

Isaiah 9:6

“He Shall Be Called: Prince of Peace”

The Nativity of Our Lord – Christmas Eve

December 24, 2024

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, West Salem, Wisc.

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Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

“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” (Isaiah 9:6).

We live in a world where war is far too common. And not just conflicts between nations, but conflicts between individual people. There is hatred of others because of their skin pigmentation, or differing religious views, or differing political views, or something was said to offend one another. There is hatred toward others simply because they covet what their neighbor has.

If this isn't enough, there is even hatred among people who ought to love each other. Many husbands and wives are at war with each other, and the result is that marriage vows are often broken. Many parents and children are at war with each other, and the result is dysfunctional homes filled with tension, strife, and violence. Even fellow brothers and sisters in Christ who ought to love one another are often filled with hatred for one another – and the result is that we have congregations filled with disharmony and conflict.

I could talk all night about the various ways that people of this fallen world are at war with one another.

Sadly, on this Christmas Eve, we do not have peace on earth. This is discouraging to us, because we all desire peace, especially on this night as we sing of peace.

During this Christmas season, many people hope for some sort of peace in their lives. But we can't seem to avoid war and conflict. Why? Well, what we need to understand is that things have always been this way since Adam and Eve declared war against God.

And we are the sinful descendants of Adam and Eve. God's inerrant Word teaches that we are all conceived with their sinful nature. So, it is our natural state to be at war with God. In fact, the reason there is so much war among people is that we are at war with God. So, until we have peace with God, there will be *no* peace on earth.

If we were in control of peace, we would be doomed to an eternity without peace. Scripture teaches us that we are by nature enemies of God. That problem is *not* that God doesn't love us. The problem is that we don't love God, nor do we truly trust Him. The proof that we don't love God is that we constantly sin against Him by our desires, thoughts, words, and deeds – *by the evil we do and the good we fail to do*.

Scripture teaches that we all deserve God's eternal wrath because of our sin, and there is nothing we can do to change that. Not only can we do nothing to get rid of our guilt and avoid the punishment we deserve, but the real problem is that we cannot change our own hearts. We can't give ourselves the peace we desperately need.

Since we are not at peace with God, then we can never be at peace with our neighbor. So, left to ourselves, there would *never* be peace on earth, but only war and strife at every level of human relationship.

This is why we must pay close attention to the true message of Christmas! On this Christmas Eve, I have the good news that us war-torn sinners long for. On this Christmas Eve, the Prince of Peace has come!

Jesus, the Son of God, came into this fallen world to give you peace! But the peace He gives you must start with Him bringing you into a loving relationship with God. We need to be at peace with God if we are going to be at peace with our neighbor.

In Isaiah 9, we are told that the Child who is to be born for us and the Son who is given for us would be called "Prince of Peace." He is called "Prince" because He rules over us, and the "Peace" describes the nature of His rule. And ***"of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end"*** (Isaiah 9:7).

This Child is Jesus, who is God in human flesh. That Baby who lived in Mary's womb is God, the Creator of all things seen and unseen. That Baby Jesus had more power in His little finger than all the armies that have ever existed. Yet, Jesus chose to live a life of humility and service. He came so that He would be beaten and nailed to cross.

But why did it have to be this way? Isaiah gives us that answer: ***"He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His wounds we are healed"*** (Isaiah 53:5). So, just as Isaiah speaks of the birth of Jesus, He also speaks of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross.

But Jesus didn't have to do this. He didn't have to endure this shame and suffering. As God, He could have just made war with us and wiped us out and just started over. But He didn't. He instead allowed us to wipe Him out with our sins that we might be saved from our war against God and be rescued from the punishment that we all deserve.

Listen to this good news:

“For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person – though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die – but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life” (Romans 5:6-10).

Jesus came down from heaven, was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary in order to die for us! He came to give us peace with God through His death! ***“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”*** (Romans 5:1).

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, because of Jesus' death and bodily resurrection, you are at peace with God! You see, the war God could have justly waged against us, He instead waged against His Son, whom He punished in our place, so that through faith in Him we would be “justified,” that is “declared righteous” before God. The Prince of Peace has reconciled you to God. In Christ alone, your sins are forgiven. In Christ alone, you are no longer God's enemy. In Christ alone, you live at peace with God.

On that first Christmas, the angels said to the shepherds, ***“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased”*** (Luke 2:14). Do you want God's peace? Then let His favor rest on you. Repent of your sin and trust in the Prince of Peace who died for your sin and reconciled you to God.

Maybe you know someone who is running from God by trying to find peace in his or her life of sin. Maybe that is you. Well, God doesn't want you to be at war with Him and your neighbor. God wants His favor to rest on you so that you can receive peace from the Prince of Peace.

On this Christmas Eve, we are here to worship our Savior, the Prince of Peace, who came to give us peace with God. On this Christmas Eve, God's favor rests on you as He calls you to repent of your sin and receive peace through faith in your Savior. I invite you to our Christmas Day service or to any Divine Service where our Prince of Peace gives us His own body and blood in the Lord's Supper. In that Supper, He gives us Himself so we can know that we are at peace with God. So, come and join us tomorrow and each Sunday or Monday!

I have even more good news! You see that same Prince of Peace who has reconciled you to God has the power to heal those broken relationships you have with your neighbor. As the love and mercy of Christ fills your heart, your heart will be changed to show love and mercy to others – *even forgiving those who have hurt you.*

Because of Jesus – the Prince of Peace, we can begin to have peace on earth. Because of the Jesus, husbands and wives can begin to forgive, love, and serve each other. Because of the Jesus, parents and children can begin to forgive, love, and serve one another. Because of the Jesus, all who trust in Him can begin to forgive, love, and serve one another. There can be peace on earth *only* when we are at peace with God.

But as wonderful as that news is – *and it is wonderful news*, we must also remember that we will never have complete peace on earth until Jesus returns again in His glory.

Despite this, we, who are in Christ, can still live in peace and have certain hope for the future! We can live in peace now knowing that our sins are forgiven and that we are reconciled to God through the Prince of Peace. We can also live with certain hope for the future because we know that the Prince of Peace will return. And on that Day, we, who are in Christ, will rest in God's favor and be ushered into the new creation where we will live forever in perfect peace!

On this Christmas Eve, let God's favor rest upon you and your homes, and keep the Prince of Peace the center of your marriages and families – and then you will experience the peace of God that passes all human understanding! Merry Christmas! Amen.

*The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.*

+ SOLI DEO GLORIA +