
ADVENT

MAKING PEACE

A message presented by Pastor Marc Minter
to First Baptist Church of Diana, TX on December 17, 2017

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

There are various themes and traditions involved with the Advent season, but the most common is the systematic lighting of 5 candles as part of an Advent wreath. Each candle is representative of a theme or concept related to anticipating and celebrating the coming of Jesus Christ. Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace are the word-themes most commonly associated with the first four candles. Each is lighted in succession over the span of 4 weeks, and the fifth candle is traditionally lighted on Christmas day. The last candle symbolizes Christ Himself, and its lighting becomes the final memorial of the Christmastime expectation and celebration.

INTRODUCTION TO THE MESSAGE

The third week of Advent usually emphasizes peace. This theme, like the others before it, is far-reaching and profound. Peace is the desire of every hope-filled person who laments the condition of the world today. Peace is the longing of every despairing sinner who knows the inevitable justice of God is ever-approaching. In this message, we shall consider the making of peace through Jesus Christ, both personally and universally. May we come to know the true peacemaker, entering into His peace now and anticipating His peace that is still yet to come.

Luke 2:22-33 (ESV)

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"*) 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."

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. 26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that *he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ*.

27 And he 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 took him 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*."

33 And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him.

THE POINT I'M AIMING AT TODAY

God is making peace through Jesus Christ, and we both enjoy it now and eagerly anticipate its fullness.

MESSAGE OUTLINE

- (1) MAKING PERSONAL PEACE**
- (2) MAKING UNIVERSAL PEACE**
- (3) PEACE ALREADY AND IN THE MAKING**
- (4) APPLICATION: WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH THIS?**

MESSAGE

(1) MAKING PERSONAL PEACE

- **Christ makes peace between God and sinners**
 - A. Christ Introduces Light
 - B. Displays God's glory
 - C. Actualizes Salvation

A. Christ introduces Light: “a light for revelation” (v32)

- In our sinful estate, we are blind and foolish (2 Cor. 4:3-4).
- **But Christ, in the Gospel, introduces light!**
 - **“For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”** (2 Corinthians 4:6).
 - When we see Christ for who He is, we are beneficiaries of light (i.e. revelation and understanding).
 - Have you seen the light of the Gospel in the face of Christ?
 - Have you come to understand your place in this world, and do you find your identity in Christ?

B. Christ displays God’s Glory: “glory to your people” (v32)

- Before we come to see the light of Christ, we chase after all kinds of less-than-glorious things.
- **But Christ, in the Gospel, displays the glory of God!**
 - **“He [Jesus] is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature...”** (Hebrews 1:3).
 - When we see Christ for who He is, we become aware of just how glorious God is.
 - Have you seen the glory of God in Christ?
 - Has your life-trajectory shifted to pursuit of God?
 - Who is He? What is He like? How can I know Him better?
 - Are you fascinated by God/Christ?

C. Christ actualizes Salvation: “my eyes have seen your salvation” (v30)

- Guilty before God and ashamed of ourselves, we are in desperate need of a savior.
- **In Christ, God provides salvation from both guilt and shame!**
 - “all have **sinned** and fall short of the glory of God, and **are justified** by his grace as a gift, **through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.**” In this way, God is both the **just** and the **justifier** of the one who has faith in Christ (Romans 3:23–26).
 - When we see Christ for who He is, we realize that all our guilt and shame have been taken away.
 - Have you felt the freedom from guilt that only Christ can give?
 - Do you generally suppress a sense of shame, or do you make a practice of living honestly with Jesus and others?

Summary: Christ makes peace between God and sinners...

(Segue) *But, Christ is not only making peace for you and me, He is also making peace on earth!*

(2) MAKING UNIVERSAL PEACE

- **Christ makes peace on earth**
 - A. Christ is Light to the world through His people
 - B. Christ’s Glory is on display among His Church
 - C. Christ’s salvation is peace in His Church

A. *Christ is Light to the world through His people*

“a light for revelation to the Gentiles” (v32)

- Christ is light to the world.
 - The prophet Isaiah (in anticipation of promise of God) said, *“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned”* (Is. 9:2).
 - Matthew confirms that this was about Jesus near the beginning of His earthly ministry (Matt. 4:16-17).
 - And Jesus’ message was, *“Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand or among you or has come near”* (Matt. 4:16-17, 12:28; Mk. 1:15).
 - *“4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 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”* (John 1:4-5, 9).
 - Simeon saw God’s salvation with his own eyes in the infant Christ, and he said that God had presented the Savior *“in the presence of all peoples”* (v31).
 - Is Christ still shining light in the world today?
 - Yes, through His people!
- Christ’s people are light to the world.
 - Jesus said to His followers, *“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven”* (Matt. 5:14–16).
 - The light of Christ’s people is their “good works” (*i.e. their lives lived in harmony with God and others*).
 - Friends, let me ask you simply... Are you a shining light in this dark world?
 - Do people see your good works and bless God?

- If not, then you should ask yourself about the things we have talked about so far...
 - We will never be light-bearers until or unless the light of Christ invades our own hearts!
 - If your actions and words do not reflect love for Christ, then your problem is much deeper than actions and words.
- The light of good works should be especially on display in the church, in order that God/Christ be glorified here...

B. Christ's Glory is on display among His Church

- Paul said to the church in Philippi, ***“It is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God”*** (Philippians 1:9–11).
 - As love abounds among fellow church members...
 - As church members grow in knowledge and spiritual understanding...
 - As church members approve excellent and pure things, earning a blameless reputation among the world...
 - As church members are filled with the fruit of righteousness...
 - ...God/Christ is glorified in the world!
 - Friends, many of us want to love our neighbor by helping them in various ways, and this is a great thing!
 - But, I wonder how many of us are striving to do the things listed here...

- Are you overflowing with love for your fellow church members?
- Are you growing in knowledge and spiritual understanding?
- Are you approving excellent and pure things? The implication is that we are not to approve of impute things...
- Do we, the church members of FBC Diana, have a blameless reputation?
- Are you filled with the fruit of righteousness?
 - May God give us grace so that we may bring Him glory in the world and not shame!
- One of the greatest contrasts between the Church and the world, bringing glory to God, is the peace we enjoy in the church...

C. Christ's salvation is peace in His Church

“my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples” (v30-31)

- Jesus' earthly ministry was on the stage of the known world of the first century... God put His salvation on display in Christ!
- Scripture also teaches us that Christians now display Christ's salvation and the resulting peace.
 - We read that Christians ***“have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here [among the people of God] there is not Greek and Jew [ethnic], circumcised and uncircumcised [pious pedigree], barbarian, Scythian, slave, free [socio-economic]; but Christ is all, and in all”*** (Colossians 3:9–11).
 - How does Christ's salvation make peace among us, His Church?!

- ***Well, what is the basis of your personal peace?***
 - Is it because of your ***ethnicity***?
 - How about your ***pious pedigree***?
 - Does your ***socio-economic*** class factor in?
 - ***NO! Christ is ALL and in ALL!***
 - Friends, is the Gospel of Christ the bond of your relationships among this church family?
 - Have you begun the shift from worldly group-identity to Gospel-centered Community?
 - How many close relationships do you have with church members who don't share your life experiences?
 - Do you have any close relationships with Christians who have a different skin color?

Summary: **Peace on Earth is among God's people – the Church!**

(Segue) *But, we do not see perfect peace among God's people or in the world...*

(3) PEACE ALREADY AND IN THE MAKING

- **Already Inaugurated Peace** (personal & universal)
 - ***Christ inaugurated personal peace***
 - Those who trust in Christ now have peace with God...
 - But we still have sinful desires
 - And we remain *simul justus et peccator*

- ***Christ inaugurated universal peace***
 - The whole world has been given this gift of God – the Savior of sinners and the great peacemaker...
 - But many in the world have not heard of this Savior
 - Many have heard the Gospel but remain indifferent or hostile to this amazing message
 - Many in the world hope for peace without a peacemaker
 - Many others simply do not want peace if it means that they cannot be in charge

- **Peace in the Making (personal & universal)**
 - ***Christ is making personal peace***
 - Those who trust in Christ are now on their way to perfect peace
 - There is coming a day when we who love and trust Christ will be totally free from sinful desires and shame
 - We shall be like Christ and enjoy the fullness of His presence and glory

 - ***Christ is making universal peace***
 - The whole world benefits from the presence of God's people now, and eternal peace shall be firmly established one day soon.
 - There shall be no more disease or death
 - There shall be no more war or conflict
 - There shall be no more anxiety or fear
 - There shall be no more sun or moon, for the light of Christ will illumine all
 - And there shall be no more politicians or governments, because the peace of Christ shall extend as far as the curse is now found

Summary: God is making peace through Jesus Christ, and we both enjoy it now and eagerly anticipate its fullness!

(Segue) But, do you enjoy Christ's peace? Do you eagerly anticipate Christ's peace?

(4) APPLICATION: WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH THIS?

- **Will you enjoy Christ's personal peace?**
 - **Can you say with Simeon, "I can die in peace..."?**
 - Non-Christian, do you know that Christ is the only hope we have for peace with God?
 - Christian, do you feel the freedom and joy of Christ's personal peace?

- **Will you enter into the peace of Christ among your church family?**
 - If you long to see Christ glorified in Diana, TX, and this church family have a great reputation, then will you seek real peace (Christ's peace) among your brothers and sisters here?
 - If you have been distant or unengaged from your Christian brothers and sisters, then will you stop looking for common ground on lesser things?
 - If you tend to mostly speak with and pray for others who talk and look like you, then will you make a new effort to connect with someone different?
 - If you have been dividing by ethnicity, family ties, or social status, then will you repent from this sinful practice and ask for God to give you new affections for new brothers and sisters?

- **Will you eagerly anticipate the peace only Christ will bring in the world?**
 - If your feelings of despair have begun to run away with you, then will you remember that Christ is coming again... and He will make peace?
 - If you have been placing your hope for peace in a political party, a judicial panel, a military force, or even a personal arsenal, then will you stop hoping in things that will cannot deliver?
 - If your perspective of the future has become fearful and dim, then will you raise your eyes to see the peace that Christ made and is making?

Major Point: God is making peace through Jesus Christ, and we both enjoy it now and eagerly anticipate its fullness.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

Peace through Justification by J.C. Ryle

http://www.chapellibrary.org/files/ebooks/justfg/index_split_010.html

Not Peace but a Sword by Joel Kim

<https://tabletalkmagazine.com/article/2015/10/no-peace-sword/>

Peace with God and False Peace by Martyn Lloyd-Jones

<http://www.peacemakers.net/unity/mljromans5-1-2-c02.htm>