

## **12-18-22 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent**

### **Sermon- Call Him Prince of Peace**

**Scripture-** Isaiah 26: 1-13, 66:12-14, CTW- Reading #598

**Hymns-** 191, 168, ???

**Theme-** It is said that on Christmas Day, all those years ago, we received the greatest gift ever given...but do we really understand what that is? Today we look at the name "Prince of Peace"..."of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end...peace like a river."

### **I. Introduction: Finding Peace**

As you know, I love studying the Civil war and am fascinated by the "back stories" of that war. Today's subject is a farmer names Wilber Mclean.

Wilmer McLean owned a farm near Manassas, Virginia, which is just south of Washington, DC. His house was seriously damaged during the opening battle of the Civil War, which was named for a nearby creek called **Bull Run**. After the Battle, falsely believing he would be safer from future battles, thinking that lightening does not strike the same place twice, he rebuilt his home there- only to have it destroyed during the **2nd battle** of Bull Run.

Disgusted, he moved to a part of the country where he felt he could escape the ravages of war - a small obscure community called Appomattox...the site of the last battle of the war in 1865.

When Lee surrendered to Grant, it was Wilbur McLean's house that was used by the two Generals to sign the historic terms of surrender. Their aides de camp were so moved by the signing they desired a memento of the occasion - a souvenir to remember what had taken place in this house. So they all walked off with a piece of furniture from McLean's house.

Truth is that no matter where Wilmer McLean ran he could not escape conflict. He could never seem to find peace.

People have sought peace for generations.

They have rallied for it.

They have bargained for it.

They have compromised for it

They have even fought for it.

They presume that if they can ever create an world where there is no trouble, no difficulties, no conflicts - then they can have perfect peace.

But Jesus tells us (even for us who belong to Him) "in this world you will experience trouble..." **John 16:33**

Peter wrote: "Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you." **1 Peter 4:12**

You are NEVER going to reach a place in this world where there will be no trouble. No difficulties. No conflicts. (pause...) It's never going to happen.

The circumstances of conflict and troubles will (sooner or later) invade your life. And you will not be able to move away from them.

But you can choose how you will deal with those circumstances...

In other words, you can have peace, because you CHOOSE peace... you pursue it.

As **Psalm 34:14b** tells us "...seek peace and pursue it."

## **II. What Kind of Peace should we pursue?**

Jesus said: Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. **John 14:27**

**A. What kind of peace is this peace of Jesus?** It's a peace where my heart isn't troubled. It's a peace where I am not afraid.

It's not like the "world's peace" Because the world's peace is based upon what my circumstances are. If my life is going badly then I'll be sad or angry. If things are going well, only then will I be pleased. That's the peace the world knows.

BUT this peace from Jesus is different. This peace is a promise from God of His peace IN SPITE OF my circumstances.

As Paul writes: this peace "transcends all understanding" – it doesn't even make any sense to the world.

Isaiah tells us that this kind of peace (perfect peace) is promised by God to His people. You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you. **Isaiah 26:3**

**B. What's this peace like? How will you know when you have it?**

You won't stumble through life. As we're told in **Psalms 119:165** "Great peace have they who love your law, and NOTHING CAN MAKE THEM STUMBLE."

You know you have God's perfect peace, because...

...You'll be surefooted

...Confident

...Able to stand up with courage and boldness

ILLUS: It reminds me of the story of Shadrach, Meshach and

Abednego. When commanded by the Babylonian King to bow down to his golden idol they replied:

"O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up." (**Daniel 3:16b-18**)

Did you catch that? Even if God doesn't rescue us...  
we WILL NOT bow down.  
we WILL NOT fall down  
we WILL NOT stumble down before your idol.

### **III. So, how do We get this peace? How do We "pursue it?"**

Well, **Isaiah 26** tells us something about that – "In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; God makes salvation its walls and ramparts. Open the gates that the righteous nation may enter, the nation that keeps faith. You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you."

In vs. 1 we're told we have a strong city; God makes salvation its walls and ramparts.

**A. The imagery God is using is that of safety and peace INSIDE the walls of a city.** In other words, if you're going to find God's peace & security you've got to be inside the walls. You have to be where He wants you to be.

Now, I know I'm preaching to the choir here, but part of that means being in church.

Jesus: "where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them." **Matt.18:20**

God's church can be a strong city with Jesus sitting right in the middle of it. God's peace is here BECAUSE Jesus is here. That's a spiritual reality

**B. But there's a practical aspect of this as well...** when you go to church you can find God's peace because there are other Christians to model yourself after. And when you model yourself after other faithful believers, you are GUARANTEED peace.

Paul wrote: Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me— put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. **Philippians 4:9**

How does that work? It works because the people you hang around with shape your life. If I spend my time reading great books – I'll begin to think like those people. If I spend my time watching TV – I'll begin to think like those people I watch.

Too often, we don't have peace in our lives, because we listen to the wrong things.

We listen to the wrong music

Or we watch the wrong TV programs

Or we read the wrong kinds of books and magazines

Or we spend our time with the wrong kinds of people

You're not going to find God's peace there...

What you'll find by surrounding yourself with that kind of music, entertainment and companionship is anger, blasphemy, cursing, lust, arrogance, impurity, self-righteousness etc.

**C. God tells us Do not be misled:** "Bad company corrupts good character." **1 Corinthians 15:33**

You can't spend a lot of time with certain kinds of people and receive God's kind of peace.

But, when you come to church and begin to look to other Christians whom you can admire, then you've got someone to model your life after. You can learn how to live your Christianity as they do and you can gain the kind of peace they've come to know.

#### **IV. If you want God's kind of peace in your life - Then you've got to focus on God.**

You've got to learn to TRUST HIM. Because if you don't trust God, you will not have peace.

##### **A. God "will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you." Isaiah 26:3**

What God is telling us is – our ability to gain His perfect peace is based on an attitude that is convinced that we can TRUST Him.

**B. Let God rule the present day...**In the mid-17th century, Oliver Cromwell sent one of his officials to France to represent England in some negotiations.

One night during his travels this official found he was unable to sleep. According to the custom of the day a servant slept in his room and that evening the servant was sleeping soundly.

In the middle of the night the official woke his servant up to tell the servant that he could not rest because "I am so afraid something will go wrong with the diplomatic mission,"

"Master," said the servant, "may I ask a question or two?"

"Of course." Replied the official

"Did God rule the world before we were born?"

"Most assuredly He did."

"And will He rule it after we are dead?"

"Certainly He will."

"Then, master, why not let Him rule the present, too?"

Something in the servant's reply stirred the official's faith and he felt a deep sense of peace come over him - and in a few minutes both he and the servant were sound asleep.

As we approach the end of this season of Advent, we must keep in mind that one of God's desires for his people in this season and beyond...But remember this, in the Beatitudes when He says "Blessed are the Peacemakers", He means us!

So the question becomes for all of us, in this Holy season of love and peace, what are we each doing to achieve that? Do we just walk around and pray that Jesus gives us peace or are we going to listen to his call to become peacemakers ourselves.

There is a song that we would do well to listen to: "Let there Be Peace On Earth and Let it Begin With Me."

Amen? Let us pray...