

What Kind of Peace Does Jesus Give?

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Do you remember what the angel said on that first Christmas eve?

"Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth peace good will toward men."

The announcement was, "Let there be peace on Earth and good will toward men." That's called reconciliation.

What is reconciliation? It's when a broken relationship is restored.

When a boyfriend and girlfriend get back together. Or a husband and wife get back together, there's reconciliation.

Where do you need peace in your life this Christmas? That's what Christmas is all about. Peace on Earth, good will toward men. If We asked people this week, "Where do you need peace?" Here's what they would probably say:

"I'd like to see peace in the broken families."

"I'd love to see peace in politics."

"I'd like to see peace in my life."

Iraq & Afganastan

"Peace? Right in this country of ours."

Everywhere!

There will never be peace in the world until there is peace in nations.

National peace. And there will never be peace in nations until there is

peace in communities. And there will never be peace in communities

until there is peace in families. And there will never be peace in

families until there is peace in individuals. And there will never be

peace in individuals until we invite the Prince of Peace to reign in our

hearts. Jesus is called the Prince of Peace.

What kind of peace does Jesus give to us at Christmas time? The

Bible talks about three kinds of peace. There's peace *with God*.

There's the peace *of God*. And there's peace *with each other*.

Christmas is all about all three.

First, you need peace *with God*. I don't know if you realize this or not,

but if you're trying to live your life without God, you're at war with

God. If you're saying, "I'm going to run my own life, and I'm thumbing

my nose to You, and I'm going to do my own thing. Forget You, God. I'll

make my own decisions, thank You very much." You're at war with God, and you need a peace treaty. You need reconciliation because that relationship has been broken. Jesus Christ came to be that bridge over troubled waters, to be that reconciler between God and man.

Once you make peace with God, that's spiritual peace, then you get the peace *of God* in your heart, and that's emotional peace.

This is the one you really need for daily living. The peace *of God* happens in your heart when you've made peace *with God*. All of a sudden, the stress just goes down in your life. You're just not as angry as you used to be. You just don't get as ticked off as you used to be. You're a lot more at peace than you used to be. Things just don't bug you as much. You're a lot more patient. You're filled with a whole lot more love and peace than you used to be. Why? Because now you have the peace *of God* in your heart once you have peace *with God*.

The Bible says it like this, "*Don't worry about anything. Instead pray about everything.*" He's saying you've got two choices in life. You can pray, or you can panic. Those are your choices. In every circumstance,

you can pray or panic. You can worship, or you can worry. If you prayed as much as you worry, you'd have a whole lot less to worry about.

Once you make peace with God, and then you get the peace of God in your heart, you're just a whole lot less stressed than you used to be.

Now, you can start making peace *with other people*. God says, "I want you to be a peacemaker. I want you to be a reconciler." The Bible calls this the ministry of reconciliation.

God says, "Once I have shown you grace, I want you to show it to other people." God says, "I've cut you some slack. Why don't you cut some other people some slack? Don't hold them to such heavy standard.

Show grace to them. Be a peacemaker."

Jesus said it like this - "*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.*" If you're really a child of God, if you really know Christ, the Prince of peace, you're going to be a peacemaker, not a troublemaker, at work. You're going to be a peacemaker, not a

troublemaker, at home or at school. You're going to build people up, not tear them down. You're going to compliment more than you criticize. You're going to love people the way Jesus loves people. You're going to be a peacemaker.

Christmas is the perfect time to show grace to other people. We're reminded of the grace of God shows us. That He gives us what we need, not what we deserve. So let me ask you a very frank question: Who do you need to rebuild a relationship with this Christmas? Who do you need to restore a broken relationship with this Christmas? Who do you need to reconcile with, this Christmas eve? That's the spirit of Christmas. Peace on Earth, good will toward men.

If I were to get a Christmas gift from you this Christmas, and I never opened it... One, you would be disappointed. You'd be hurt. And two, it would be a worthless gift because I received no benefit from it if I never opened it. Jesus Christ is God's Christmas gift to you. Yet, you have gone Christmas after Christmas after Christmas after Christmas and never opened the biggest gift under the tree - the gift of

salvation. God's gift to you. Why even celebrate Christmas if you're not going to open the biggest gift? Just get on with it. It doesn't make sense to leave the gift of your past forgiven, a purpose for living, and a home in heaven. Who would ever leave that gift unwrapped?

Jesus Christ says to you, "I can replace the frustration in your heart with peace. I can replace the guilt and the resentment and the shame and the grudges, I can replace that with forgiveness. And I can replace the worry and anxiety in your heart with confidence and faith. And I can replace that depression or despair with hope. And I can replace that emptiness with meaning and purpose. And I can replace that confusion with clarity. But I'm not going to break the door of your heart down. You've got to invite Me in."

In the early church, to invite Jesus into their heart they would believe Jesus died for their sins, They would turn away from their sins, They would confess their faith, and be baptized to publicly show the death of their old life and birth into a new life. If this is your desire I want

to talk to you after the service.

Would you Pray with me the prayer in your outline if it is your intention of unwrapping God's gift of Jesus this season:

Dear God, I'm scared. But I want to get to know You. I don't understand it all. But I thank You that You love me. I thank You that You're with me even when I didn't recognize it. I thank You that You're for me. That You didn't send Jesus to condemn me, but to save me. I admit I never even realized I needed a savior. But today I want to receive Your Christmas gift of Your Son. I ask You to save me from my past, from my regrets, from my mistakes, from my sins, from my habits and my hurts and my hang ups that mess up my life. Save me from myself. I ask You to save me for Your purpose. I want to know why You put me on this planet. And I want to be what You want me to be. I want to fulfill what You made me to do. The first step of faith I will make is if I have not been immersed, I will do so as soon as possible. I want to learn to love You and to trust You and have a relationship with You. I need peace with You, God. And I need You to put the peace of God in my heart. To take away that stress and to fill me with Your self and Your love. Help me to be a peacemaker. To help others find the peace with You and with each other. In Your name I pray. Amen.