

Message Series: **The Arrival**
Today's Talk: **'At Peace'**
Scripture Source: **Luke 1:67-79**
Speaker: John Garner
Date: Sunday, December 22, 2013

Peace for You

At times it seems elusive, hard to pin down, hard to sustain. Peace of mind. Peaceful relationships. Peace within. Peace with God. How would you assess your 'at peace' quotient?

Unsettled/anxious _____ | _____ At peace

Where would you place the mark today?

What infuses you with peace or depletes you of peace?

Can you identify specific reasons for your assessment? Is there any room for movement 'to the right'?

On this Christmas Sunday morning we want to explore the amazing and life related offer of God, 'rooted' in a relationship with Jesus, the Prince of Peace, an offer of a rich and full-orbed peace.

No wonder the angel of God announced with passion and clarity this message of hope: "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the city of David a Saviour has been born for you; he is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:10-11

I think the angel was thrilled to bring this message to the first century shepherds. The angel loved offering hope to spiritually hungry people. And God loves to offer hope and peace to people like you and me today!

Soul Guide: Luke 1:76-79

Ever been in unknown territory and felt vulnerable and anxious? Yep, most of us have. We look for someone to guide us to where we need to go. Illustrate:

Folks, God longs to be your guide into a fuller, richer, and life changing experience of peace. He really does. These descriptive verses paint a picture of a God deeply interested in people's lives. Including yours.

One of the names given to Jesus is Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6 Jesus was born in profoundly humble and obscure circumstances and grew up to be the Saviour of humanity. And He wants to be your 'prince of peace.' Jesus wants to 'guide your feet into the path of peace.' What experiences of peace does He have in mind for you? I would suggest 4 realms and experiences of peace. What reality do you most hunger for today? And how can you experience his sure-footed guidance, whether you are a spiritual seeker or follower of Jesus?

Peace Squared

1 Peace with God: Restoration

We need a Saviour from the penalty of sin which is death...separation from God. Isaiah 59:2 Romans 6:23. The most meaningful celebrations of Christmas take into account the purpose of his Arrival...to save people from the penalty and power of sin, yours and mind included.

How do we experience peace with God? Faith in Jesus Christ as the singular source of forgiveness of sins and a restored relationship with God. John 1:12, 3:16-18. We confess our sins to God and believe that Jesus died on the cross in full payment for our sins. We begin our relationship with God at a blood stained cross, right next door to an empty grave...the place where Jesus triumphed over sin, death, and evil. You may have tried to experience peace with God by trying harder, by trying to run away from your sin...it doesn't work. You know that deep within your soul. You need a Saviour.

2 Peace Within: Reassurance

God yearns that we learn to be at peace with ourselves, our flawed humanity. A peace that is not about excusing misbehaviour, or justifying it. Rather, a peace within that is based on God's forgiveness and being in an indestructible relationship with Him. We can invest our energies in maturing and learning and not waste time and energy 'trashing ourselves.'

Romans 8:1 "Therefore there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." No need to fear God's judgement and rejection. We are beloved and forgiven. Don't let others tell you different. Do you need to believe this incredible promise that can infuse peace?

3 Peace with Others: Reconciliation

Relationships can nourish us and bring great joy...or impoverish us and inflict profound damage. You know that to be true. God longs to 'guide our feet into the path' of relational skill, wisdom and health.

Romans 12:17-21 "If it is possible, as much as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." Vs.18

God's word gives us down to earth instruction on how to figure out what 'bridges' to build into people's lives and what 'boundaries' need to be constructed to protect us from toxic and destructive people.

So, you aren't responsible to fix people or single-handedly repair relationships...you are expected to do what you can. Is there a bridge or boundary that needs your attention? Pay attention to the expert relational architect.

4 Peace with Life: Perspective

Circumstances fluctuate...some good, some great, others profoundly heart breaking. Is inner peace dependent on favourable circumstances? Or...can we experience a measure of peace even when tears wash our face? Is God's presence and love able to infuse peace when life is cruel and doesn't make sense? Romans 8:28 "God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose." Illustrate:

This kind of peace doesn't mean we become passive and indifferent. It doesn't mean we deny the heartbreak and anguish we sometimes feel...it does mean that we choose to believe that God is with us, helping us move forward, believing that life still has purpose, and that one day God will bring an end to suffering, loss, tears and death. It is a peace born of God-given perspective.

You...and Peace

What realm do you most need to experience peace for the first time or a renewed time? Identify it. Own it. And let God know.

How Does the Prince of Peace Guide Us?

Through His words and by His Spirit. Psalm 119:105,130,165.

“Great peace have they who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble.”

Peace is experienced as we get to know the God of peace and follow His leadership in our lives, a leadership mediated through his words and Spirit. You and I need to be learners and doers of God’s word, and do so in relationship with others who are serious about experiencing God’s real life peace.

This Book, the Bible may intimidate you. Please ask us for help. You may be just a few ‘reads’ away from experiencing peace like you have never known, or once knew and have drifted from. During this Christmas season, put your life into the strong and wise hands of The Prince of Peace and learn to find your footing in his truth and grace...and some others may be inspired to trust God.

Between Sundays: Further Study, Reflection & Response

The Arrival – Week 3: ‘At Peace’

Luke 1:67-79

Sunday, December 22, 2013

1. What enhances your peace of mind?
What depletes your peace of mind?
2. Take a few moments to reflect on these verses: Luke 1:76-79.
What 'gets your attention' from the imagery used?

How do these verses encourage you?
3. Reflect on Romans 15:13: what condition must we meet in order to experience God's peace?
4. What makes it hard for you to trust God in the flow of life? Be as specific as you can be.
5. Which dimension of peace do you most yearn for?

Peace with God: restoration, Peace within: reassurance, Peace with others reconciliation, or Peace with life: perspective?

Why is that?
6. I encourage you to spend time reading and reflecting upon Psalm 119 in the Old Testament. This passage is a tremendous section on the potency of God's Word and how it can benefit our daily lives. If you want to do an in depth study, go through this passage and note the benefits/consequences of reading, believing, and acting upon God's Word. I have done this a number of times over the years and it is inspiring and instructive.