

Prince Of Peace

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[0 : 00] All right, church, well, we are going to continue on with our series, and this is kind of our last Sunday in this series, which is Isaiah chapter 9 and verse 6.

So if you'll take your Bible and begin turning there now, Isaiah chapter 9 and verse 6. We've been looking at this passage that goes through the names of Jesus, and that is, as they are given to us here, Jared preached a couple Sundays back on Jesus as our wonderful counselor.

And our takeaway there was that Jesus is our living hope, there we go, because in our living, we can turn to that wonderful counselor for wisdom, for advice, for guidance, for sometimes correction, and our wonderful counselor is absolutely Jesus Christ.

There can be a lot of other counselors in this world, but we can always turn to him for something greater than anyone else can give us. And so he is our hope that is alive today, that we can get through whatever tomorrow brings because of our living counselor.

And then the next Sunday, we talked about Jesus as our mighty God. And the takeaway was simply this question, who is the hero of your story? When we see that phrase, mighty God, in the Old Testament, we understand that there is a heroic application there, that Jesus is our hero.

[1 : 36] And so who is the hero of the story of you, your life, and mine? And is it us, is it someone else, or is it Jesus Christ, our mighty God?

And then last Sunday, we talked about Jesus as the everlasting Father, the everlasting Father. And we asked this question, are you in obedience to the founding Father of your faith?

We understood that that word Father gives this idea as he is the origin. He is the founder. He is the beginner of our faith. And we see him called that in the scriptures.

So are we living in obedience to the founder of our faith? Or have we kind of decided to do faith how we want to do it? And we've kind of built a life for ourselves apart from what Jesus actually set up for those who name his name.

So today, we're going to be looking at this passage, once again, Isaiah chapter 9 and verse 6. And let's read it together if we can.

[2 : 42] Isaiah 9 and verse 6. We're going to look at Jesus as our Prince of Peace. If you're able to join me in standing, would you do that one more time?

I know you've been up and down a good bit in the service, but let's try to read this together. Isaiah chapter 9 and verse 6. You may be seated.

Thank you for standing. Isaiah 9 and verse 6 calls our Lord the Prince of Peace. We talked about that just a moment ago with the kids when they were up here for their Q&A.;

But I want to draw special attention to that this morning on kind of this last Christmas Sunday of this season. What exactly are we talking about when we call Jesus Prince of Peace?

When Isaiah the prophet was given this prophecy from the Lord about the coming King, the coming Christ, what did he mean when he wrote down Jesus would be called Prince of Peace?

[4 : 03] I think first of all, we have to get a good understanding of what peace actually is. I want to reference a quote from our former president, Theodore Roosevelt, that said, the things that will destroy America are these, prosperity at any price, peace at any price, safety first instead of duty first, the love of soft living, and the get-rich-quick theory of life.

Now this was many years ago when he said this, wasn't it? Would y'all say he had maybe caught a glimpse of the future? Would you say that maybe we're there now? We've been there for quite some time.

And certainly these are the things of the flesh. These are the things that promote mankind to a higher place than he should be. These are the things that eventually get you to the place where you say, I don't need God.

I got this handled myself. My life is pretty comfortable. I've achieved most of what I wanted to achieve. I've made peace with the rest of it.

But this peace at any price idea is what will take down any nation, any home, any organization.

[5 : 23] We must have peace at any price. Well, Theodore Roosevelt certainly saw the danger of that. I want to take it just a step further and share one more quote with you.

Back in World War II, Eve Curie wrote this. She said, We discovered that peace at any price is no peace at all.

Peace at any price is no peace at all. Of course, that was in the context of World War II and Hitler's takeover of Europe. And there were many who were resisting the idea of going to war.

Because nobody wants to go to war, right? Just let this Hitler guy do what he wants. Nobody wants to go to war. So we have to understand that there are two ideas of peace.

There is this worldly idea of peace that we just must maintain calm. We must resist any conflict. We must resist any storms.

[6 : 38] Is this the kind of peace that Jesus came to bring? Or there is true peace. And that's not the absence of conflict.

Peace is calm in the midst of conflict. Peace is a steadiness, a security, regardless of what comes our way.

It's certainly not stepping away from duty. It's certainly not stepping away from responsibility. It's certainly not coming to the place where you say, It doesn't matter to me what is right and what is wrong.

I just want to keep the peace. Have we ever found ourselves guilty of saying something like that? Probably so. At some point.

It's hard, right? Conflict is hard. But sometimes, in order to actually maintain real peace, conflict has to happen.

[7 : 44] We certainly find that in the case of Jesus. If Jesus was going to say, Peace at any price, then he could have just said, Ah, forget it.

Nobody needs to die. Nobody needs to go to hell. Their sin isn't that bad. Let's just let them do what they want. Let's have peace.

But of course, we know that that would have resulted in just more chaos than we could even possibly imagine. This world is full of chaos already.

I think it's fantastic. I was talking about peace and then the baby started crying. It was great.

Couldn't have planned that any better. Y'all, regardless of how much we strive for peace, we're never going to ultimately achieve peace.

So that's why Jesus had to die. Why? Why? Because conflict is always going to happen. Selfish people are always going to put themselves first. You and I are not...

[8 : 50] We're involved in that, aren't we? We're implicated in that. Sometimes we're some of the selfish ones who put ourselves first. So this world, we find it broken.

We find this world full of brokenness and in need of being put back together. We find families broken and in need of healing.

Find people and hearts broken and in need of healing. So the question is, can the brokenness be put back together? Thankfully, God sent us a prince of peace.

He knows what peace is. More than that, he knows what peace costs. And he was willing to pay that price. So let's dive into it this morning.

Truth number one, God's peace looks very different than man's peace. God's peace looks different than your idea of peace and mine. What do we mean by that?

[9 : 58] Well, this word shalom. When we read peace in the Old Testament, this Isaiah passage is certainly included in that. This word shalom is what we get this idea of peace from.

What does that mean? This Hebrew shalom does not mean the absence of conflict. It means being whole, complete, and at peace. So that's where we get this idea of peace.

It's wholeness. It's completeness. You say, man, some days I wake up and I don't feel whole. I don't feel complete. I feel like something's missing.

You ever felt like something's missing in your life, in your heart, your family, your friendships? You ever felt like something's missing?

I know I have, and I don't think I'm alone in that. So when the Hebrews would greet each other, they would say shalom. And that was, I wish you wholeness. I wish you completeness.

[10:59] I wish you real peace. Because when we're complete, in the New Testament, we read this word as perfect sometimes. Say, man, nothing in my life is ever perfect, okay?

Yeah, God knows that. But what he means is, you can be whole. You can be complete. Jesus said to the crippled man, do you want to be made whole?

And he said, yes. Jesus extends that invitation to every one of us today. He says, do you want to be made whole?

Because I am the king, the prince of wholeness. I want to bring you peace. I want to bring you completeness. I want to bring you fulfillment.

Thomas Akempis said this, all men desire peace, but very few desire those things that make for peace. We all get this idea that we want peace, don't we?

[12:05] We all want to be whole. We all want to be complete. But very few of us are willing to do the hard thing. Very few of us are willing to take the steps that peace requires.

Very few of us are actually willing to step out and confront evil when it rises its head. Very few of us are willing to confront the evil within ourselves.

And so we're left in turmoil. We're left in incompleteness. We're not complete. We always feel like we're missing something because so many of us are willing to do the things that make for peace.

Let's see what the word of God has to say on this. Jeremiah chapter 6 and verse 14. They have healed the brokenness of my people superficially, saying, peace, peace, but there is no peace.

You understand what he's talking about? God is talking about his people, his Jewish people. And he said they have come to them saying, there's peace, peace, but there's no peace.

[13:16] They've tried to just stamp peace on something, speak their truth, speak it into existence. You ever heard that from anybody in mumbo-jumbo psychology out there? Well, just speak your truth.

Just speak it into existence. That doesn't happen, folks. You can say peace, but that doesn't make peace, right? Jeremiah 8 and verse 11. All they ever offered to my deeply wounded people are empty hopes for peace.

Would you look at the screen one more time? All they ever offered to my deeply wounded people are empty hopes for peace.

Well, that rings true for some of us. You get conflict that arises or hurt that is caused, and then people say, oh, it's going to be okay. Why don't you just move on?

Why don't you just get over it? It's going to be all right. And God says, no, there is no peace. You cannot have peace without addressing the real problem here.

[14:19] And then Ezekiel chapter 13. They tell my people there will be peace, even though there's no peace to be found. They're like workers who thinks they can fix a shaky wall by covering it with paint.

Is that going to work? You got a wall that's about to fall down? Well, let's just throw a coat of paint on it. It'll look good as new.

Well, it might look okay, but don't go lean against it. You ever had that in a relationship? Whether it's between spouses, whether it's between friends, coworkers, church members, whatever the relationship is.

You ever had a shaky wall that, man, you just know if you blow too hard on it, it's going to fall. God says you can't fix that by covering it with paint.

Ezekiel 13 and verse 16. They promised my people peace when there was no peace. I, the Lord God, have spoken. Now you can challenge him on that, but it's not going to work out well.

[15:26] So what are we learning from this? That peace is impossible apart from Jesus. You can't just go use human efforts to make peace.

You must go to the Prince of Peace. Because truth number two, Jesus himself is our peace. God's peace looks so different from ours because the peace can only be found in him.

We can try peace through compromise. Finding a middle ground. But normally, most times, both parties are going to be discontent with that.

We can find peace through one side winning, but that's no peace. The downtrodden will never be able to find peace in that circumstance.

The losers, only the victors, will think they have found peace. Until the next conflict comes along. But when we find peace in the Prince of Peace, that's when we find completeness.

[16:43] That's when we find wholeness. So Jesus himself is our peace. Ephesians chapter 2 tells us what that looks like. In Jesus Christ, you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

For he himself is our peace. Do you see what peace costs? It costs Jesus' blood. So when we sing these Christmas carols, and we sing about peace on earth, goodwill toward men, do we remember in that moment what that peace on earth cost?

The peace on earth cost the lifeblood of the Son of God. So when we want peace in our families, peace in our church, peace in our homes and neighborhoods and workplaces, community and our nation, what's it going to cost?

It's always going to cost something. It costs Jesus everything. And he knew it would. That was the plan from the very beginning. The plan that was laid before the world was even formed.

Was Jesus giving it all for our peace. So that's how he can be our peace. Because he paid the highest price.

[18:04] He paid the sacrifice. Isaiah 53 describes it. It says he was wounded for our rebellious acts. Not because you're a nice guy. Not because you're a nice girl.

Because you're a rebel. And so am I. Because we were rebellious. Jesus was wounded. He was crushed for our sins.

Not our achievements. Not our accomplishments. Not the amount of times that we pat ourselves on the back. Not the good days. The victories. None of that amounted to anything.

That could lessen the punishment on Jesus. He was killed. And crushed. For our sins. He was punished. So that you and I.

Could have peace. You see the dichotomy there? You see how different those two things are?

You've got punishment. On Jesus. And peace.

[19:04] For us. That is the gospel. That's the good news that the children were talking about a little bit ago. That's the Christmas story.

This beautiful baby would grow up to be punished. So you and I could have peace. And we received healing. From his wounds.

Thank God for the prince of peace. Because otherwise. There would be no peace. It goes on. When we finished that passage.

It said. Before we go to the next slide here. It said. By his. We received healing from his wounds.

That was in God's word translation. I want to go over here to the.

The. New revised standard version. I loved how this. How this. Jesus. Phrases this. It's basically the same. Well it is the same meaning. We get basically the same idea from it.

[20:15] But would you read with me here again. God's word translation. He was wounded for our rebellious acts. He was crushed for our sins. He was punished. So we could have peace. And we received healing from his wounds.

Then we go to this next one. New revised standard version says. But he was wounded for our transgressions. Crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the punishment that. What is those three words?

Made us whole. And by his bruises. We were healed. Back over there. And the other one it said. So that we could have peace. The Bible you're looking at today.

Likely says one of those two things. It might say peace. It might say made us whole. Why? Because the peace that it's talking about. That shalom means wholeness. It means completeness.

So you and I could not be whole. We could never be made whole. Like Jesus offered that crippled man. Apart from the Savior. Apart from his sacrifice.

[21:12] That is what can make us whole. Well let's keep going back to that. That's what can still heal. The problems that come up in your life. That's what can still heal.

The conflict. That's what can still make it whole again. One is Jesus. That's how we can be made whole.

That's how we can find peace. So truth number three. God's peace doesn't make sense. You didn't expect to hear that today when you came to church.

That something about God doesn't make sense. Right? But it doesn't. And the Bible says so. What are we talking about? Go to Philippians chapter four and verse four.

Would you? I didn't put this one on the screen. I want to try to get you to turn in your actual Bibles every once in a while. Okay? So Philippians chapter four. Let's look together at verse four.

[22 : 10] If you didn't bring one with you. There should be a Bible in the seat back in front of you. You can look on with someone next to you. But Philippians chapter four and verse four. For sake of time.

I'm going to go ahead and begin reading. Rejoice in the Lord always. The Apostle Paul, one of the greatest Christians and prolific Bible authors who ever lived is writing this to the church that was located in Philippi.

Well, centuries later, we still get to read it. The church located in Henrietta gets to read this letter to the church in Philippi. And we get to take it as though it were written to us.

So rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again. Rejoice. Let your graciousness be known to everyone. Is your graciousness known to everyone?

That's just a little side note there. That's free. Are you known to everybody as being gracious? If not, you got to seek the Lord's help for that.

[23 : 11] That is one of the key identifiers of being a Christian, a child of God, a follower of Jesus. Is being gracious and kind to everyone.

When we're not, we identify more with the other guy. Okay? And we don't need that. We don't need to be identifying with Satan.

We don't need to be identifying with our old stinky rotten flesh. We don't need to be identifying with the old self. So we say, God, help me be more gracious and more like you.

So he challenges them to do that. Rejoice in the Lord. Rejoice. Let your graciousness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Don't forget, he's coming back.

Okay? He's coming back. The clock is running out to serve him here. Because someday that clock is going to strike zero. And we're all going home to heaven. And then our work here is done.

[24 : 09] We can't do anything else for Jesus here. We can't serve him anymore here. We can't go out and be used by God to turn anybody else to the kingdom of God.

So use the time we have here. Because the Lord is coming. Verse 6. Don't worry about anything. But in everything, through prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

I've had my boys memorize this verse until they can say it in their sleep. Because this is one of the key Christian life verses. It's like a hack.

Okay? It's a Christian life hack. Anybody know what that means? Yes. Yes. Some of the people are looking at me. What are you talking about? You talking about hacking something like with a knife or something? No.

It's like a tip. Okay? Like a key tip that will help you get through this life. Verse 6. Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

[25 : 14] So that describes a life of peace right there. That's what that looks like. A life of wholeness. I don't lack anything. I'm not worried because I don't have the truck I want.

I'm not worried because I don't have the job I want. I'm not worried because my relationships aren't what I hoped they would be. I'm not worried about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, God, I'm thanking you, even though you haven't given me everything I want.

Present your requests to God. That's a life of completeness, wholeness, and peace. Amen. And here's the crazy part. Verse 7. The part that doesn't make sense.

Okay? The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding. So Paul is saying, you're not going to get this.

It's not going to make sense to you that you have peace when, by all accounts, you shouldn't have peace. Look at the story of Job in the Bible.

[26 : 19] He lost everything there was to lose. He lost his family. He lost his possessions. He lost everything before God gave it back to him far more than he could have ever had before or ever had on his own.

But before that, he still had peace. We see it. Other people, his friends, were coming to him, trying to point the finger at him, saying, man, something must be wrong with you, because God's clearly judging you here.

Saying, no. Well, sometimes the Lord gives. Sometimes the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. I will go to him with thanksgiving.

Regardless. And that doesn't make any sense. That surpasses my understanding. And it surpasses your understanding. Don't act like you've got that figured out.

Even if you've experienced it, still doesn't really make sense. That is just a gift from God. When the peace of God, which surpasses our understanding, guards our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

[27 : 34] Say, man, I could use God's peace guarding my mind. Because my mind goes crazy places. My mind is my worst enemy. It undermines me, right?

Anybody identify with that? You get in your own head sometimes? So here's the solution. Here's the ingredients right here.

Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests of God. And then the promise that follows, the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

So, wholeness equals peace, right? Wholeness equals peace. We've got that down. Well, here's the next thing. What does it look like to be whole?

What does it look like to have peace? It looks like being full of joy. It looks like being considerate in everything. It looks like praying instead of worrying. It looks like taking our needs to God.

[28 : 35] And it looks like thanking him for all he's done. That came directly from Philippians 4, the passage we just read. So that is how to have peace. That's how the prince of peace gives us peace, which just doesn't make any sense.

Because we never lose our joy. Joy to the world, the Lord has come. Yes, he has.

And he's still here. And he walks with us. And he talks with us. And he's our friend. And he never leaves us. And regardless of what's given to us or taken away from us, we can still be full of his joy.

And then we can be nice. Then we can be generous. We can be considerate. We can be gracious. We can pray instead of worrying.

Can take our needs to God and God alone. We take our needs to other people. You know what it does? Sometimes it messes things up. Doesn't mean you can't share a need with somebody as God puts it on your heart.

[29 : 43] But you take your needs first to him and then you leave it in his hands. And then if he says, share this with your wife. Share this with your husband. Share this with your best friend.

Share this with that person at church who you know loves and cares about you. Because then they can take it to me too. We take our needs to him.

And then we thank him. Not for giving us, for hoping he gives us what we want. We thank him for all that he's done. Dying on the cross.

Coming as a baby. Healing many. Healing us. Showing himself time and time again to be our prince of peace.

Now, real quick before we finish. Peace is not only wholeness. Peace is also surrender. What do we mean by that?

[30 : 39] Peace is surrender. Well, it looks like surrendering to the prince of peace. I want to talk to you just for a moment about surrender.

Jesus is called a royal term here. He's called a prince.

Why do you think Jesus was called a prince when just a moment ago he was called a king?

Because Jesus is the son.

God is the father. We know that. That's laid out for us in scriptures. We understand that he is our mighty king. But we also understand that he is God's one and only begotten son.

So it's not a big stretch for us to understand that Jesus is called a prince. Well, do you understand what a prince is in a royalty, a nation that has a royal system, a royal family, a nation that has a king and a queen and a prince and princess?

[31 : 47] Do you understand what the prince's role is? The prince is to go out and be the physical representation of the king.

The prince is the emissary. The prince is the ambassador often. So wherever he goes, usually the king would be back at the palace running the government, taking care of everything back there.

And the prince would be sent sometimes to foreign countries to speak on the king's behalf. Well, let's stick with that for a minute. Do you see what happened when Jesus left the kingdom of heaven, left his royal throne and came down to this, you could call it foreign country?

And he wasn't treated as a prince. Sure, the wise men came and offered him their gifts and the shepherds came at his birth and they bowed down to him.

But so few recognized him for the royalty that he was. But he had a mission from the king. And it was to give everything so you and I could have peace.

[33 : 07] It was to bring peace from this peaceful kingdom of heaven to this kingdom of conflict on earth.

So the question is, do we fight against him? Or do we surrender and say, you can have me as part of your kingdom?

I want to join you. I want to join you and your king. I want to join you and your father. I surrender to this prince of peace.

He's not coming in the name of conflict. He's not coming to bring war. He's not coming to bring a sword. Even though the Jewish people had prayed for that.

Come deliver us from our Roman conquerors. Let's beat them in battle. Jesus said, no. I am come for a bigger kingdom than that. I'm come for everyone.

[34 : 11] I have come so that all of you can have peace. Not all of you will. Some of you will fight against me. But the ones who surrender, you'll have peace.

Maybe there was a moment in your life when you surrendered. Maybe you can remember the day, remember the night, when you bowed your head and put all your faith in this prince of peace.

And you said, God, I believe. I believe enough to put my faith in you and say, I believe you love me, you died for me, you rose for me, and you will forgive me and make me your child.

And you remember when that happened. But sometime along the way, you stopped surrendering to his peace. And you thought, well, I checked that box.

But I got to figure out the rest now. I still got the rest of my life to live. And at some point, you stopped surrendering. And you started looking on earth for peace.

[35 : 11] And you started looking inside for peace. Instead of looking at the prince of peace who delivered you once and for all. Would you bow your heads with me right now?

God, I pray that you would speak to us right now, God. Through your Holy Spirit, which is present in this room, in us and so many lives, God, I ask that you would call us to surrender to you.

You are that prince of peace. You offer us completeness. You offer us wholeness. And so many, since the day that we turned to you for salvation, we've lost that wholeness.

We've lost that peace. We look at all these other places for it, and we come up empty. So often it just breeds more conflict.

But you call us to peace. You call us to wholeness in you.

[36 : 19] You call us to that being full of joy, full of graciousness, that just blows our mind. We don't get how we have comfort and security and peace in these moments where it's just life's falling apart.

It's spinning out of our control. Things are moving faster than we can keep up with, and we don't know exactly what the right decision is at every step.

But we have a prince who calls to us and says, I am here to bring you peace. Don't forget me. Help us to turn to you. Help the parents in this room to show their children where to turn for peace.

God, our kids see it all. They see how stressed we get, and they see what we do when we get stressed. They see who we turn to, who we don't turn to.

Let the prince of peace rule in our hearts, God. We surrender to you. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.