

Peace on Earth

A Christmas Message

Intro: God has promised peace with and for sinners from long ago. Some hear this promise and think little of it, and others listen only to the part they want to hear. All humanity is sinful, guilty, and accountable to God, but there is peace and rest for those sinners who love and trust the steadfast Promise Keeper. One man, named Simeon, embodies the kind of anticipation and celebration we all should possess when we come to know the One through whom God has made peace. Those who presume upon or abandon God's promise are without hope for such peace, but those who trust in the Prince of Peace may enjoy the peace He brings forevermore.

Luke 2:22-32

Outline:

- (1) All humans are guilty, morally negligent, and deficient of righteousness.
- (2) God makes peace with sinners through Jesus Christ.
- (3) Peace comes only and certainly to those who believe God's promise.

Message Body:

1. All humans are guilty, morally negligent, and deficient of righteousness.

Luke 2:22 – “*22 And when the time came for **their purification** according to the **Law of Moses**, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, ‘Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord’ [Ex. 13:12]) 24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, ‘a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.’”*

2 Things are clear here:

A. Joseph and Mary (Jesus earthly parents) were poor.

- i. Leviticus 12:6, 8 – “When the days of her purification for a son or daughter are over, **she is to bring to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting a year-old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a dove for a sin offering... But if she cannot afford a lamb, she is to bring two doves or two young pigeons,**

one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. In this way the priest will *make atonement for her*, and she will be clean.”

B. Joseph and Mary are indicative of the universal sinful human condition.

- i. Romans 3:10-20 – “10 None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands; no one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one. 13 Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips. 14 Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness. 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16 in their paths are ruin and misery, 17 and the way of peace they have not known. 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes. 19 **Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.** 20 For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.”

A Noteworthy Implication:

A. All *Law-breakers* are cognizant and blameworthy.

- a. The mentions of “stopped mouths” and “accountability” indicates a moral knowledge and responsibility (Rom. 3:19).
 - i. Romans 1:28-32 – “since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. 29 They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 **Though they know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.**”

2. God makes peace with sinners through Jesus Christ.

Luke 2:26-32 – “26 *And it had been revealed to him [Simeon] by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ [or Messiah].* 27 *And he [Simeon] came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law,* 28 *he [Simeon] took him [Jesus] up in his arms and blessed God and said,* 29 *“Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word;*

30 for my eyes have seen your salvation 31 that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel”

Christ is (A) Light, (B) Glory, (C) Peace, and (D) Salvation

“I may ‘depart in peace’ (v29), for I have seen ‘Your salvation’ (v30), and He is both ‘light’ and ‘glory’” (v32).

A. Christ is LIGHT:

- i. Isaiah prophesied (9:2), “The people walking in darkness have **seen a great light**; on those living in the land of deep darkness a **light has dawned.**” And Matthew confirms that this was about Jesus near the beginning of His earthly ministry (Matt. 4:16-17).
- ii. John 1:4-5, 9 – “4 In him [Jesus Christ] was life, and the life was the **light of men.** 5 The **light shines in the darkness**, and the darkness has not overcome it.... 9 The **true light**, which **gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.**”
- iii. John 8:12 – Jesus said, “**I am the light of the world.** Whoever follows me will **not walk in darkness**, but **will have the light of life.**”

B. Christ is the GLORY of God:

- i. Hebrews 1:3 – “**He [Jesus] is the radiance of the glory of God** and the exact imprint of his nature...”
- ii. 1 Timothy 3:16 – the Apostle Paul says, “Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He [Jesus Christ] was manifested in the flesh, vindicated [or *proved*] by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.”

C. Christ is the PRINCE of PEACE:

- i. Isaiah 9:6-7a – “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.** Of the increase of his government and **of peace there will be no end...**”
- ii. Ephesians 2:14-16 – “14 For he [Jesus Christ] **himself is our peace**, who has made us both [Jew and Gentile] one and **has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility** 15 by **abolishing** [ending / fulfilling] **the law of commandments** expressed in ordinances, [so] that he might **create in himself one new man** in place of the two, **so making peace**, 16 and might

reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility..."

D. Christ is the Promised SALVATION:

i. Jesus is the source of salvation *for all who trust and obey Him* (Heb. 5:9).

1. Hebrews 5:8-10 – “8 Although he [Jesus] was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. 9 And being made perfect, **he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him**, 10 being designated by God a high priest..."

ii. Jesus saves “*those who are eagerly waiting*” for Him (Heb. 9:28).

1. Hebrews 9:24-28 – “24 For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf... 26b But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, 28 so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but **to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.**”

3. Peace comes only and certainly to those who believe God’s promise.

Luke 2:25 – “*Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, **waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.***”

3 Things:

(A) What does that mean, (B) There were others like Simeon, and (C) We can be sure of peace, but only if we are waiting too

A. What does it mean that he was “*waiting for the consolation of Israel*”?

i. This phrase describes the anticipation of those who believed the promises of God (that He would ultimately save His people).

1. Isaiah 40:1-31 – “1 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. 2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned... 3 A voice cries: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD [Prophecy fulfilled in John the Baptist – Matt. 3:3; Mk. 1:3;

Lk. 3:4; Jn. 1:23]; make straight in the desert a highway for our God... 5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

9 Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news [Prophecy repeated in Is. 41:27, 52:7 and fulfilled as Christians became heralds of this news – 1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11; Rom. 10:15]; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, “Behold your God!” 10 Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him [Christ is the ruler bringing reward – Rev. 22:12], and his recompense before him.

11 He will tend his flock like a shepherd [Christ is the ‘Good Shepherd’ – Jn. 10:11, 14]; he will gather the lambs in his arms [All those who trust in Jesus Christ are His sheep, the flock of His hand – Matt. 25:33; Jn. 10:14-16; Ps. 95:7]; he will carry them in his bosom...

18 To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him [There is none like the LORD – Ex. 8:10; 1 Sam. 2:2; 2 Chron. 14:11]?... 21 Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? 22 It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in; 23 who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness [God ordains and sustains kingdoms, and He destroys or establishes their power according to His good pleasure – Ps. 75:7; Dan. 4:32; Rom. 13:1 – God finds the poor in the dust and sets them among princes – 1 Sam. 2:8].

25 To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. 26 Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name, by the greatness of his might, and because he is strong in power not one is missing.

27 Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, “My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God” [Not a sparrow falls to the ground that God does not

know – how much more so is He aware of each one of you! He is intimately acquainted with even the smallest most insignificant detail of our lives – Matt. 10:29-31]?

28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable [His power is beyond comprehension, His understanding and wisdom are limitless – Ps. 147:5 – His mysteries are unfathomable, His might is immeasurable – Job 11:7 – He alone is to be feared and praised – Ps. 96:4].

29 He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. 30 Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; 31 but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint [Jesus says to the weak and weary, “Come to Me and I will give you rest... My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” – Matt. 11:28-30 – To the slave in bondage to sin and death, Jesus says, “You will know the truth and the truth will set you free! – Jn. 8:32].”

B. There were others, like Simeon, who were waiting (2 examples).

- i. Anna, a prophetess worshiping in the Temple, and an unnumbered group of others were also waiting for the “*redemption of Israel*” (Luke 2:36-38).
- ii. Joseph of Arimathea, the rich man who loaned his gravesite to Jesus for a time, was also said to be one who was “*waiting for the kingdom of God*” (Mark 15:43).

C. We can be sure of peace, but only if we believe, trust, await this Prince.

- i. John 3:16-18 – “16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. 18 **Whoever believes in him [Christ] is not condemned, but whoever does not believe [trust in Christ] is condemned already**, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.”

Application

- What is God commanding us to BELIEVE here?
 - God has been at work to bring peace to sinners for a long time
 - God delivered on His promise in Jesus Christ
 - God can be trusted to deliver on His promises (both for curses and blessings)

- What is God commanding us to DO here?
 - Trust in the promise of God to bring you peace
 - Lament that you ever disbelieved, neglected, or presumed upon this promise
 - Live in light of this certain promise and in light of what God has done in Christ to make good on it

My Prayers

- May God comfort us with His presence as we remember His promise.
- May God help us to find joy, peace, and rest in Him this Christmas season.
- May God make us the witnesses we ought to be of His grace and power.