

FIVE FORKS BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH

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SERMON: *Prince of Peace*
SERIES: *And His Name Shall be Called*
SCRIPTURES: *Isaiah 9:2,6*
SPEAKER: *Shaun Kipe*
DATE: *12 - 22 - 2019*

Well good morning. It is so great to worship with you on this Christmas Sunday. Certainly this is a special day in the life of the church, as we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Orange cards – guests.

I want to remind you that we have several Christmas Eve services (**Christmas Eve Service Graphic**) on Tuesday and so please make plans join us for one of those services. We'll have three services here in the auditorium at 3pm, 4:30pm & 6pm and then one service in the chapel, also at 4:30pm. All of those services will include candle lighting and communion. So just really looking forward to that.

This morning, we are in the fourth and final week of our Christmas series titled: "And His Name Shall be Called" (**SERIES TITLE SLIDE**). We have been taking a few weeks to look at the Christmas story through a passage of Scripture found in the Old Testament book of Isaiah. A passage understood as a reference to Jesus.

Isaiah 9:2,6 - The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned...⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Each week we've looking at one of these four titles and how Jesus represents or embodies that title. And so this morning we want to talk about Jesus as the **prince of peace**.

I was thinking this is just such an important title for Jesus.

Certainly it was when Isaiah was living. He was living at a time, referred to as the Assyrian Conquest. God's people, the Israelites are being destroyed, conquered and enslaved by the invading Assyrians. They are a people walking in darkness, broken, confused, battered by life. And they're looking for a prince of peace to sweep in and make things right. The phrase we use today is, "a little peace and quiet."

I was thinking that there are reminders every day that peace and quiet is not the norm in our world.

Jenny is working full time now. She leaves the house early in the morning and gets home around 4pm in the afternoon. It's a long day, and when she comes home she needs a little peace and quiet. The other day, she got home from a long day at work and walked in the door. Landon our 10 year old immediately said, "Mom, I need you to help me find a sweater for our ugly sweater day at school?" 2 mins later our 7 year old daughter Adalyn walked out of her bedroom and said, "Mom, you know that glitter kit I have, that you said to keep in the kitchen, I spilled it all over my bedroom floor." 2 min later Keagan our 5 year old, walks out and says, "Mom, don't worry about the glitter, I took Lilly (our cat) and used her to clean up the glitter. But I don't think she like it too much, cause she ran into your bedroom and when I chased her went running into your closet." 2 mins later the fourth member of Jenny's household, we don't need to mention his name here on a Sunday morning because that's not important, but he's also immature and helpless, walked in and said, "Boy, I've had long hard day at church, what are you making for dinner tonight?"

So often, life ends up being anything but peace and quiet.

Maybe it's the daily and tedious grind of life. Maybe it's turmoil where you work. A co-worker you don't get along with. Maybe it's expectations you can't seem to manage. Expectations as a parent. Expectations as a student. Expectations as a recent high school graduate. Family expectations around the Holidays.

Maybe you're facing tough decisions related to your career or relationships.

Perhaps you have been abused or abandoned. You are lonely.

Maybe there's an addiction or habit you've been struggling to overcome and you just can't seem to break through.

We live in an anxious, restless, busy, stressed, tired state...it is rare to find someone, at peace. And you'd just love a little peace in your life. You'd love for the Prince of Peace to just sweep you off your feet.

And that's why Isaiah's words, written almost 3000 years ago, are so relevant to you and me. At Christmas, a time that is often anything but peaceful, we are reminded that the Prince of peace, entered our chaotic world.

In fact, I just love this, Jesus one time told his followers... **John 14:27 – I am giving you the gift of peace, the kind of peace that only I can give. It isn't like the peace this world gives.**

Wow, wouldn't you like the peace of Jesus in your life?

So let's just talk about the Peace that Jesus gives.

I. The peace that Jesus gives, means reconciliation with God.

2 Corinthians 5:18 – God sent Jesus to make peace between himself and us.

Now there are a lot of people in our world today who don't realize they need peace with God. And I think it's because, we have trouble believing in things we cannot see. God is unseen, often seems far off, distant and so many people don't even realize they need peace with God.

And yet deep down, there are many people in our world who get the sense, intuition that something in life, isn't quite right. (Our living room chair) There are many people in our world living with the sense of uneasiness or disquiet in their souls. And I believe this sense is related to a need for Peace with God.

Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus: **“You are created in Christ Jesus to do good works...”**

Think about it like this, if there is such a thing as a right way to live and a wrong way to live (if you were actually created for good works)...and if God is the one who determines this...then whenever we choose the wrong way, our way instead of God's way, we become disconnected from God. This sense of uneasiness in our souls.

And our connection (our peace) with God is broken. And I don't want blow things out of proportion, but you and I are eternal beings...our souls live into eternity.

You are an unceasing spiritual being with an eternal destiny in God's great universe.

(Dallas Willard)

Every time I cheat on an exam, a test, taxes, cutting corners at work. It's not just that I "broke the rules" of the institution. It's that cheating goes against God's human design and intentions for life and the person He created me to be. And so in that sense my cheating has eternal, cosmic significance.

Every time I am dishonest. There is this uneasiness in my soul. Because dishonesty breaks my fellowship with the Creator and the way I was made to be.

Every time I indulge myself in things like food, laziness, materialism, it is breaking fellowship with the Creator...and this is why I have told Jenny, indulging in sappy hallmark Christmas movies goes against God intended design for humanity and ruins my eternal nature. I refuse do it.

And when that fellowship with God is broken, I need some kind of reconciliation, a setting right.

Maybe you have been living with that sense of unrest in your soul. Something is not right..."I am not at peace with God. I want peace with God." Right here right now, you bow your head you tell the Creator, "I want peace with you."

Second and this is really important. Sometimes when we start talking about peace in churches, that's where the conversation ends. We leave the peace of Jesus, between us and God. And peace becomes this spiritual, unseen, mystical concept that has very little to do with real life.

BUT peace with God is NOT the whole story. It's the start.

II. The peace that Jesus brings means reconciliation with others.

It's rather fascinating but there is a phrase that comes from this time in history, **Pax Romana**, Latin meaning Roman Peace. The Romans claimed to bring peace to the world. But in Rome peace was reserved for a select few. Only Romans, and mostly elite, wealthy, educated. This is limited peace, partial peace, selective and comfortable peace.

Kind of like the peace we so often experience in our world. For me, for people that look like me, peace for people who think like me, talk like me, get along with me.

And in fact, the Jews were looking for this kind of selective, limited peace as well. A savior who would come and offer peace to the Jews at the expense of the gentiles.

But when the Prince of peace comes he blows down all of our boundaries about peace and who deserves it. Jesus brings a peace that is extravagant and generous and excessive.

He started saying things like

Blessed are the peacemakers, they are children of God. (Peacemakers, reflect God's character).

1 John 4 - ²⁰ Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar.

In fact he said, the greatest command in Scripture is, **“Love God and love your neighbors...”** And the Jews who heard this, immediately wanted to be selective about it. And so they asked “Yeah, but who is my neighbor...” And Jesus proceeds to tell them this shocking story about a Good Samaritan. Jesus makes their enemy, the hero of the story.

Jesus came to make peace between all of humanity. His peace was for Samaritans. It was peace for Zacchaeus. Peace for tax collectors. Peace for fisherman. Peace for gentiles. Peace for lepers. It was peace for Roman soldiers who nailed him to the cross. Peace for Shepherds, wisemen, unwed mothers...

The Prince of Peace and he shatters all our walls of separation: social status, our cultural barriers, our racial preferences, our personal differences...

You and I have a responsibility. You just take a moment and think about our world where do you see conflict between nations, groups...how about in your own life? Is there someone who you try to avoid? Is there someone, that when you see them or

hear their name, your immediate thoughts are unpleasant...your harboring bitterness, ill-will towards an individual or even towards a group of people.

Prince of peace says, it's got to go. It has no place in your life.

See this is why, when we talk about concepts like peace at church it's anything but fluffy, spiritual talk. Peace with others will take you the rest of your life and even then you won't fully master it!

And finally, I started to realize, you know, that not only does Jesus offer us peace with God and peace with others but...

III. The peace that Jesus brings means reconciliation with ourselves.

Maybe that's what you need this Christmas season. So many in our world living each day with a sense of inadequacy, shame, humiliation, failure, doubt. And these qualities begin to define our lives and can just destroy our personal peace.

Jesus, Prince of peace said, **“Come to me all you who are weary and burdened...and I will give you rest. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”**

Ever made bad decision in your life. Ever made a mistake. Ever been overwhelmed by the expectations others have for you. Ever wondered if you fit in. Ever felt battered, crushed by words that others have spoken to you or failures in your life.

Jesus comes to offer our broken souls rest. There's this powerful story in John 4

³ The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group (Talk about shame, humiliation, failure on display). **⁴ and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the**

act of adultery. ⁵ In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?"

...he said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her."

⁹ At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. ¹⁰ Jesus asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

¹¹ "No one, sir," she said.

"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared.

In a world so quick to condemn, the prince of peace comes along to say, "You are not condemned. You are not lost. You are not hopeless. You are valuable. I love you so much. God so loved the world he sent his son." That's Christmas. Some of you in here need reminded of that this Christmas.

This is a picture my daughter Adalyn (**Pic of ADY**), when she was a little younger. She loves to dress up and pretend to be a princess. And it really becomes like this whole routine for her. She will put on her princess dresses, and then she goes to her closet and find her princess slippers. And they're all glittery and shiny and sparkly. And then she has this chest at the end of her bed that is filled with little kid jewelry. And she'll pull out all of that jewelry and start putting it on. She has necklaces and bracelets and fake earrings. And she loves to put little bows in her hair or to have Jenny braid it. And then she'll ask for some lipstick to wear. And then finally, it must be a girl thing, because her outfit is not complete until she has a purse or some kind of bag that she can hang over her arm, full of stuff to carry around with her.

And then this is the best part, she'll walk out into the living room, and she'll stop right in the middle of the floor. Right in front of the TV. And she'll just stand there and turn her head from side to side and smile. She'll just stand there waiting for me to notice.

And then I try to be as realistic as I can with her...“Ohh Ady, your slippers are too big and that dress doesn't really fit right, it looks silly. And your lipstick doesn't really match. You didn't quite get it on their right. And you know...you're not really a princess, right? You know that. And please move, you're blocking the TV.”

I would never say those things to her. Because the truth is, when I look at her, to be perfectly honest I don't notice those little flaws, all I see is my little princess. And I get to just tell her how beautiful she is. “Wow, you look so pretty Ady Grace. I love your dress. You look like a little princess.” And she'll smile this big ole smile, because that just fills her up. When she was little before should could use proper English should was say, “Yeah, my look like a Princess, Daddy.”

I kind of wonder, if that's what Jesus was getting at when the religious people brought this woman in to point out her failure and to put it on display for everyone to see. And I bet it just broke his heart, to look at her humiliated, broken self. And so the prince of peace stepped in and he, “Oh woman you are my little girl. I just love you so much. You are not condemned, you are my little princess.”

There was a Christian writer George MacDonald, lived about 100 years ago. And McDonald often wrote about princesses. Somebody once asked him, “Why do you do that so much?” MacDonald's response, **“It's because every little girl is a princess.”**

And he wasn't being metaphorical when he said that. He said, **“If you think about it, a princess is the daughter of a king. A prince is just the son of a king. That's every human being who is made and loved by God.”**

1 John 3 - See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!

Jesus comes along to tell a world full of shame and humiliation and inadequacy...to shepherds and unwed mothers...to you and to me... “Come, come, come to the manger. You are made in the image of the King and you shall be the special guests at his birth!”

People in our world, are looking for peace in all kinds of places. But I just want you to know this Christmas, the real peace that you are after you will not find in a bottle, a pill, an experience, a book, or wrapped gift under your tree...the peace that you are after is one that only the Prince can give.

6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given...And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Benediction: I just want you to know...if you’ve been looking for some peace in your life, peace with God, peace with others, peace with yourself...you’re welcome back here at Five Forks next week, and the week after and the week after. Our desire is to encourage each other and help each other each week to find the Prince of Peace. And we’d love for you to be on that journey with us. Thank you so much for worshipping with us today, we hope you join us on Tuesday evening for Christmas Eve...may have a Merry Christmas!