

Jesus, Prince of Peace – Isaiah 9:6-7
Sermon – Pastor Joe Davis
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INTRODUCTION

Shalom. That's Hebrew for peace. And what a wonderful word it is. *Shalom*. It speaks of friendship and goodwill; of reconciliation between former enemies. It's God's kind of peace. Rabbi Robert Kahn has contrasted worldly peace with *shalom*, God's kind of peace. He says:

“One can dictate a peace; shalom is a mutual agreement.
Peace is a temporary pact; shalom is a permanent agreement.
One can make a peace treaty; shalom is the condition of peace.
Peace can be negative, the absence of commotion.
Shalom is positive, the presence of serenity.
Peace can be partial; shalom is whole.
Peace can be piecemeal; shalom is complete.”
(from JewsForJesus.org)

Do you have *shalom* with God today? Are you on friendly terms with him? Are you at peace with him right now? Because the wonderful reality made possible by Jesus, the Prince of Peace, is that each of us can right now live in permanent, lasting *shalom*, peace, with God our Creator and Sustainer and the Shepherd of our souls.

This week we're continuing our study of the names of Jesus Christ revealed more than 700 years before he took on human flesh and was born as a human baby. These names were revealed through a prophecy found in the Old Testament book of Isaiah, chapter 9, verses 6 and 7. Let's read those verses again this morning:

6 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. 7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with

righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

May the Lord bless the reading of his Word.

In our study so far, we've seen Jesus as Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Wonderful Counselor. Now this week and next week we'll focus on the significance of his name, Prince of Peace...Prince of *Shalom*. And how desperately the world continues to need the lasting, life-giving peace only he can offer. In a world very short on peace, the Prince of Peace has come and continues to offer lasting peace with the living God – a peace that when understood, experienced and lived will transform the way we live our lives and bring peace into our relationships with others as well.

NO PEACE WITHOUT THE FEAR OF GOD

God himself in Isaiah 48:22 makes a very simple, profound, black-and-white statement about peace that all people should pay attention to: ***There is no peace, says the Lord, for the wicked.*** Who are the wicked? Surely not me or anyone I know? Well, the Bible makes clear that the wicked are simply those who have passively or actively rejected God and his ways and are trying to live life without him...for all practical purposes living as if he doesn't exist and isn't in charge and is not the one who created them and who's continually giving them life and breath each day.

And guess what? Every human being begins life with this godless perspective, thinking the world revolves around them, that they're in charge, and that they deserve the credit for their lives, gifts and talents – all of which in reality have been given to them as gifts from the living God meant to bring him great glory. In short, as Paul tells us in Romans 8:17-18: ***There is no fear of God before [our] eyes...and because of that, ...the way of peace [we] have not known.*** *There is no peace without the fear of God.* And yet this is the place we all begin and live our lives. And in this place where we're not acknowledging God as our Creator and Sustainer and we're not surrendering to his rule and reign in our lives, we simply cannot have *shalom*...permanent peace with God and the serenity, wholeness and completeness only he can bring.

Certainly there are many other paths to peace apart from God being offered in the world today. Just head to the local bookstore and you'll find countless books claiming to offer a new or old method for achieving peace and serenity in your life apart from God. But all of these other paths to "peace" offered by the world are temporary, fleeting, partial, empty and will not survive our physical death and entrance into eternity. And that's because there's an "elephant in the room" that must be killed – the "elephant" of our sin and rebellion against the One who created us and continually gives us life and breath every day. And if it's not killed, we'll discover when we die that we're enemies of God and subject to his wrath and judgment for taking the life and gifts he's given us and using them for our own purposes and our own glory, denying the One for whom we exist and refusing to give him thanks and honor and glory. This "elephant" must be killed if we want peace with God.

PEACE PURCHASED BY THE PRINCE OF PEACE

But, my friends, we have good news, don't we? This can all be set right. This is not how we have to live. Complete forgiveness and peace with God and walking into his purposes for us are all possible right now... today. We don't have to be God's enemies and subject to his wrath for our sin. And that's because Jesus, Prince of Peace, made the way for us during his 30 some years on earth. He carried out the love mission God the Father had given him before the foundation of the world...a rescue mission that would cost him his own life to save the very people who had rejected him and were rebelling against him. *Peace was purchased by the Prince of Peace.*

Isaiah told us 700 years in advance what this Prince of Peace would have to do to make peace possible:

Isaiah 53:5-6

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

The picture we have here is you and I as sheep that have run away from the Good Shepherd...the One who knows us and loves us and wants to feed, lead and protect us. We've decided we don't need him and will be better off heading out on our own. But how do you think a lone sheep is going to fare when it meets a wolf pack in the woods? Well, this is the situation all people are in when they've rejected God and his ways and turned each to their own way. It's a lone sheep against a wolf pack.

But thanks be to God, we don't have an ordinary shepherd who's just working his day job and doesn't care for the sheep. We have a Good Shepherd who was willing to step between us and the wolf pack. And more than that, even willing to let the wolf pack tear him to pieces so we could run to safety and rejoin the flock. The wolf pack is the justice and consequences we brought on ourselves through our willful and foolish decision to leave the flock and the protection of the Good Shepherd. And Jesus, the Good Shepherd, was willing to take the justice and consequences for us so we could LIVE and return to peace with God in his flock.

But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed...and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

That's how the Prince of Peace made it possible for every human being, every lost sheep, to have peace with God, their Shepherd, and return to his care and protection – to the place where he is their Mighty God, their Everlasting Father, their Wonderful Counselor.

But did you know, the sheep could still reject the amazing sacrifice the Shepherd made by giving himself to the wolf pack? The sheep could stand there and watch the wolf pack tear the Shepherd to pieces and still not run back to the flock. It could then try to take on the wolf pack itself after they finish with the Shepherd. And you know the outcome of that would be. And yet, that's what people who reject Jesus, the Prince of Peace, are doing. They're rejecting the one way to peace with God and choosing to pay the penalty for their sin themselves, rather than letting Jesus do it for them. They're letting the love sacrifice Jesus made for them personally go to waste.

Have you accepted the peace with God that the Prince of Peace purchased for you on the cross, where he paid the penalty for your sin? Where he bore the shame you deserved? Where he let the wolf pack tear him to pieces so you could live? I trust that most of you have. And for each of you who have, I say what I know is true right now about the way God relates to you at this moment: ***Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Peace to all of you who are in Christ*** (1 Peter 5:14b). You now have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (see Romans 5:1)! Are you living in that peace and allowing it to have its life transforming effects in your life? Next week, we're going to spend some time considering what it means to live *shalom* in our daily lives...to live the life, the way of peace Jesus laid out for us.

KNOW PEACE THROUGH REPENTANCE AND TRUST

But it's very possible that there are a few people here today who are still standing near the wolf pack watching the Good Shepherd sacrifice his life to save yours. You see it happening, but you still haven't decided whether you're going to run to safety or try to take on the wolf pack yourself after they've finished off the Shepherd. Perhaps you think your so called "freedom" from the flock is worth the risk of getting eaten by wolves. But it's not! And it's not true freedom. It's the illusion of freedom that really leads to slavery and death. May I invite you this morning to run to safety? To return to the safety of the flock and the care of the Good Shepherd? To find lasting *shalom* with God?

How do you do that? It's so simple. Remember, *shalom* is a mutual agreement. You have to be involved and accept the path to peace God is offering. You do this through repentance of sin and trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation. ***KNOW peace through repentance and trust.*** Repentance is simply acknowledging your rebellion against God and deciding that's not the way you want to live anymore. Trust in Jesus Christ alone is simply believing that Jesus died on the cross for your sins and rose from the dead, and inviting him to be your Savior and the One in charge of your life from here on out. This is what the Bible calls the word of faith in Jesus Christ, the one path to peace with God. It's the word of faith expressed by Paul in Romans 10:8-11:

8 But what does it say? The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); 9 because, if you confess

with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. 11 For the Scripture says, everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.

That's a promise. ***Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.*** In other words, faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation and peace with God will never be in vain, will never be uncovered as a hoax, will never be exposed as a lie. Jesus himself said: ***"I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me"*** (John 14:6). And the apostle Peter said of Jesus: ***"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved"*** (Acts 4:12). Repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ for salvation and peace with God is perfect truth you can stake your life on and know without a doubt that it will prove true.

If you're ready for peace with God today and the beginning of a new life with him, may I invite you to pray this simple prayer with me:

A Prayer to Accept God's Gift of Salvation through Jesus:

God, I've lived a life of rebellion against You and I want to change. Jesus, I believe
You're the only One who can save me and change me.
I believe You died on the cross for my sins and rose from the dead.
I receive you as my Lord and Savior and invite You to take charge of my life from
here. Teach me to live life with You
and like You by Your power. Amen.

As we spend time now in Communion reflecting on what Christ did to make with peace with God possible for us, I'd like to let Romans 5, verses 1 to 11, tie everything together for us today:

THE BODY

Romans 5:1-5

1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

THE BLOOD

Romans 5:6-11

6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. 10 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. 11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

For Additional Study and Application

Carefully read Romans 5:1-11. Note any truths that stand out.

What does it mean in your own words to have peace with God?

Is the peace we have with God through faith in Jesus Christ permanent or does it come and go based on how we're doing in our walk with God? Explain.

In Romans 5:1-11 what are the benefits we experience through being reconciled to God through Jesus?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-21. What is the ministry of reconciliation we've been given? Describe. Are you currently involved in the ministry of reconciliation and how? What are the obstacles that keep you from participating in this ministry?

List 3 people you see on a weekly basis whom you would like to see come to peace with God. Begin praying for them regularly and thinking of ways to share Christ's offer of peace with them.