

Wait Peacefully

Sermon December 4, 2022

Today we live in a very busy world, where every day more and more computer programs and machines are invented which make our lives easier. The human brain can have a hard time following or understanding modern technology.

Last week, a very nice person told me that she worries about her 106-year-old grandmother who started to have some issues with her eyes. Since she has issues with her eye sight, she cannot dial phone numbers now and cannot find the right channel on the radio to listen to music. I suggested to her to buy a very affordable Google product, which is a small box, and this will help her grandmother to live in a more comfortable way.

I have this box in my office and I can tell it: “Hey Google, play Gospel songs.” And the box will play Gospel songs for me. “Hey Google, play Christmas carols.” And the box in no time will start to play Christmas carols.

Today, technology is advancing so rapidly, that new inventions will fulfill almost all our needs.

We pause and wonder what the little child of Bethlehem wants to do in our technologically advanced world.

Jesus himself answers this question: Two thousand years ago, with His arrival “*The kingdom of God has drawn near; repent and believe in my gospel*” (Mark 1:15). Two thousand years ago, Jesus began His teaching on earth with this message. This is how His very first sermon was opened. Most of the time in His messages, Jesus spoke about the Kingdom of God, which we call Heaven. Jesus came to us to present to us God’s kingdom, heaven, and He came to bring to us a glimpse of that heaven.

The very first gift of His kingdom is PEACE. The angels proclaimed also that, with Jesus Christ, the Peace of Heaven came to us. After Jesus was resurrected, this is how He was greeting his disciples: “Peace to you.” Even today in this world, the modern man, the stressed out and worried man, needs His peace. I can say that we never needed Jesus’ peace so much as today. This is what Jesus is bringing us during this Advent and Christmas in 2022. Today, Jesus wants to share with you the peace of the kingdom of God.

Let's take a much closer look at what exactly Jesus meant when he used this expression, the kingdom of God. According to a more accurate translation of the

original Greek word, BASILEA, I could say: the kingdom of God is the place where God rules, where He rules as the King of Kings. For us today, the spiritual kingdom of God is that happy, perfect state in which there is one will, God's will. He is our king. The kingdom of God is materialized in those people's lives who act in every situation according to God's will, and who live in a deep and loving relationship with God.

I once saw a saying on the wall of someone's house: "Yes, Lord!" The kingdom of God is a state in which God's glory and peace are reflected and echoed continuously in an adoring, obedient, good-willed "yes". Never be disturbed by "no", denial, or contradiction! In those people's lives, there is NO "Yes, Lord, but..." These people obey God with joy.

Heaven is a different world. Heaven is like that paradise where the first couple lived before they sinned. Heaven is the place where there is no sin, sadness, and passing away, but only happiness and eternal life.

Do you believe that there exists somewhere such a country, such a happy, divine rule, a perfect world full of God's glory and peace, which we call heaven for short?

God Himself talks about it in the Bible. He tells many of his precious secrets in His statement, but the greatest thing He says about heaven is that this country's creator and sustainer came over to our world and appeared in Bethlehem as a child.

This is why Jesus says: "*The kingdom of God is near*". If he were to say this today, Jesus would say that the creator of this world has come in Him, and invites us to that new world that will never come to an end, which is everlasting and where eternal peace reigns forever.

On Christmas night, the Lord Jesus came to us from that other world. He arrived in the little stable in Bethlehem. That little child lying in the manger is the same LORD Jesus Christ who said about Himself: "*I am the life...*" John 14:6 and "*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me*" Matthew 28:20.

In Jesus, God is among us. He is the sign that God loves you and me without limits. Jesus comes today again to bring peace to our hearts. Inner quiet peace. Pure perfect peace. This is the secret of Christmas. That's why Jesus said, pointing to Himself: "*the kingdom of God is near*", that happy, perfect, pure heaven.

Christmas is the most important moment in human history. This is why we started counting the years from the first Christmas day, which is considered the date of the birth of Jesus Christ. We count forward and backward from this time. Christmas is

a turning point where there is a new beginning. The peace of heaven came into our world. On the first Christmas Eve, and since then, the divine peace is shared on earth. And even today, only those who accept Jesus feel and experience God's peace.

The angels also announce that God is with us. "*Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.*" Luke 2:14.

Jesus said: "*The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor*" Matthew 11:5. These are the signs that our creator, sustainer, and saviour, Jesus Christ, is here among us.

Jesus wants to extend His kingdom by moving into us through His Holy Spirit and giving us His infinite peace: the peace that neither illness nor death breaks. And we can enjoy these gifts today. When we feel this peace within ourselves, we feel that the kingdom of God has been realized in us already here on this earth. Only those who feel this enormous and unbreakable peace in their hearts can say that the peace of God's kingdom has reached them. This peace always comes only with Jesus and in Jesus.

So, this peace has arrived. It is here. It has come to touch you and me. As soon as Jesus announced this, He immediately added the call: "*repent and believe in the gospel*" (Mark 1:15b).

To repent means accepting Jesus Christ as the Lord of your life, your king, your saviour, the only and greatest help that man can receive on earth. Repent means turning to Jesus with all your heart and listening to Him, listening to His word, and listening to His advice. And by listening to Jesus, His peace will move into your heart. You just accept Him and He will do everything in the future so that there is peace in your hearts, in your homes, and in your families.

We are all born into a world corrupted by sin. And God brought Jesus into this world to give us inner peace and a new way of life.

We all start life on the wide road and only Jesus can change us to the narrow road that leads to heaven. And at the end of the narrow road, God takes us to the world we call heaven. But He only takes those who have given their lives here to Jesus. It is not virtues or good deeds that will take us to heaven, but Jesus and Jesus alone.

The burial place of the former House of Habsburg of Austria is in the church of the Capuchins in Vienna. It was a custom there that, when the dead king's body was

carried down the narrow stairs, the coffin bearers knocked on the closed door of the crypt.

“Who is asking for admission?” came the question from within. “Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary!” was the proud reply. The door didn’t open.

The coffin bearers knocked a second time, and the question came again: “Who wants to be admitted?” Then they listed all the dignities, titles, and ranks of the former ruler. The door remained closed.

The coffin bearers knocked for the third time and, when the question came from the inside, the coffin bearers' answer was: “A poor, and sinful human being,” then the door opened and the procession carrying the coffin could enter.

At the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II. the ministers in their prayers were not praying for the Queen but for Elizabeth, the humble servant of God.

Anyone who brings anything other than Christ, His suffering, death, and resurrection, knocks in vain at the door of the Kingdom of God. Title, rank, earthly achievements, good deeds, virtues, and sufferings are not enough to enter into His eternal Kingdom. Until you can say from your heart that a wretched sinner is asking for admission, free of grace, the gates of this country will remain closed. But it opens as soon as someone begs for mercy in front of it.

The Child of Bethlehem wants you to accept Him and spend the rest of your life with Him. In this Advent, waiting for Jesus, please give Him your heart, your two hands, your work, and yourself. May God help you so that many people may know Jesus through you. Just tell that the Christmas news is that “the kingdom of God hears”. For this, we have to repent and believe in the gospel. Amen