

Sermon: Prince of Peace  
Isaiah 52:7-10, John 14:25-27

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Advent 4, 12/18/16

**Isaiah 52:7-10**

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messengers who announce peace, who bring good news, who announce salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing for joy; for in plain sight they see the return of the Lord to Zion. Break forth together into singing, you ruins of Jerusalem; for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

**John 14:25-27**

"I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

## Sermon

Prince of Peace. This week we look at the final title given in Isaiah 9, a title for a king, and a title for the messiah. To better understand this title we must first examine what it means for a king. So what does peace mean for an empire, for a kingdom, for a nation? For most of history, peace has been subject to a particular people for a particular time. Peace for my family, my tribe, my community, my country. This type of peace has not particularly cared much about the peace of those outside of that particular people or that particular time. Oh, we want others to have peace, but that is much lower on our cares than our own peace. It is sad about what is happening in Aleppo, but the most important thing is peace in the kingdom, peace in America, peace in my home.

But even when we turn our eyes inward, and examine peace within our own context, we find that it is subject to limitations. Protestors speak out about injustice while others cry for peace. Can there be peace without justice? Minority Groups cry out for equal rights, and we pray for peace. Can there be peace without freedom? If only we could all stay where we belong, but can there be peace through isolation? If only the police and military could crack down harder, but can there be peace through force?

In the empire, the king wants to keep the peace at any cost, because for those in power, peace means that their power is maintained, unchallenged.

And then peace is announced by Isaiah, a peace that is connected to good news, to messengers of joy. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messengers who announce peace, who bring good news, who announce salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." And why is peace announced? "The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." All the ends of the earth, not just Israel, not just Judah, not just the Hebrew People, all the ends of the earth shall see God's salvation.

This is the kind of peace that sees that we are all interconnected, even if we don't see it. This is the kind of peace that understands that lasting peace cannot be just for me, but must be for all the ends of the earth.

And yet we are faced with the hard questions, Is peace just a myth, a Pollyanna hope in something that can never be attained in this life time? You can call me an optimist, but I believe that peace is more than a myth, and though we may never see real peace in this life because of the broken sinfulness of humanity, that doesn't mean that we give up on peace and not work to make peace a reality in whatever ways we can.

And as Christians, we also see peacemaking as one of the callings for those who would follow Christ. Jesus talked about peace as both something that we do and something that we are. It is something that can be given and something that can be received and it is something that can be grown in each of us.

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives.” Jesus’ peace is not like empire peace, not like the peace the world tries to enforce. But what makes Jesus’ peace different?

For one, Jesus’ peace is grounded in forgiveness instead of penalty. Jesus’ peace is based on sharing so that everyone has enough and breaking down barriers that divide us by race and class and economics. Jesus’ peace is centered on humility, the ability to not see ourselves as better or more or higher than others, but instead seeing ourselves as servants, as neighbors, as brothers and sisters. And Jesus’ peace is seen in compromise, the ability to give and take, share our belief and thoughts without forcing them upon someone else. Stepping back before we argue and really thinking, how important is this for me, and how important is this for them? Jesus’ peace recognizes that we don’t always have to get our own way.

And Jesus promises that we do not have to walk this path of peace alone. He promises an Advocate, a teacher, a guide along the way. Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit to help us as we work for peace, real peace in our everyday world. We are not alone, but in our efforts of peace we have an ally that can give us the courage and strength to follow in Christ’s footsteps. May we do so today. Amen