional obedience and spiritual habits.

Five practical ways to “fight for” inner peace:

1) Repent

- Unconfessed sin weighs heavily on the soul and disrupts inner peace.

- When we hide sin, we carry guilt, shame, and distance from God.
- When we confess and repent, the weight lifts and peace follows.
- Even after forgiveness, the enemy loves to drag up old sin—so we must keep trusting God’s promise that He removes our sin “as far as the east is from the west.”

2) Pray

- Anxiety is rising everywhere—diagnosed or not. Many live with a constant low hum of worry.
- Philippians 4:6–7 calls us to trade anxiety for prayer.
- Name what you’re anxious about and present it to God.
- The promise: **not** that all circumstances instantly change, but that His peace will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus.
- Often this is a repeated, daily (even hourly) practice.

3) Give Thanks

- “Comparison is the thief of joy.” We overvalue what others have and undervalue what God has given us.
- Psalm 103: “Forget not all His benefits.”
- A simple practice: write down your blessings—from salvation to the smallest comforts. Gratitude reorients the heart and restores peace.

4) Slow Down

- Many of us wear busyness like a badge. Our schedules are maxed; our souls are exhausted.
- You can’t redline an engine forever; it will break. Same with your life.
- Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is **say “no”** or “not now” and create margin.
- If a possession or commitment dominates your time and keeps you from being who God’s called you to be, it may need to go.

5) Reduce the Noise

- We live under a constant firehose of information—TV, phones, social media, news.

- Much of it is negative, outrage-driven, and anxiety-producing.
- Ecclesiastes 1:18 – “The more knowledge, the more grief.”
- You’re not designed to carry every tragedy on the planet in real time.
- For some, that might mean limiting or removing social media or news consumption. Not every burden you see online is one God has assigned you to carry.

The goal: Lying down in peace.

- David, under real threat from enemies, could say:
“I will lie down and sleep in peace, for You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.” (Psalm 4:8)
- His peace wasn’t from perfect circumstances, but from trusting a sovereign, caring God.
- That same God invites us to trust Him and rest.

KEY SCRIPTURES (NIV)

- **Isaiah 9:6–7** – “Prince of Peace... of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end...”
- **Luke 2:14** – “Glory to God in the highest... and on earth peace...”
- **Romans 5:1** – “We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- **Philippians 4:6–7** – “Do not be anxious about anything... and the peace of God... will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”
- **Psalm 4:8** – “I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.”
- **Ecclesiastes 1:18** – “The more knowledge, the more grief.”

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Getting Started

- When you hear the phrase “**inner peace**”, what comes to mind?

- A feeling? A picture? A season of life?
- On a scale of 1–10, how would you rate your current level of inner peace?
- What factors are most impacting that number right now?
- Think about the Target parking lot picture: peace is real, but feels unattainable. Does that resonate with you? Why or why not?

2. Digging into Scripture

Read Isaiah 9:6–7 together.

- Walk through the four titles given to Jesus:
 - Wonderful Counselor
 - Mighty God
 - Everlasting Father
 - Prince of Peace
- Which title do you most need Jesus to be for you in this season? Why?
- The Hebrew word **shalom** describes not just the absence of conflict, but a deep wholeness—mind, body, and spirit.
- How is that different from how our culture usually defines “peace”?
- Where do you most feel a lack of shalom in your own life right now?
 - Verse 7 says, “Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end.”
- In your own words, how are **His rule** and **His peace** connected?
- Can you think of an area where you surrendered something to Christ’s lordship and later realized, “I actually have more peace here now”?

3. Fighting for Inner Peace – The Five Practices

A. Repent

- Why does hidden or ongoing sin so effectively steal inner peace?

- Without sharing details you don't want to (if in a group), can you describe a time when confession and repentance lifted a heavy weight from your soul?
- Is there any unconfessed sin or ongoing pattern the Lord might be gently bringing to mind today?
- What might it look like to respond in obedience this week?

B. Pray (Philippians 4:6–7)

- If you're comfortable, each share **one specific thing** that tends to create anxiety in your life right now.
- How does Philippians 4:6–7 practically invite us to handle those anxieties?
 - What's the "instead" of anxiety?
- How have you experienced God's peace guarding your heart and mind when you've prayed?

C. Give Thanks

- How does comparison (with friends, social media, coworkers, etc.) affect your peace?
- Take 2 minutes silently and list **5–10 things** you are genuinely thankful for today.
- Afterward, share one or two of them with the group.
- Did simply naming them change how you feel?

D. Slow Down

- Where do you most feel the effects of an overfull schedule or life with no margin? (Family, work, sleep, emotions, spiritual life, etc.)
- Is there one commitment, habit, or expectation you may need to say "**no**" or "**not now**" to in order to obey God and walk in greater peace?

E. Reduce the Noise

- How does your media/phone/news intake affect your inner world—honestly?
 - Do you notice more peace *before* or *after* scrolling or reading the news?
- What might a realistic step to "reduce the noise" look like for you this week?
 - Time limits? No-phone zones? Social media fast?

- How could the group encourage you in that?

PERSONAL REFLECTION (FOR THE WEEK)

Use these questions in your quiet time this week:

1. **Is Jesus truly my Prince of Peace, or just a concept I like at Christmas?**
2. **Where is my life currently *not* under His government?**
 - Is there an area I'm resisting His leadership—but also lacking peace?
3. **What specific sin or pattern do I need to repent of today?**
4. **What am I most anxious about right now?**
 - Have I clearly named it and brought it to God in prayer?
5. **What could I practically change (schedule, media, habits) to create more room to experience God's peace?**

Consider journaling a short daily prayer like:

“Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace, I surrender this day, this situation, and my thoughts to You. Rule in my heart, and let Your peace guard my mind.”

PRAYER TIME (GROUP OR INDIVIDUAL)

If in a group:

- Invite volunteers to briefly share one area where they need inner peace.
- Pray in pairs or as a whole group:
 - Thank God that **through Jesus we have peace with God.**
 - Ask Him to reveal any hidden sin needing repentance.
 - Pray Philippians 4:6–7 over one another by name.
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to help each person slow down, reduce noise, and walk closely with Christ this week.
 - Close by thanking Jesus that He is our **Prince of Peace**, and asking Him to help you all “lie down and sleep in peace” (Psalm 4:8).