

Sunday Sermon Review: Week of December 18th, 2022

Sermon Series: Christmas at LifePoint

Sermon: All I Want for Christmas is PEACE (Luke 2)

Speaker: Pastor Mike Burnette

Icebreaker

- What is a Christmas tradition in your house that might not be in everyone else's house?

Discussion Questions

Introduction

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end... (Isaiah 9:6-7)

- What are currently you using to find peace? Does it really bring true peace or are you just trying to shut your brain off?
- Have you ever needed just a few minutes of peace at the end of a stressful day? Knowing Jesus is the Prince of Peace, how does it make you feel to think of that after a stressful day?

He (Simeon) took him (Jesus) up in his arms and blessed God and said, "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation... (Luke 2:28-30)

- Last week, Pastor Mike asked, "What if God could ask for one gift from you - to be ready to meet Him?" What if, because we have met Jesus, knowing Jesus became our source of real peace?
- Describe the difference between the peace of Jesus and the peace of the world.
- What are you currently allowing to steal your peace? Why are you giving it so much power to do that? What would God say about that?

Because of Jesus, We Can Have Peace with God

May the Lord bless his people with peace! (Psalm 29:11)

- What was the last or most recent blessing you received? Did you recognize it as a blessing?
- In Hebrew, *Shalom* means peace. Peace from God IS the Peace of God. Knowing this, and being a Christian, what do you feel when you hear this?

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:1)

- Do you really believe that peace is meant for you to have in all areas of your life? Why or why not?
- What grief or shame are you carrying that you need to surrender to God, knowing that He will give you peace? What are you holding onto in your life that you think is keeping you from God?

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. (Romans 5:6-11)

- When bad things happen, do you let God deal with it or do you try to control the situation?
- How much more is God doing for you, now that you are reconciled and are a child of God? How has your life been transformed since walking with Christ?
- Are you spending quality time with Jesus or just quantity time with Jesus? How do you know? What's the difference?

Because of Jesus, We Can Have Peace with Others

- Think of one person who you really struggle to like or to get along with in life. Knowing that the Holy Spirit is alive on the inside of you, how does that make you feel?
- Remember, peace doesn't mean you have to be in a close relationship. Peace can also look like boundaries. How do you need to set boundaries to protect your peace? What does that look like?

Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:9-21)

- What does it look like to genuinely love someone you're not in peace with? How does God help us live in peace with people who have different ideas of peace?
- If we were to pick one person to resolve conflict with, what stage of reconciliation are you in? What's your next step?
- How would you encourage someone else who's struggling to live in peace with another person?

Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. (2 Corinthians 13:11)

- What kind of people are you surrounding yourself with: People who

create storms or people who bring life?

- How do you protect your peace when dealing with people who have a history of creating storms?
- Are you in a storm that you created? Are you responsible for disrupting your own peace? Explain why or why not.
- Share a story of a time where you were able to restore a broken relationship. How did you do it? Did God help?
- If you've been offended or hurt by someone, Pastor Mike said we should do the following:
 - Pray for them and forgive quickly
 - Choose to be unoffendable
 - Pursue healthy, life-giving relationships

Which step comes the easiest for you? Which is more difficult? What would it look like to apply these steps to the last person or situation that offended you?

Because of Jesus, We Can Have Peace within Ourselves

- How does it make you feel to know that Jesus will forgive you of everything, and you can forgive yourself?
- What's holding you back from seeing yourself as His son or daughter? Why haven't you given it to God?

Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all. (2 Thessalonians 3:16)

- Are you living in the peace of Jesus? How are you doing it?
- Have you gotten far away from God?

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)

- Take a moment to reflect on the things that you share with others. Are you sharing stories to be self-righteous, be a victim, gain allies, or to share the peace and goodness of Jesus? What do your stories tell

people about you?

- If what you're saying isn't producing good fruit, why? What would it take to change it?

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

(Phillippians 4:4-7)

- What makes you anxious? What would it look like for you to hand that over to the Lord and let Him worry about it?
- Describe a time when you had so much peace that you couldn't explain it, but it was evident. How did it feel?

You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock.

(Isaiah 26:3-4)

- What does it mean to you to know that God will keep you in perfect peace if you keep your mind on God and trust in Him?
- Do you trust God is big enough to handle your problems? Or do you think they're too big or too little for Him to handle?
- What are some ways that we can keep our eyes on God when we're in the midst of a struggle? How can God help us keep our peace when a situation is trying to steal it?

Now What?

Encouragement: Because we know Jesus, we have the gift of unending peace. This peace isn't conditional and it's more than just shutting your brain off. God's peace is all encompassing, no-strings attached, undeserved, wholeness, connectedness, settledness - something that we won't find anywhere else but with The One who is peace. We belong with Jesus, so we can have this peace. This relationship helps live in peace with one another. Christ dwells on the inside of us and because of that, we can

live peacefully with other people. The Spirit gives us peace, patience, and the wisdom to do life with others, we can't do it on our own. And this same blessing of peace is how we can have peace within ourselves. Knowing how God sees us His precious children, we can see ourselves as His precious children. We no longer have to walk around carrying guilt, shame, anxiety, or anything else that keeps us away from God. BEcause we've received Jesus, we've received peace, and as long as we keep our minds set on the Lord, we can always have peace.

Ask:

- What's getting in the way of your peace? How do you need to protect it better?
- Can others see God's peace in you? Do you bring God's peace to others? Why or why not?
- Are you disturbing the peace? Why? How can the Lord help with that?
- How can this sermon help you as you go into the holiday season?

Challenge:

- Jesus said in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." As you go through the week, pay attention to what offends you, what gives you anxiety, what gives you pain. Consciously acknowledge your pain points (family, sin, regrettable decisions, etc). Then, get the help you need to heal in Christ (small group, a counselor, deliverance, etc.). Finally, believe you are forgiven, and walk in your healing!
- Take your pain points to God and spend some extra time with Him this week praying and say, "God, I'm Your child, so this is Your problem."
- Help bring peace to someone this week. Offer a prayer, lend a hand, give some encouragement. Help calm someone else's storm.

Closing Prayer

Lord, thank you for the gift of shalom. Thank you for Your calming peace. Thank You for the promise of peace that surpasses all understanding, that we don't have to earn or search for. During this holiday season, a time that can be disruptive and stressful, we pray for peace. Because we've been reconciled to you through Jesus, we can have full peace with You. You empower us to have peace with others and you make it possible for us to have peace within ourselves. Help us to pray often this season, to forgive people quickly, to relinquish our spirits of offense, and to pursue life-giving relationships. We submit any hard feelings, hurts, wrongs, and offenses we've been holding onto to You. Draw near to us and help us draw near to you. Help us to live in the freedom You have given us. We get to have peace because greater is He that lives in us than the spirit of this world. Help us share Your peace with others in our lives who need it instead of feeding into or creating storms of chaos. Give us the wisdom and the words to help calm situations down. What a blessing it is to be precious sons and daughters of the Most High. We receive Your Peace. Amen.

Sunday Sermon Review: Week of December 11th, 2022

Sermon Series: Christmas at LifePoint

Sermon: All I Want for Christmas is to Be Ready! (Luke 2:8-11)

Speaker: Pastor Mike Burnette

Icebreaker

- How long does it take you to get ready in the morning? Do you have a routine or do you go with the flow?

Discussion Questions

Introduction

- When you're waiting for a gift to arrive, you prepare for it by going to the store, buying wrapping paper, etc. What are you doing in anticipation of the gift of Christ? How are you preparing to receive Jesus when he comes again?
- In Luke 2:8-14, the angel shows up unannounced and the shepherds are surprised and filled with fear. If God showed up unannounced in your life today, would you be filled with great fear or great joy? Would you be ready to see Him, or would you be afraid? Why?
- If God can use a shepherd to spread the Good News, how can He use you?
- God is asking you for one thing this Christmas. What is it?
- How do you spend time with the Lord?

Jesus Wants You Ready!

- Philippians 2:12-13 says, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. What are you currently doing to help you become a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ, ready at any minute for Jesus to come?"
- What do you feel you need to change before Jesus comes back? Are

you procrastinating?

- What are things in your life that distract you from God and keep you from being ready at a moment's notice?
- All ten brides in Matthew 25:1-13 were invited, but only some were ready to meet the bridegroom. What are you missing in your Christian life that will cause you to be caught unprepared? What can you do to change that?
- Have you ever abused God's grace?
- Do you have a devoted faith or a borrowed faith? How do you know?
- Why is it hard for you to build a relationship with God?

We Want to Be Ready!

How to grow close to the Lord, grow in devotion, and be ready meet Him:

- a. Submit your life to Jesus
 - b. Commit to a life devoted to Jesus
 - c. Live a life ready for Jesus!
- What are you doing every day to remind you to completely submit your life to God, as Lord of your life?
 - What are the areas that you won't surrender to Jesus, and why is that?
 - Do you really believe that God can forgive you for your sins? Is there something that you're holding on to that makes you feel like you have to earn your way into heaven?
 - The Will of the Father is for us to know God, have a relationship with Him, to believe in Jesus and follow Him, to submit to the authority of Jesus and walk with Him, and live for Jesus. What are you missing from this list? How will you make changes in your daily life to fix that?
 - How are you including others in your preparation? How are you sharing with others?
 - Are you willing to give up your leadership for God's leadership? Do

you try to follow Jesus and still be in control? For how long?

- We don't work our way to salvation with Jesus, but instead we posture ourselves to be ready in response for Christ. What's the difference?

Now What?

Encouragement: Our true joy of the season comes from knowing and affirming that Jesus is coming. He's coming back for us, and we don't want to be caught off guard, unprepared for his promised return. Jesus doesn't want us just sitting around waiting, He wants us alert, dressed, and ready. And what does that look like? It's submitting to Jesus as Lord of your life, committing to a life devoted to Jesus, and living a life ready for Jesus. Your life matters to God, and how you spend your life in devotion to Him should matter to you. Are you ready? Are you excited?

Ask:

- What in your life reflects your relationship with God?
- Imagine if you were kidnapped, bag over your head, locked up, and knew you were facing certain death. Would you be filled with peace, ready to meet God knowing that you were a fully devoted follower of Jesus? Why or why not?
- God's patiently waiting for you to be a part of more people coming to know Christ. How can you help?
- What guides your relationship with God: Your Christian traditional knowledge or personal connection?
- What rhythms in your life now can help you build now to receive Jesus joyfully and not fearfully?

Challenge:

- Have you said yes to Jesus, put your trust in Him, dedicated your life to Him, submitted to and committed to follow Him?
 - If yes, who can you share that with today, that you never have

before?

- If not, who do you know in your circle that you might ask about it today?
- If you've gotten out of rhythm with God, get back in it!
- Improve your devotion to Jesus - share your plan on how you will grow in all of these area this week:
 - Build a devotion life (Pray, read your Bible, develop disciplines, repent from sin)
 - Belong to His Church (Attend Sunday services, commit to your small group, serve, be generous, pray)
 - Become a lifelong disciple of Jesus (Follow Jesus and The Word, never stop learning and growing about Jesus, be spirit-led)

Closing Prayer

Lord, we thank You for this message. Thank You for the reminder of the heart behind this advent season. And as we celebrate this season, help us become people who are ready. When Jesus returns, we don't want to be caught unprepared. Speak and wake up our souls so we're not spiritually sleeping, busy with things that don't matter, or distracted from what matters the most. Lord, we know that we're all invited to be close to You, but we have to be ready to be close to You. Show us what we need to do to be ready to meet You. Help us submit areas of our lives and heart to You. Lead us in living lives devoted to following Jesus, not because we have to, but because we love You. Help us get right with You. Help us trade our selfishness for readiness. Starting today, help us live our lives as gifts to You. Amen.

Sunday Sermon Review: Week of December 4th, 2022

Sermon Series: Christmas at LifePoint

Sermon: Fresh Faces - The Gifts of Advent: Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace

Icebreaker

- When you open a gift, do you...
 - a. carefully open the gift, taking great care not to tear the paper or damage the bow?
 - b. tear it open, throwing paper all around you like a crazed racoon digging through the trash for a delicious morsel of food?

Discussion Questions

Introduction - Shelby Knuckles

- Advent is a season of preparation for celebration leading up to the coming of Christ.
- What is advent and why do we do it?
- What does advent mean to you?

Hope - Pastor Willie Simpson, Small Groups Pastor

- How do you define hope? Does it line up with the Bible's definition of hope?
- We all know what it feels like to be hopeful, but have you ever felt HOPELESS? Did you know that while sometimes God is silent, He is never sleeping? Think of a time when it felt like all was lost. How does this knowledge that God was still there with you give you hope today?
- In Luke 2:36-38, Anna the prophetess was worshiping, fasting, and praying. Faith fueled Anna's life, but it was HOPE that fueled her faith. Anna began to proclaim Christ to everyone who would listen, because she was filled with hope. What about Jesus gives you the hope that fuels your faith?
- How can Anna's example of fasting, worship, and prayer be used in

our own lives to feel hopeful?

- Have you ever been so filled with hope, so completely overcome with the happiness it brings, that you couldn't wait to tell someone about it? Describe that time, and how it fuels you to proclaim Jesus today.
- Romans 5:4 says that "Hope does not put us to shame." What do you find yourself putting your hope in other than Jesus Christ? What does this lead to?
- Romans 12:12 says, "Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer." How does this help you as we enter the holiday season?

Love - Natalie Villegas, KidPoint Director

- Some people identify as masculine, feminine, American, military... Some identify as worthless, meaningless, hopeless... God is LOVE and He identifies us as HIS children. How does it make you feel to know that God sees us ALL as His worthwhile and meaningful children?
- Read Exodus 34:6-7. God gets misidentified all the time based on our needs and wants. How do you identify God? Have you ever misidentified God and what led to that?
- In John 3:16 we see that God's gift to us was LOVE in the form of Jesus as our savior. How much love would it take for a father to give his only son for a world of undeserving sinners? Think about that for a moment, and describe how it makes you feel to know this.
- Jesus died for you. Everyone. No one is excluded. Sit on that for a moment.
- What has formed your idea of love and how does God want to change that?
- In Romans 5:8 we see that "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Imagine the love you would have to have in order to make this sacrifice. Without God, we wouldn't have love. How does knowing this make you look at God a little different from how you did before you realized how much He

sacrificed for us?

- God is Love. What am I? Am I loving? Why or why not?
- Would the Holy Spirit living in you be able to see God's love in you? Or would all the other things you see yourself as cloud that love? How can you live in God's love and allow the Holy Spirit to work on you and all the negativity that clouds over God's love for you?

Joy - Pastor Jarae Meriwether, Students Pastor

- Joy comes from the hope in His word. Imagine getting a text message today and the news it contains is the absolute best news ever. Wouldn't you want to share it with everyone? What about God giving us his son as a gift of salvation to us makes you joyous?
- In Luke 2:9, Jesus was born and an angel appears out of nowhere to some shepherds in a field. Imagine being one of those shepherds, watching the herd and protecting them from predators. They must have been filled with great fear. Then, the angel brings them this great news directly from God that removes all their fear. What good news have you experienced in your life that took away all fear? How did you share it with others? Did you scream it from the rooftops, or keep it inside and tell no one? Why?
- In Luke 2:10 the angel says, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people." This GREAT JOY that the angel spoke of and God brings you was then beaten up, spit upon, placed upon a cross, and killed by man. Fortunately for us, Jesus the GREAT JOY then rose again, and He paid the debt of our sin. This GREAT JOY gives us everlasting life. Describe the feeling of GREAT JOY this news brings you today.
- Do you have a hard time being filled with joy? Do you believe joy is a choice and you are deserving of it? What may cause you not to choose this gift?
- "Joy is the serious business of heaven." It comes from the Holy Spirit and presence of God. Is this where your joy comes from? If not, where does it come from?

- What would evolve your happiness to joy?

Peace - Pastor Christian Christenson, Online Campus Pastor

- God's son brings us the peace that doesn't matter what season of life we are in or how good things are right now. It is an eternal peace, a peace that is everlasting, a peace that encompasses all of our being. How does it feel to know that every care is washed away by the peace of Jesus Christ?
- We all have a picture of what peace is in our minds. In Isaiah 9:6, we see Jesus referred to as Prince of Peace. How much bigger is this image of Jesus than any picture of worldly peace we could ever imagine? Do you truly understand the depth of Jesus as our Prince of Peace.
- In Luke 2:25-26, the Holy Spirit has told Simeon he will not see death until he sees the Lord's Christ. He had PEACE when he saw Jesus. Put yourself in Simeon's place and imagine what it would be like to be told that you would see the Christ and be assured of your own salvation by the Holy Spirit. How much peace would this give you as it happened?
- If the world is waiting on Jesus so he can have peace, what happens when he is gone? That's a trick question, because He was never gone. When he arose and ascended to Heaven, He left the Holy Spirit, and that is how He gives us peace. We don't always understand it, but the peace that Jesus gives is eternal, far beyond your reach, can't be earned, must be freely accepted. How has the Holy Spirit given you peace?
- Will you accept God's freely given peace? Will you say yes with your prayer, devotion, relationships? How will you spend time with the one whom we call PEACE, Jesus Christ?
- Do you try to control everything to have peace or are you allowing God to lead you to His peace?
- What is stealing your peace? Why are you allowing this thing to steal your peace?

Now What?

Encouragement: This advent season, take time to appreciate these four amazing gifts we've been given. We don't have to earn them, and yet, hope, love, joy, and peace are always there. And not only do we get the blessing of having the gifts, but we also have the privilege of sharing them with others. How can you share these gifts with friends and family this season?

Ask:

- Which of the four gifts do you truly need to accept in your life?
- Pray about what the Lord would lead you to do to fully accept this gift in your life.
- How can you be an agent of hope, love, joy, and peace to others around you this advent season?

Challenge:

- Read Luke Chapter 2 this afternoon, and see how God gave us His gifts of Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace. Look around you this week and discover new ways to see this in your everyday life. Use this newfound awareness to spark a desire to share these gifts with others in your life throughout the week. Pray that God will open your eyes and the Holy Spirit will guide you to share these gifts with someone who desperately needs them.

Closing Prayer

God, I am all in. I believe in Jesus, that he died for me, so I can live for Him. Help me to live in a way that honors God. I don't want to wait any longer, I want to follow you now. Help me to follow you in everything I do today, tomorrow, and every day. Thank you for your gifts of Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace. Help me to use them in everything I do, and give me the courage to share them with others. In Jesus' holy name, amen.