



The Shepherds - Peace

Luke 2: 8-14; Isaiah 9: 6-7; Romans 8: 6-7

There is a sense from the very beginning of the Christmas story that the hope, peace, joy, and love that arrive with the birth of Christ is not just for the powerful and perfected. The Child who is born is for everybody everywhere. The peace that will come with His leadership and rule is not for the ones who are already in power, but for the ones who are scratching and clawing just to make it another day. If you don't feel like you are worthy of the peace that is found in Jesus, just know you are in good company. The Christmas message of peace is for you.

God promised in Isaiah that a day was coming when the Messiah would arrive and usher in a government of peace. The angels in Luke bring good news to the lowly shepherds and confirm that a new and unexpected way to govern is coming to pass that will indeed bring peace on earth.

Key question: Do you believe peace is available for you?

As you read this week's bible devotion, you will discover much of the Bible is written by people who found themselves in the midst of conflict and struggle as well. In fact, much of the Old Testament is a story of the people of God who are under siege by surrounding nations, exiled to foreign countries, or enslaved to powerful empires. In peace, an angel of the Lord appears to shepherds tending their flock. Their first response is absolute terror. They are fearful because the glory of the Lord shines around them in the dead of night. It must have been an overwhelming experience. But notice the first words spoken to the shepherds: "Do not be afraid."

The first words spoken over the shepherds, and I believe over us today, are words of peace: Do not be afraid. Though you may be facing a painful situation, do not be afraid. You may be facing an unfavorable diagnosis; do not be afraid. You may be struggling to restore a relationship; do not be afraid. You may be anxious about the circumstances that swirl all around you; do not be afraid.

Maybe you could use some good news today because your spirit does not know peace. In the arrival of Jesus Christ, we are given good news. The good news is this: you have not been forgotten by God. In fact, He has come to be with you in the midst of your struggle. He was born in the city of David, He is the Messiah and the Lord. He is in charge. He is King. He is the One you have been waiting for. The peace that Jesus brings into our lives is not necessarily the absence of trouble, but instead it is the confidence that we are not alone.

You see, the birth of this promised king is the coming of a new rule for the entire world, and that rule begins inside each and every one of our hearts. The baby grew up to be a man who offered Himself on the cross as atonement for our sins. The peace that we find at Christmas comes from submitting to the leadership of Jesus Christ.

Peace is available for you... and His name is Jesus.

⁶ For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

† Isaiah 9:6-7 †