



gracefellowship

Series: Rescue+Mission
Date: December 24, 2023

Title: War and the Prince of Peace
Passage: Isaiah 9

Advent Reading: Love and Christ Candles

In the movie “Troy,” two kings stand on a battlefield with their armies amassed behind them on either side of the field. The first king calls for his champion to come out and fight on behalf of his army: “Boagrius!” A giant man steps forward, towering head and shoulders above everyone. He’s obviously done Crossfit a time or two! The second king calls for his champion: “Achilles!” And no one steps forward. The king is told that Achilles is not with the army and the king has to send for him. When Achilles arrives the king says, “I should have you whipped!” Achilles responds, “Perhaps you should fight him. Imagine a king who fights his own battles. Wouldn’t that be a sight?” (From *Troy*, 2004, Warner Bros.)

Why would I begin our Christmas message telling you a story from the movie, *Troy*? Because Christmas is a rescue mission in which Jesus, the King of kings, came to earth in order to fight against the powers of darkness and win victory over Satan and our sin nature. When we read Isaiah we come upon a Messianic prophecy in chapter 9 where Isaiah describes the Savior who would come into the world. We are going to read this passage together and then I want to focus on two specific names of the Messiah.

If you’re new with us and have missed the other messages in this series let me give you just a brief glimpse at what we’ve been talking about this month. We are looking at Christmas through the lens of an ongoing battle. When humanity sinned against God in the garden of Eden, everything that God created and declared “good” was broken. Satan and the kingdom of darkness waged a full on assault against God. There is a spiritual war that happens all around you every day and the goal is to pull people away from God. But God, in His mercy, devised a plan to rescue us from the powers of sin and death: He sent Jesus into the world- God in flesh- to fight for us and to restore our relationship with God.

With that in mind, let’s read Isaiah 9:6-7 together.

:: Isaiah 9:6-7

**⁶ For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.**

**And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

**⁷ Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.**

**He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.**

**The zeal of the Lord Almighty
will accomplish this.**

We could spend a lot of time talking about the various ways Jesus is described here, but I want us to focus on two for a just a few minutes. Isaiah tells us that Jesus is the Mighty God and the Prince of Peace.

Jesus is the Mighty God and the Prince of Peace.

In Hebrew, Mighty God, is El Gibbor- God the Savior or God the Hero! I know we like the image of Jesus at Christmas in a manger laying in straw, but Isaiah tells us when we look at Him, we need to see Him as "Mighty Warrior"- our Hero in battle! Jesus came into enemy territory with the express purpose of bringing freedom to captives. The Bible over and over again calls us people who are enslaved to sin and prisoners of darkness. We needed a champion who would come and set us free. A rescue mission was 100% necessary if we were going to have any hope of being reunited with God and being set free from the effects of sin.

Then, in what seems like a stark contrast, we get the next name of Jesus: Prince of Peace. But here's why these names work together:

Peace is won through victory!

We long for peace in our world and in our lives, but when we think of the word "peace," we typically mean "the absence of conflict." But in both Hebrew and Greek the word for peace has a much deeper meaning.

The Hebrew word for peace is "Shalom."

The Greek word for peace is "Eirene."

Peace, in a biblical sense, means, “to restore; make complete, whole or right.” Peace isn’t just the absence of something, but the presence of something.

We know that at the fall of mankind, when Satan tempted Adam and Eve to rebel against God, the whole creation experienced brokenness. The peace Jesus came to bring is not just to make our relationship with God right again, but to restore all things in creation to it’s former glory.

Paul wrote about it this way in Romans 8:

:: Romans 8:18-25

¹⁹ For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.

²⁰ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope

²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

²³ Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.

²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have?

²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

Through Jesus’ death and resurrection we can experience peace with God in this world. Romans 5 tells us this:

Romans 5:1-2

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.

We currently have peace with God through the work of Jesus on the cross, but there is still more to come when the Prince of Peace will bring *eternal* peace! He will destroy the work of the devil and will make all things new. This is what we continue to hope for and long for. How is that peace achieved? Through war! Our peace and enduring, eternal peace is won through a brutal battle.

:: Colossian 2:13-15

**13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,
14 having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.
15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.**

I don't use The Message version of the Bible often, but you have to hear how Eugene Peterson said this:

:: Colossians 2:13-15 (MESSAGE)

When you were stuck in your old sin-dead life, you were incapable of responding to God. God brought you alive—right along with Christ! Think of it! All sins forgiven, the slate wiped clean, that old arrest warrant canceled and nailed to Christ's cross. He stripped all the spiritual tyrants in the universe of their sham authority at the Cross and marched them naked through the streets.

On the cross, Satan bruised the heel of Jesus. Jesus hung naked, bloodied and beaten, with nails in His hands and feet. But the good news of the gospel is that Jesus didn't stay dead! He arose and crushed the head of Satan!

So...

**What power does sin have over us? NONE! We walk in forgiveness!
What power does death have over us? NONE! We have eternal life!
What power does hell have over us? NONE! We are citizens of heaven!**

All of this is possible because of the Prince of Peace. Peace can only be found in the one who created and reigns over peace! And our peace came through a decisive victory of Jesus over Satan.

But until Jesus returns to bring the eternal peace He promised, we continue to fight battles against sin on a daily basis. God strengthens us for the fight and gives us promises to hang on to. One of my favorite comes in Romans 16, and it fits this series perfectly!

:: Romans 16:20

**20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.
The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.**

How perfect is that? But here's what I want you to see: this isn't just some future promise. Paul said the God of peace is going to do this. When? Soon! And what is he going to do? Crush Satan under *your feet!* God is going to give you victory over Satan and all his deception.

When you come to faith in Jesus your eyes will be open and you will become wise to all God calls good. You will also become wise and innocent toward evil and you will begin to oppose evil.

As these two things happen- you become wise toward good and evil and are able to choose the good and reject the evil- Satan gradually loses his grip on you. Jesus has restored you to God. Satan's power over you is crushed!

:: James 4:7

7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

If we were to put that in military language it would sound like this: When you follow the orders of your commanding officer, the devil has to sound the retreat and leave the battlefield.

In Christ we have victory. That's why Christmas is so important. Christmas tells us that God is for us and He is doing everything necessary in this just war to stamp out evil. God must oppose everything that is evil and He has no moral qualms about destroying evil. Christmas is the precursor to the final battle. When Jesus came to earth the first time He came meek and mild- a child in a manger. When He returns it will be with the angel armies of heaven. He will bring peace through power!

In the book of Revelation John was shown a vision of the future and the final battle when Jesus destroys evil once and for all.

:: Revelation 19:11-21

11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war.

12 His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself.

13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God.

14 The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.

15 Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter."^[a] He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.

16 On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: king of kings and lord of lords.

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God,

18 so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and the mighty, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, great and small."

19 Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to wage war against the rider on the horse and his army.

20 But the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who had performed the signs on its behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped its image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.

21 The rest were killed with the sword coming out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.

Not your typical Christmas message, is it? The peace Jesus brings to us comes through war- and it's a just war. God is right to judge evil and destroy it and all who stand against Him. So that leads us to the most important question of the day:

Do you know the peace that comes through Jesus?

He has the power to restore you to a relationship with God by forgiving your sins. He has power over anxiety and guilt and shame and fear and isolation and anger.

One of the greatest parts of the Christmas story is when the angel shows up in the shepherd fields to tell the shepherds about the birth of Jesus. He tells them:

:: Luke 2:14

**14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."**

The glory of God brings the peace of God. When you give glory to God and leave your sinful life behind, then and only then will you experience true, lasting peace.

If you're not a follower of Jesus, today is the day you can start a journey with Him that will change your life forever.

If you are a follower of Jesus, this is a message worth telling everyone! We are going to close today by singing "Go Tell It on the Mountain." Sing it out in this room, but go and make known where you live, work and play all that God has done to rescue you and bring you peace!