

Nothing Missing, Nothing Broken

For some, Christmas can't come quick enough. For others, it brings more stress and the feeling of being overwhelmed. We all need Christmas, but what is it about Christmas that we need? We all need to know that "all is well" because of the peace we celebrate, the hope that arrived and joy we can embrace.



INTRODUCTION

The word "Shalom" appears in the Bible 429 times. Pastor David gave us biblical examples that show us how we can have peace (nothing missing, nothing broken) in our lives. While we learned what peace really is, we also learned what peace really is not.

STARTER QUESTION

This past year has been challenging to say the least; however, as Christians, we can have shalom in our hearts and lives no matter what is going on in the world because of what Jesus did for us on the cross. How would you describe shalom or peace? What would peace feel like to you? What would your covenant with God look like? Based on the sermon today, what do you need in order to surrender to God? Try to imagine the peace and freedom you will feel in your heart once you do so.

INTO THE WORD

1. Read Romans 5:1-10. What do you think is meant in verses 7 and 8 when it says, "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?"
2. John 16:33 reads, "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." If you were to ask others what it means to have peace, do you think some would answer in ways that are worldly, and not supported by Scripture? What worldly things can bring "peace" to some people?

APPLICATION

3. Which example of shalom that Pastor Smith explained most applies to your life right now? Which example would you like to cultivate with others? How might you go about doing so? Why do you feel these are important ways to show shalom?
4. A human tendency when speaking about peace and shalom is to find it through worldly means. This may include good circumstances, getting all we ask from God or "practicing peace" through rituals or other routines. What types of world-centered "sources" of peace are you tempted to trust in as opposed to the One True Source of peace, the Prince of Peace, Jesus? In what ways might you seek after Him rather than your own plans and will in order to have genuine peace with God?

PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, we come to you today with humble hearts, thanking you for the shalom that you offer us if only we will surrender to you. We thank Jesus for dying on the cross for our sins and so much more, for the covenant of eternal life and peace. We pray that each one of us will take a moment to be honest with ourselves and with You. May we see what we need to in order to surrender to you now, so that we can experience the shalom you intended for us to have. In Jesus precious name, Amen.

SUGGESTED ANSWER GUIDE / MORE FOOD FOR THOUGHT FOR SELECTED QUESTIONS:

In reference to question 1:

A righteous man is already "safe" with God. The righteous man shines his light in everything he does. He follows all of God's commands, he has a continuing relationship with God and shows his love to others. In other words, he is nearly perfect. However, Jesus went above and beyond by giving his life so that our sin may be forgiven. (Romans 3:23 and 6:23; Mark 2:17)

In reference to question 2:

When we think about what brings peace in our lives... financial security, good health, career success, material things, answered prayers, and good relationships might come to mind. (John 14:27, Job 42:2). Some may think that physical activity, such as yoga, meditation, harmony between mind and body, or spiritual discipline will help them find Shalom. God, however is the source of all peace. (Philippians 4:7, 2 Thessalonians 3:16, and Psalm 4:6-8)

In reference to question 3:

All of these examples are only possible by the power of the Holy Spirit working in and through us (Proverbs 3:5-6, Ephesians 4:3, Romans. 15:13, John 16:33, and Romans 5:1-10).

Doing good to others, offering forgiveness, reconciliation in relationships, and a sense of completeness and well-being are found when we fully let go and surrender our lives to the Lord. In thinking of ways to experience peace in your life, we can remember that Jesus is our Source of peace; it cannot come about by "me" alone in my own strength.

In reference to question 4:

A covenant of peace is offered to us through all Jesus accomplished on the cross for us. He died for our sins and offers us forgiveness and eternal life when we accept Him as our personal Savior (John 3:16, John 16:33, Philippians 4:7, and Isaiah 9:6). Our relationship with Jesus allows us to be living, breathing examples of peace to others in a difficult world. Pray to God for His peace to fill you and for the Holy Spirit to grant you wisdom in sharing His peace in tangible ways with those around you this week. Share with your group a few ways you might be able to do so with the Prince of Peace guiding your path and decisions.