

Prince of Peace

Isaiah 9.6, and Various Scriptures

Introduction – In this past Christmas season, we've been reviewing these Messianic titles in Isaiah 9.6:

Isaiah 9:6-7

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
7Of 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.

And today we are going to wrap up with seeing how Jesus Christ is the PRINCE OF PEACE.

- The Old Testament word for "peace" is "shalom". It means more than our English word for peace. Basically the Hebrew word means more than just the absence of hostility but includes all the blessings that God intended for us to live in. Biblical peace means having the smile of God upon the world. Biblical peace is when all is right with you and God and the creation.
- And if we are honest, the peace has been shattered. We see evidence of that in our own souls and the world around us every day.
- But Jesus is the Prince of Peace. That means that Jesus is the only one who can bring true peace. We are going to see how Jesus bring the peace of reconciliation, peace in relationships, and will bring ultimate peace when He rules the world.

1. The Peace of Reconciliation with God

- a. I think that instinctively we understand that there is a God and that all is not right between Him and humanity. We seem to know that somehow things went wrong. The Bible not only offers the best explanation of what went wrong: human disobedience, but it also explains how humanity can be reconciled to God.
- b. Listen to these passages regarding reconciliation and peace with God through Jesus Christ...

Colossians 1:19-22

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

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

Romans 5:1 - Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

- c. Perhaps the best way to understand the peace of reconciliation that Christ offers is through 2 specific aspects of these verses:
- **FIRST**, we cannot be at peace with God unless we are holy and blameless and above reproach before Him (Colossians 1.22). God is holy and everything that is holy is at “peace” with God. Anything that is not holy is alienated from God, banished from His presence, and at war with Him. So by our very nature as sinful humans, we are NOT reconciled to God, we are NOT at peace with Him, in fact we are at war with Him. But Jesus Christ on the cross made peace between sinful humanity and holy God. His holy life was offered as a substitutionary sacrifice for us. God poured out on Him the judgment that we deserved.
 - **SECOND**, we receive that peace through FAITH in Jesus Christ (Romans 5.1 - ...since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.) Now this is very important... God does not reconcile with us, God does not offer us peace by just winking at our sin. God JUSTIFIES us which means that He genuinely makes us holy by crediting Christ’s holiness to us to both cancel out our debt of sin and grant us the positive holiness of Christ. By God’s grace and Christ’s sacrifice, we are truly RIGHT with God. And that righteousness leads to genuine peace with God.
 - * Instead of being alienated from God we become part of the family.
 - * Instead of being God’s enemy, we are enlisted into His ranks.
 - * Instead of self-destructing on sin, we experience a growing faithfulness and obedience to God.
- And we receive all of that, the righteousness of Christ credited to our account, a right relationship with God, peace with Him through FAITH. In other words, when we recognize that we are alienated from God by our sin, when we believe that God, in love, sent His Son to die in our place, when we stop trying to make it on our own, when we receive that gracious forgiveness as our own through Christ, when we yield our lives to His control, then we have salvation. We have been rescued from the wrath of God and have been brought into His family.
- d. Now, what I have just described is what the Bible calls the Good News, and there is something scandalous about it. More than once in the Bible, God describes the sinfulness of His people as a wife who turns to prostitution. She has a loving, caring husband and yet she sells herself on the market to the highest bidder. And yet each time God uses that horrific imagery to describe the unfaithfulness of His people He clearly states His intention to take her back! There is something scandalous about grace. If your spouse turned to prostitution, would you reconcile with him or her? That kind of descriptive imagery helps understand the unfailing love of God, but it is more than that. If we are like a cheap prostitute because of our sins, then being enfolded in God’s arms of love, being welcomed into His family, being reconciled to a right relationship with Him is ABSOLUTELY NOT based upon our performance!!! It is only and always based upon Christ’s performance.
- e. That is the peace of RECONCILIATION with God! And at the same time, that is the scandalous nature of grace!
- f. **Application** – So this aspect of peace through reconciliation with God applies to our lives in a couple of ways.
 - If you have never trusted in Jesus’ sacrifice for your sins to supply that reconciliation, trust

in Him today.

- And then, we must highlight the importance of grace. If salvation is by grace it is not by works. If reconciliation is by faith it is not by performance. We must examine our hearts for ways that we tend to think that we deserve God's favor. God is not impressed by our good works. We have to constantly keep in mind how dirty our sins have made us and how the grace that washes us clean is so undeserved that it is scandalous!

- g. Transition** – Now... that glorious peace with our Creator should lead to some other kinds of peace. So let's talk about...

2. The Peace of Relationships submitted to God

- a.** When we think of peace in relationships we should begin with Ephesians 2...

Ephesians 2:1

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins

Ephesians 2:5

even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ— by grace you have been saved—

When we think about the condition that we were in, in sin and corruption and death, and then the grace of God in making us alive to Him and saving us from our sins, it should help us as we consider our relationships with others...

Ephesians 2:11-12

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— ¹²remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

This passage highlights some of the common divisions that we allow to come between our relationships. Here it is "the circumcision" and "the uncircumcision", which might be roughly equivalent today to something like "religious vs. non-religious". Other things that are mentioned in the New Testament that naturally divide people are Jew vs. Gentile, slave vs. free, male vs. female. But as we read on, we see that Jesus Christ has brought reconciliation and peace to those relationships...

Ephesians 2:13-16

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

- b.** So Jesus has brought peace to these naturally hostile relationships by His sacrifice. Here's how I think that this works itself out in the everyday world: Before being reconciled to God, we looked at people's skin color, or their income level, or their cultural background, or their nationality, or their educational level, or their personality traits to decide whether or not we liked them. But now that we have been reconciled to God and welcomed into His family when we meet someone else that has been reconciled to God that trumps everything else!
- c.** The other way that being reconciled to God brings peace to relationships is through the ability to forgive. When we looked at Ephesians 2 it reminded us that we were in terrible shape. We were dead in trespasses, we were hostile to God, we were children of wrath. Basically we were out of control with sin! But God in His rich mercy and grace reached down and saved us and forgave our sins. And then when someone hurts us with their words or with their negligence or with their actions, we have this whole well of grace to draw from to be able to forgive them. When we

look at our sin against God, and see His forgiveness, then we can find the strength to forgive someone else – **Ephesians 4.32** – “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

- d. **Application** – So the Prince of Peace gives peace in relationships. If they are relationships that would naturally be hostile because of human divisions like race or culture or economics when we submit ourselves to Christ, we are united to one another. When we are reconciled to God being reconciled to other believers who are naturally different from us is a matter of submission not preference.

And then when it comes to peace in personal relationships reconciliation can come because being forgiven by God makes it feasible to forgive one another. Seeing the amazing extent of His grace provides us with grace for peaceful relationships. As John Newton said, “His love subdues the power of self...”

- e. **Transition** – Now... even if we have been reconciled to God and even if most of our relationships are relatively peaceful we often still feel a restlessness. Even the best Christians go through times where their hearts are not content. Even the best relationships can go through difficult times. And of course, no matter how peaceful you may be personally, we still long for world peace, international peace. Ultimately the solution to those last vestiges of hostility require...

3. The Peace of the Rule of the Messiah

- a. Listen to the peace that will pervade on the earth with Jesus sets up His kingdom:

Isaiah 11:6-9

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,
and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together;
and a little child shall lead them.
⁷The cow and the bear shall graze;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

⁸The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra,
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.

⁹They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

- b. True peace, ultimate peace will only come when Christ reigns. But there is a lesson in this too. The more Christ reigns in hearts and homes and churches the more peace there will be!
- c. The book of Revelation gives us a glimpse of both the personal peace and the global peace that will come when Jesus returns and the universe is recreated...

Revelation 21:3-4 - And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

Revelation 22:1-2

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ²through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

- d. At the end of time, real peace, final peace will belong to God's people. He will wipe away every tear, every vestige of personal angst, and the leaves of the tree of life are for the healing of the nations! There will be not private tears and there will be no international wars! That is true peace!

Finally, I want to make a couple of final comments about "personal peace".

Illustration – You know how in the Air Force, the big tankers refuel the fighter jets in mid-air? We've talked about some "highflying doctrine this morning: peace through RECONCILIATION with God and the anticipated peace of CHRIST'S FINAL RULE in the recreated universe. But how do we get that fuel down into the fight of our everyday lives?

So what if we are anticipating a time when the reign of Christ will usher in world peace and dry all our personal tears, what if our hearts are filled with anxiety TODAY?! How do we receive the peace, the shalom, of Christ personally in everyday living?

- First of all we have to remember that our personal experience of peace is built on the doctrine that we've already talked about. If we understand that even though we were once enemies of God, by His grace and the blood of His Son we have been reconciled to God Almighty, then the little ripples of everyday life aren't going to bother us nearly as much.
- And then we have to realize that worry and anxiety is really a form of pride. If our lives are just not peaceful, if our hearts are filled with complaining and our spirits are restless it is probably because we are not humbling ourselves under the sovereign rule of Jesus. Listen to...

1 Peter 5:6-7 - Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

The phrase "casting all your anxieties on Him" is really supporting the command to "humble yourselves". When we humble ourselves under the authority of Christ, peace will have fertile soil in which to grow.

- And then, what about "dying in peace". Is it possible to face death with a peaceful heart? God created us to LIVE, and death is described in the Bible as our enemy, so death is not "a natural part of life". If we are honest it strikes terror in our hearts. However, there are 2 things that we should remember.
 - Once again, the theology of peace should prepare us even for facing death. If we are reconciled to God in life, we are prepared for eternity. And if we've been reconciled to God, we are a part of His family. We are held in His hand, and nothing can touch us until He allows. We are safe, even in death, if our trust is in Him. In fact, I believe that God sends His angels to escort us into His presence when we come to the end of our days.
 - Even if the thought of death causes us to tremble (and it would be unnatural if it didn't) I believe that God gives "dying grace". Paul said, "I am ready to be poured out like a drink offering". In other words he was prepared to die. I don't know how many times we've heard testimony of people who saw loved ones, Jesus, or angels in the very moments before their death welcoming them across the river of death. I'm not trying to say that death is easy. It is certainly difficult, but if God provides grace and peace for the difficulties of life, we can rest assured that God will provide grace and peace for the difficulties of dying.

Conclusion – I think that this sermon leaves us with 3 main questions:

- Will we find peace with God in the cross of Jesus Christ? Do you need to “surrender” to God and receive salvation and forgiveness through Jesus?
- Will we find personal peace through greater submission to the authority of Jesus in every area of our lives?
- Will we overflow with peace and forgiveness in our relationships knowing how much God has forgiven us?