

God's Gift of Peace

Slide	Sermon
1	Title slide -God's Gift of Peace
2	<p>We are almost to Christmas! For the children it seems like Christmas day will never come. And they are really stimulated with extra sugar treats, all the decorations, lights galore!, the Christmas tree, and the smell of pine & cedar. And let's not forget the stimulation of the culture all pointing to the visit from St. Nick.</p> <p>And we too as adults are excited for Christmas to arrive. It means different things to different people. Some are waiting for the whole family to gather around a feast!</p> <p>Some are waiting for the time off from work—</p> <p>Some are waiting for the day to enjoy one's Christmas gifts with friends and family—</p> <p>Some are waiting for that someone special to come into their lives! (at least that's what every Hallmark Christmas movie portrays!)</p> <p>And some are waiting to have a few days of time not scheduled in any way!</p> <p>Yet the main thing we are waiting for is to experience the Savior in a new and more powerful way.</p>
3	<p>We've learned that hope is crucial to the present and future—we will experience the Savior if we have no hope.</p> <p>We've learned that to love the Savior we must look in places where love is found. But more importantly we need to be involved—sharing love, especially to those in need.</p> <p>We've learned that one evidence of the Savior is when we find real</p>

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	<p>joy. And that fundamental joy comes from a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. And today we consider the issue of <i>Peace</i>.</p>
4	<p>Because where true peace resides is where we'll experience the joy of Christmas—why peace? Because the Scripture tells us the Savior will bring peace! Jesus—Emmanuel—God with us.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Isaiah 9:6, will be the Prince of Peace John 14:27, Peace I give to you</p>
5	<p>What is peace and how does Jesus become our Peace?</p> <p>First we have to look at what peace means in our day to day world.</p> <p>Peace is more than tranquility. Even though more people would say a relaxing summer day napping in a hammock would be a peaceful day. It certainly feels and looks that way. That's because we define peace as the absence of conflict, frustration, fear.</p> <p>While this is a result of peace, peace has profound deep spiritual roots. And these roots are found in an infant called Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Jesus is God who becomes fully human.</p> <p>So here, we know that Jesus as human will deal with all the enemies of peace just as we do! But in the midst of his humanity Jesus shows us the way to peace.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>HE will be Our Peace</i> Micah 5:5</p>
6	<p>Peace most simply defined is being in a right relationship—</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Right relationship with God, for example being in God's will2. Means being in right relationship with other people whether

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relatives or others, for example, living among people in love and joy and hope; loving others as you would love yourself.

3. Being in right relationship with nature, God's creation

Now you can see that peace is no easy task! In fact no one can create the peace that God wants us to have. That's why we must see peace as God's gift to us in Jesus!

- 7 Oh we try to find peace through our own efforts, don't we?
- A. By pursuing popularity. We want everyone to like us. But once we venture down this path soon we realize that we must become what others want us to be! We spend time and energy learning to change like autumn leaves, becoming someone different depending on the circumstance. If we are good at this then from the outside we look like we have it all together and are at peace. But inwardly we are at war with ourselves.
 - B. We also seek peace by becoming the most powerful person possible; dominating over all our competition! But that leads us to treating others as objects to be conquered. Our peace then is left to the success and failures we have. But this peace is just the absence of being on top!
 - C. Thirdly we see peace in pleasure. We think if more of life can be like vacation we would have the peace we want. We look to sexual relationships, we seek thrill rides like zipline, mountain climbing, cycling. We look at throwing ourselves in to movies or reality shows. And the thrills can't just be enough. The next adventure has to be bigger and better! We throw ourselves into sports, using all our free time playing or watching or betting on the possible outcomes. But when the games or the thrill, or the pleasures are over, we feel an emptiness in our souls!

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	<p>So we try lots of things and do lots of things and to lots of people to find that satisfying peace we long to have!</p>
8	<p>But the truth is this peace we so desire is right here at Christmas in the manger. We've seen it every year all our lives but somehow we miss it!</p> <p>And year after year God continues to pursue us constantly showing us that the Peace we seek is right there in front of us!</p> <p>If the truth be known, God pursues us the other 364 days a year trying to give us the gift of peace</p>
9	<p>[Story of God's pursuit]</p> <p>Several years ago an eastern paper reported this story:</p> <p>One evening a woman was driving home when she noticed a huge truck behind her that was driving uncomfortably close. She stepped on the gas to gain some distance from the truck, but when she sped up, the truck did too. The faster she drove, the faster the truck did.</p> <p>Now scared, she exited the freeway. But the truck stayed with her. The woman then turned up a main street, hoping to lose her pursuer in traffic. But the truck ran a red light and continued the chase.</p> <p>Reaching the point of panic, the woman whipped her car into a service station and bolted out of her auto screaming for help.</p>

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	<p>The truck driver sprang from his truck and ran toward her car. Yanking the back door open, the driver pulled out a man hidden in the back seat.</p> <p>The woman was running from the wrong person. From his high vantage point, the truck driver had spotted a would-be rapist in the woman's car. The chase was not his effort to harm her but to save her even at the cost of his own safety.</p>
10	<p>God pursues us—not to harm us or to get us into the kingdom, but to open the gift of Peace in our lives.</p> <p>And that Peace will only come with a relationship with God through the babe, Jesus, who becomes the Peace maker through the cross.</p> <p>And from accepting Jesus as Savior and Lord we will find the Prince of Peace sowing the soil of peace in our lives with others.</p> <p>By taking in the depth and breath and wonder of the Christmas story we will begin to see how everyone and everything is important in this world, and this leads to the desire to be peacemakers for the creation God gives us!</p>
11	<p>Conclusion</p> <p>Joseph is a character that had to receive God's peace to accept his role as Jesus' earthly father. Everything was against him saying yes</p>

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to the angel—

1. Leader in community
2. Man of the scriptures and important in the synagogue
3. Had a reputation beyond dispute
4. Had a career to make an honest living—carpentry
5. As a result he probably looked at the world as one that fits together, has clean edges and could be nailed so that really stayed the same
6. Through his faith we believe he was moral and just

He would have been one to follow the law—rewards and punishments

1. as the law decreed
2. He'd probably be practical
3. He would be concerned about how he carried himself and conscious of how he was regarded by others

12 But even with all these reasons to act responsibly and quietly dismiss Mary—something stirred in him—

- He was sure it was a messenger from God that told him to take Mary for his wife
- He was sure that the child, while not his, was miraculous
- And he desired most of all to do God's will—thus finding

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	<p>real Peace</p> <p>So, hard as it was for him to go against what culture and religion expected, he chose God's will</p>
13	<p>That decision changed his life forever. But that decision also brought him the Peace that God gives! And Joseph teaches us that we to can have that Peace if we will let Jesus lead us to the Father. Amen</p>