

Advent Sermon Series

- **Theme:** Peace “Using the Unremarkable to Achieve the Impossible”
 - *Peace*. Reconciliation with God, secured through Christ’s death and resurrection; not external peace, politically and militarily maintained.¹
 - *peace*. Hbr *shalom*; a state of wholeness and unity; may include reconciliation (Gn 15:15; 26:29; cf Ps 50:14). Most often this is a blessing from God (cf Nu 6:26; 25:12).²
 - **PEACE** (Διήψυ, *shalom*; ειρήνη, *eirēnē*). A pervasive concept in the Bible that most commonly relates to a relationship of **love** and loyalty with God and **one another**.
 - **a state of well-being, peace**³
 - “Earth” is placed beside heaven. If the incarnation fills heaven with God’s glory it does so because it pours out “peace on earth.” The ειρήνη (1:79) is “peace” as the fruit of the incarnation, the condition in which God’s wrath is turned away and his grace extends to men; “peace” objectively as “made through the blood of the cross,” Col. 1:20, and as in the Word “preaching peace by Jesus Christ,” Acts 10:36. It is for men to accept and enjoy and thereby to enter into a new relation to God; but whether they do so or not, the babe in Bethlehem means “peace on earth.” It is argued in vain that “on earth” means, not the whole earth, but only places on the earth. The peace brought by Christ is universal. “In the highest” also does not mean here and there in heaven but in all of heaven. So many unwarranted assertions are still made regarding these words of the angels and thus destroy the unity of interpretation.⁴
 - The angels are speaking objectively of the peace that has been won for the whole earth and is intended for all men, and not subjectively only of those who finally attain this peace.⁵

¹ Engelbrecht, E. A. (2009). [The Lutheran Study Bible](#) (p. 1812). St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

² Engelbrecht, E. A. (2009). [The Lutheran Study Bible](#) (p. 7). St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

³ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000). [A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature](#) (3rd ed., p. 287). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

⁴ Lenski, R. C. H. (1961). [The Interpretation of St. Luke’s Gospel](#) (pp. 134–135). Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House.

⁵ Lenski, R. C. H. (1961). [The Interpretation of St. Luke’s Gospel](#) (pp. 135–136). Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House.

Types of Peace:

- Inner Peace – reconciliation with God; forgiveness; love; first kind of righteousness; vertical relationship
- **14** “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”⁶ (Luke 2:14)
 - Sermon Structure
 - Discuss the various methods by which the world attempts to achieve inner peace (define the term as the world understands it)
 - Meditation, acts of service, money, possessions, success, friends, family, etc.
 - None of these serve to give us true inner peace this year
 - What does the bible have to tell us about inner peace?
 - Visualize the Christ child in the crib
 - To begin we find ourselves standing before this small child in the crib
 - We love Him naturally
 - We want to care for Him
 - We want to protect Him
 - A small child is helpless in the face of a world full of hate, jealousy, greed, and fear
 - Unbeknownst to this child you have heard rumors that a powerful man is already marshalling his troops to destroy Him
 - Like a poisonous disease His forces of evil will flow across the land, snatching precious life from every home in which they can find it
 - You begin to fear for the life of this child because He is at great risk and you can do little to protect Him
 - In your reflections on the helplessness of this small babe you are reminded of your own helplessness in the face of life’s disasters
 - Death from COVID-19 or really any disease is a constant worry
 - We are reminded of our own mortality and our own mortality makes us reflect on our future and our own sinfulness, active and passive, gives us pause and robs us of our comfort
 - In this crib we see made manifest before us the smallest, weakest, most helpless of innocents in a world of deep dangers and crass cruelties
 - Turn our attention to the angels appearing before the shepherds

⁶ [*New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*](#). (1995). (Lk 2:14). La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

- In their sudden, terrifying, and triumphal appearance they speak of the glory of one even greater than they
- A glory that fills the very heavens with its magnificence
- A glory which pours out peace across the earth as it turns aside God's wrath
- For just a moment here in Luke we begin to see the great highway in the desert which prepares the way of the Lord
 - The angels that appear before the shepherds are busy throwing up great spadefuls of earth as they work mightily to prepare the path for the coming King
 - And yet who should come striding along this massive earthen berm of arrow straight certainty but none other than this small fragile child in a crib
 - Wrapped up in the helpless and tiny frame of a little baby is the power and glory of a King, our God whose death on the cross will defeat sin, death, and the devil on our behalf and grant us righteousness, hope, and peace
 - Because at the end of it all it is, He who will repair the relationship of the world with its master
 - And the restoration of this relationship is the real source of our inner peace (define the term as scripture sees it)
 - The world may rage around us still, dangers may threaten, COVID-19 might take from us the things we have often loved and which gave us great comfort but at the end of the day it cannot take from us our true source of inner peace because it is rooted firmly in the strength of the hand of God and nothing can topple our manger-born King
- External Peace - harmony in personal relationships⁷; second kind of righteousness; horizontal relationship
- **34** "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword."⁸ (Matthew 10:34)
 - Sermon structure
 - Discuss the various ways in which we establish external peace among the nations
 - Law, order, justice, police, military, courts, etc.
 - Yet in spite of all these things we still have turmoil and strife between nations and even within nations

⁷ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000). [*A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature*](#) (3rd ed., p. 287). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

⁸ [*New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*](#). (1995). (Mt 10:34). La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

- In fact, in our own modern world the trust in the very institutions meant to establish fair law and order amongst the people is at an all-time low
- Who do we as Christians turn to in the face of all this?
 - At first glance it is a pretty incredible stretch of the imagination
 - The Messiah of the world, the fair arbiter of justice and righteousness is now hanging on a cross like a common criminal
 - The man who was to bring peace between the lion and the lamb even now has caused such turmoil amongst His own people that the leadership is seeking to crucify Him for His sins
 - In fact, He even tells His disciples that He did not come to bring peace among them but the sword and that on His account son would turn against father and daughter against mother.
 - Even more so His claims of how a follower of Him is supposed to live is simply absurd
 - Do good to those who hate you
 - Love your enemy
 - Turn the other cheek
- Yet the great twist of irony is that this criminal, this Christ, is not on the cross for any sin or wrongdoing of His own
 - As a matter of fact, He hangs there dying because of each one of our sins
 - Every lie, hateful act, petty cruelty, theft, moment of anger, etc. everything which divides us from the perfection of God He has taken upon Himself
 - There on that cross, bearing the weight of the sin of every man and woman who has ever lived we watch in wonder as this criminal serve as the High Priest of the world
 - There before the eyes of the whole world the final act of atonement, the great sacrifice of innocent blood shed is finally enacted by this great High Priest and what should serve as the sacrifice in this cosmic moment
 - Why none other than His very own body
 - Christ as high priest turns utter weakness and defeat into victory and salvation for an entire world which daily treats Him as their enemy
 - The cross then becomes His altar and the whole world His temple and through the gift of faith through the Holy Spirit we who believe are made one with our savior and brought into the court of His holy temple
- Because of His sacrifice of Himself we now have the gift of faith planted in our hearts by the Holy Spirit

- Through this great reversal the strange commands of Christ, commands that appear on the surface as weakness show themselves for the strength that they truly are
 - We who now serve as members of the priesthood of all believers are given the strength through Christ's weakness to serve one another humbly
 - Through our established righteousness with Christ we now are called to live in righteousness to one another
 - We work for justice and peace and harmony with one another through sharing the gospel promise and by serving our neighbors humbly
- The foolishness of a criminal's self-sacrifice on a cross becomes the only real wisdom that binds the wounds and restores peace amongst the nations
- Future Hope – Messianic salvation; both kinds of righteousness
 - The ironic relationship is our own experience of the promises of our prophet Christ
 - We live in a world still seemingly overcome by Satan
 - We are simultaneously sinner, and saint
 - We still walk that highway but as we walk along it now it seems like there's cracks in the pavement, weeds growing up about it, not quite as straight and true as it was predicted
 - Yet from the other direction, marching in glorious triumph from the eschaton rides our Savior
 - A prophet who predicted His own return
 - Who died and rose again
 - Who made well the ill, cast out demons, raised the dead, and restored us to Christ
 - He rides out to meet us and in his wake the perfection of a world totally in harmony with God's will explodes out across the landscape
 - Down from the raised highway and deep into the valleys, ravines, and bramble patches of the sinful world
 - And like a cleansing fire what it leaves behind is both pure and holy once more
 - Here in this future that we look forward to, look towards with eager anticipation as we still experience an incomplete peace both internally and externally, lies a life and a kingdom and a world without lack
- Law(s): chaos in the world, fear, financial insecurity, rumors of conflict and violence, anger, hate, rage,
- Gospel(s): Jesus is King; He fills the heavens with glory, He pours out peace upon the earth, No strength of the world or the devil can overcome Him
- Significant Verses:

- **14** “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”⁹
- **27** “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.”¹⁰
- **5:1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,¹¹
- **34** “Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.”¹²
- **33** “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation but take courage; I have overcome the world.”¹³

⁹ [*New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*](#). (1995). (Lk 2:14). La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

¹⁰ [*New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*](#). (1995). (Jn 14:27). La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

¹¹ [*New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*](#). (1995). (Ro 5:1). La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

¹² [*New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*](#). (1995). (Mt 10:34). La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

¹³ [*New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*](#). (1995). (Jn 16:33). La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.