

Peace on Earth

Sermon December 19, 2021 - Fourth Sunday of Advent

Golden Verse: *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased!* (Luke 2:14)

“Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth.” The Christmas cards stop the verse too soon. They usually leave out “among men with whom He is pleased”.

Peace! The Hebrew word for peace is “Shalom”. It is a word rich in meaning, a word deep and wide with wholeness and well-being. Most know that the Hebrew word “Shalom” is understood PEACE. In Hebrew, “Shalom” is used to both greet people and to bid them farewell, but it means much more than “peace, hello or goodbye”.

The meaning of the word “Shalom” is a feeling of contentment, completeness, wholeness, well-being and harmony. Also, it means health, peace, welfare, safety, soundness, tranquility, prosperity, perfectness, fullness, rest, harmony, and the absence of agitation or discord. The word shalom is a mighty blessing. It means a complete well-being: physical, psychological, social, and spiritual.

God is not saying peace on earth with no war, just harmony and unity, or ...let's all be one big happy family. Not at all. But the peace God is proclaiming is even better... it is a peace between Him and the people that please Him.

How can we please God? It is only through Jesus Christ, only through the way of reconciliation He has made available to us. So if we want to be reconciled to God and want to be reconciled with others, then it must be through Christ.

So many of us need reconciliation today. Husbands need to be reconciled to wives. Parents need to be reconciled with children. We all need to be reconciled with God. We all need reconciliation.

Day by day, work and family and health are causing us stress. We all are weighted down by stress and anxiety. How do we find peace in those moments? – is the question.

We have an awesome Heavenly Father, a loving parent. Please always remember that God wants to help relieve you from the pressure you may be feeling. He wants to take the weight off you and replace it with grace and peace. He wants to offer you a relationship built on love and selflessness.

This is what God did when He sent His Son into the world to save His people from their sins.

In fact, He declared His peacemaking strategy 2,000 years ago, when *“for to us a child was born, to us a son was given; the government is on His shoulder. His name is Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”* (Isaiah 9:6)

Please embrace Christ here and NOW, and let Him be your Counsellor, Your Mighty God, your Everlasting supporter, and you can have here and now His Peace. And in any kind of anxiety, you will experience His immeasurable peace, which surpasses all human understanding. You will experience inner peace, and peace with others.

Inner peace begins with a relationship with God as we focus on His strength and love filling us. If anxiety spills over, choose to trust God. Choose to draw on His patience and wisdom each step of the way. He will guide you through the journey of your life if you ask Him to. Choosing to trust God will take you down the road to inner peace.

If you open your heart for the Prince of Peace, you will experience His peace in every circumstance to the depths of our souls, as you abide with Him. And the peace He provides will never fail.

Peace with others begins as we understand that God has called us to be peacemakers in our world. Please think about this question: Is there somewhere you can be a peacemaker this Christmas? Not simply a peacekeeper but a peacemaker. Is there an invitation that needs to be extended to smooth over a fractured family relationship? Is there an apology to be made or a silence to be broken? Please don't miss the blessing God promises as you respond to His call to be a peacemaker this Christmas.

You can help bring peace to our world, one heart at a time.

Father God,

Make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light;

And where there is sadness, joy.

O grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;

To be understood as to understand;

To be loved as to love with all my soul;

For it is in giving that we receive;

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

(Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi)

Today please take your peace to the next level by taking some specific time with God to tell Him where you want to trust him more, and reaching out in kindness to someone with whom your relationship feels tense.

May the peace of Christmas fill your heart and your home. Amen