

REMEMBERING CHRIST'S FIRST COMING, WHILE LONGING FOR HIS SECOND

Advent



THE PEOPLE WHO WALKED IN DARKNESS HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT; THOSE WHO DWELT IN A LAND OF DEEP DARKNESS, ON THEM HAS LIGHT SHONE. - ISAIAH 9:2



PEACE FOR THE WORLD

THE PEACE CANDLE | The second candle of advent is the Candle of Peace. Peace from God, biblical peace, is rooted in the Hebrew concept of “shalom” which refers to a state of fulfillment that can only come from God’s presence, and which makes everything just as things should be, physically, spiritually, relationally, and emotionally. Looking at ourselves, our lives, our calendars, our responsibilities, our burdens, even as we watch the evening news, we might wonder: is peace possible? Maybe more than ever, we’re ready to throw in the towel and accept that peace is *not* possible. Yet, biblical peace, that peace which is from God, is something that allows us to trust in God’s promises through faith, and even to begin to experience the fulfillment of His promises.

In the advent story in Luke 2:15, the angels message declared with the birth of Christ: *“Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”* What did the angels mean with their declaration of peace? (As we reflect on multiple verses to answer this question, ask group members to participate by each reading a text.)

READ & RESPOND | Isaiah 53:5; Romans 5:1; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21; Colossians 1:19-20

- The angels were right to make their claim of peace on earth, because Jesus makes it possible to have peace with God.
- How did Jesus bring peace with God?
- Why is it that everyone who puts their faith in Jesus finds peace with God?

READ & RESPOND | Luke 2:28-31; John 14:25-27; Philipppians 4:6-7

- The angels were right to make their claim of peace on earth, because Jesus makes it possible to have peace with yourself.
- Sin not only separates us from God, it also brings separation within our own being. We desperately need inner peace.
- In the examples you read, how did Jesus’ presence bring satisfaction and peace to Simeon, to the disciples, and to all who are in-Christ?

READ & RESPOND | Matthew 1:20; Ephesians 2:14; Colossians 3:1-3 & 12-17

- The angels were right to make their claim of peace on earth, because Jesus makes it possible to have peace with others.
- Jesus came to break down the barriers, to bridge the gaps, to bring people together, and to restore trust and any damage that may come in human relationships.
- Reflecting on the Colossians 3 text, which aspect of Christ’s character do you need to clothe yourself with, in relation to: ____your spouse, your parents or kids, your employer or employees, a changing relationship____?

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



ASK | If you have time, briefly consider these questions together as a group (or send the questions home with your group to consider on their own):

- What is the difference between how Jesus gives peace and how the world does?
- Biblical peace is a peace from God that can only come from His presence in your life. How ‘at home’ are the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in your life? Would you say Father, Son, and Spirit are more like owners or temporary guests?
- On a scale from 1 (smooth sailing) to 10 (furious storm), what is your peace quotient? Why? Where do you need Jesus’ peace?

PRAY | *Dear Father, our world is hurting and broken. There is no hope for us apart from you. BUT YOU have loved us in such a powerful and tender way by sending Jesus, who is our peace. And Holy Spirit, you are with us, and you are a very present help in times of trouble. Would you draw me close, that I would know you more? Would you comfort us and all those who grieve? Would you help us to be peacemakers in world that is deeply in need? Amen.*