

After all of the noise and the confusion of the past few days hopefully you have had a moment or two of peace. But if you have small children in the house or your Christmas guests are still here, you may be waiting for that time of peace. But regardless of what goes on around us, Christmas is a time of Peace.

The people of Israel were waiting for the Messiah before Jesus was born on the first Christmas. They were waiting for the mighty warrior who would defeat the Romans and bring freedom to the nation. The prophet Isaiah said, ***“For you will break the yoke of their slavery and lift the heavy burden from their shoulders. You will break the oppressor’s rod, just as you did when you destroyed the army of Midian.”*** (Isaiah 9:2 NLT) The people believed this was the promise of a military Messiah. They didn’t realize that the Messiah would break the yoke of slavery to sin and set people free from guilt and shame.

One of the things that people long for is Peace, one of the things on many “grown up Christmas’ lists.” Peace is not what we get when the world is calm and everything is going right. Peace is knowing that God’s message of hope is the same even when our world is unpredictable or unmanageable. On the night that Jesus was born, the angel of the Lord proclaimed, ***“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”*** (Luke 2:14 KJV) Peace on earth is God’s gift to us in Jesus Christ. Peace is not a calm world. Peace is the good news that God is with us in a messy world because Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace.

Real peace begins with God. There will be no peace in our world until there is peace in nations. There will never be peace in nations until there is peace in communities. There will never be peace in communities until there is peace in families. There will never be peace in families until there is peace in individuals. There will never be peace in individuals until we invite the Prince of Peace to reign in our hearts. Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace.

Peace begins with God. We will only have real peace in our lives when we are at Peace with God. When we try to live without God in our lives, we are really living at war with Him. It doesn’t work. We can’t make peace with God by promising to be good, by trying to be perfect, or by never sinning. We can’t do those things. The Bible tells us that the only way to have peace with God is through faith in Jesus. ***“Since we have been made right in God’s sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.”*** (Romans 5:1 NLT) Jesus gives us peace with God by forgiving our sins. So when God sees us, he doesn’t see us as we are, but He sees us through Christ. He doesn’t give us the punishment we deserve. Instead He gives us the forgiveness and life that Christ won through the cross and the empty tomb.

Once we have Peace with God, then we can have the Peace of God. We have two choice when life gets out of control. The Apostle Paul tells us what we should do, ***“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything.”*** (Philippians 4:6 NLT). Our choices are worry or pray. If we prayed as much as we worry, we would have a lot less to worry about. Worry never solves problems; it never changes anything. But prayer has the power to change everything, beginning with our attitude. When life gets messy and out of control, prayer helps us to receive the peace of God. (Philippians 4:6-7) I can’t count the number of times I’ve seen and experienced it when I’ve been with people in the hospital or during a family crisis. They can be worried about anything and everything. But when we take the time to pray, the attitude in the whole room will change as God gives them hope and peace. The peace of God can help us have peace in the storms and chaos of life.

Jesus didn’t just come to reconnect us with God and give us peace with God. He also came to heal broken relationships and give us peace with others. Jesus said, ***“God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.”*** (Matthew 5:9 NLT) God has given us a message of peace and a mission of helping people find peace. That is a vital mission in world filled with conflict. Peace makers listen so that people can release the pressure in their lives before they blow their tops. Peace makers help people see things from a different perspective or help them see different options. Peace makers remind people of God’s love and forgiveness for them and for others.

One of the greatest need in our nation is the need for peace, for broken relationships to be healed and restored. God sees the hurt in our world and even in our own lives. He is ready to forgive us and give us His Peace. That has to happen first before we can make peace with others. You can’t love people the same way Jesus loves them. You can only love them that way when he fills you with His love. You can’t forgive others by yourself. You’re going to have to let him forgive you first and give you the ability to forgive others.

Never forget, you matter to the Lord. You are not an accident or a waste of space. You were created by God. Jesus wants to give you the Peace of God and Peace with God. Then, and only then, will you be able to love and forgive like Christ. And then you will be able to be at Peace with others, because you will be able to see them with the eyes of Christ, imperfect but loved, forgiven sinners, restored by Christ.

Christmas is a time of peace because Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace comes into our world. The world around us and our personal circumstances may change. But God’s love lasts forever. When Jesus is with us, we have the Peace of God. That is the key to having peace with one another.

May Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, give you His peace. Amen.