

**“Peace wanted”    Isaiah 9:2-7**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent    December 4, 2004    Pastor Jon Bergemann**

Come, come, Immanuel, and ransom us, the captive of Israel, Amen. The Word of God for our consideration this morning is found in Isaiah chapter 9 (read text). In the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, dear brothers and sisters in Christ.

The Holidays are such a peaceful time, aren't they? Long, relaxing moments sipping hot apple cider by a fire with logs all aglow. Quiet afternoon naps under a soft blanket with snow falling softly outside. The calm sounds of Christmas carols playing gently through our minds. Ah, the peace of the Holiday season.

Is that what the Holidays are like for you? Or are there times when the “peace” of the Holidays is replaced by the panic of pages upon pages of things to do? We need to get the tree, put up the decorations, get the gifts, make travel plans, make the food for this party and that event, go to this store and that mall, fight miles of traffic. Oh, and in the meantime, those other little responsibilities of life – such as work, and school, and paying the bills, and cleaning the house, and remembering who needs to get dropped off where and who needs to get picked up when – they all are still going on. So is this time really a time of peace, or of panic? Is it the Holidays, or the Hecticdays?

Do you ever find it ironic that in a season where we hear so much about peace and even quiet (notice how we sing “Silent Night”), we seem to be busier than ever? We seem to be doing more than ever? We seem to be worrying and working and sweating and striving more than ever? Ah, how we sometimes struggle not to fall to pieces in this season of peace!

Peace can be elusive. But I don't think that Christmas is the only time when this happens. After all, 365 days of the year we live in a world full of deadlines and due dates. A world full of pressure and pains. A world full of anxiety and anger. A world full of guilt and greed. A world full of strife and suffering. In short, a world full of sin.

And folks, it's this sin that so often punctures and pulverizes our peace. It's this sin, part of us by nature, that shows itself in our selfish actions. It's this sin that results in marriages with angry words and angry thoughts. It's this sin that results in families with children who do not always honor their parents as they should and parents who are not always as honorable as they should be. It's this sin that results in loneliness and heartache. It's this sin that results in uncertainty and shame. It's this sin, in each and every one of us, that violates the standard of perfection that our perfect God sets for us to get into heaven on our own. Which means that it's this sin which should result in us going to hell.

This peace shattering and eternally condemning sin pervades every part of this world. It's why, whether it be December or July, we so often fail to find the peace we long for in this world. It's why, to give us true peace, our God gave us a gift that was out of this world.

What happened? The Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace – Jesus Christ, glorious God over all, came from outside of this world – from the throne of heaven itself – down to our world to give us true peace.

We said that nothing in this world can give us perfect peace – it's all contaminated with sin. So Jesus came from outside of our world into our world to solve the problem of peace. After all, did you catch that last name that Isaiah called him? He's the Prince of Peace.

Peace is part of his name! Peace is his Christmas time and summer time and fall time and springtime and all the time gift to us! How did He make this gift for us?

It didn't come from a workshop in the North Pole where he was assisted by his little elves. Oh no. This gift he made with his own life. He began making this gift for us in the most amazing of ways – he came to earth as a baby born in Bethlehem.

Then he crafted this gift of peace with the rest of his life. Remember that our God demands perfection to get into heaven. Look what Jesus did. He lived a life of perfection in our place.

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Then he made sure that God would see this perfect life in our place, that forgiveness and perfection would be given to us, by giving His life on the cross to pay for our sins. He gift-wrapped our gift of forgiveness and peace with his own blood.

And to complete the gift? He rose from the dead! Proving that God sees his perfection in our place! Proving that we have forgiveness from God! We have peace with God! We have heaven!

Jesus gives us true peace. He gives you a personal gift of forgiveness and love. He washed away your sins and wipes away your guilt. He gives you forgiveness, he gives you peace. This gift is paid for in full. No batteries needed. No exchanges to be made. This is your gift, 365 days of the year.

You see, even when you feel your mind spinning for everything on your “to do” list, you can have peace through Jesus. The most important gift to get – forgiveness and eternal life – is done. He gives it to you.

And even when you say and think and do things you regret, you can have peace through Jesus. Look to the cross. He forgives you. You are at peace with God.

And even when you toss and turn in bed when you turn out the light – pondering all that you should have done differently in the day or the week or your life – you can fall asleep in peace. Jesus has completed the job of saving you. He has won heaven for you. Everything else pales in comparison. You are at peace with God.

And even when you close your eyes in death – you can have peace. Jesus promises that you will wake up to an eternal Holiday celebration in heaven. You don’t need to bring a thing, he has the party of peace waiting for you.

So as you scurry to and fro this Holiday season, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another, serve the Lord with gladness. And know that the Lord will bless and keep you, that the Lord will make his face shine upon you, and that the Lord – the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace – will look on you with favor, and give you peace. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds through faith in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:7