

## Christmas Family Service, 2021 – His Gift is Peace

1. It is such a privilege to be back with you this Christmas, especially in light of missing last Christmas due to the pandemic
  - a. I'd like to say, "Wow what a difference a year makes!" but I can't, here we are worshipping under similar circumstances to last year but at least we can gather
  - b. So, when we hear the Christmas announcement from the angelic host heralding "peace on earth and good will to men" you can be excused for wondering what kind of peace they meant given our last couple of years
    - i. Since we were last able to welcome our newborn king together in worship we've endured a continuing pandemic, masks, shutdowns, a tumultuous election, civic unrest, inflation...need I go on
    - ii. These past two years have been anything but "peaceful"
    - iii. You might find yourself on Christmas Eve of 2021 in dire need of a good word, some refreshment and consolation – and that is just what Christ came to bring
    - iv. This Christmas KNOW that the Lord has come, and His gift is PEACE
2. But there is a difference between what the world calls peace and the peace Christ offers
  - a. In the world peace is circumstantial
    - i. There is no conflict therefore we must be at peace
    - ii. Nothing bad is happening in your life - times are peaceful
    - iii. But the world's peace is easily disrupted when circumstances change, like they have over the past two years
  - b. But the good news tonight is that Christ has come to bring you peace, not by taking your problems away but giving you peace even when you're in the thick of them.
    - i. He said in the Gospel of John, "**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.**" (Joh 14:27)
    - ii. He spoke those words the night before He was crucified knowing full well what was coming in the morning.
3. The peace that Christ brings is not worldly peace but heavenly peace, it is not based on conditions or surroundings but it's a supernatural gift surpassing earthly circumstance
  - a. It comes from knowing first and foremost that through faith Jesus has opened the doors to heaven for you through the forgiveness of your sins
    - i. That's what the angels meant when they said their message was good news of great joy because Jesus, the Savior, had finally come to bring life where there had only been the promise of death
    - ii. Covid isn't the first disaster humans have faced, it won't be the last unless our Lord returns before it's over
    - iii. But the one guaranteed disaster that awaits all of us is death – we all know it and fear it – that's what Christ came to remove.

- b. When God created the world there was no death, there were no diseases, wars, or natural disasters – it was paradise
  - i. But death and everything else we consider normal in this world entered as a result of sin when our first parents, Adam and Eve, took the fruit in the Garden of Eden
  - ii. Sin brought with it a broken relationship between us and God and a broken world where calamity and death happen
- c. But Christ was born to restore what we had broken
  - i. Restore our relationship with God through the forgiveness of our sins and take away the fear of death
  - ii. And He would do that through His own sacrificial death on the cross by which He endured the punishment we deserved for our sin.
  - iii. That's why God became human in Jesus so that He could sacrifice Himself for us
  - iv. And when He rose on that first Easter morning He had defeated death and now gives that victory to all who believe in Him
- d. That is His gift that brings peace because no matter what happens, good or ill in this life, our eternal life in heaven is guaranteed.
  - i. Listen to Paul in the book of Romans, **“For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** (Rom 8:38-39)
  - ii. That means no economic upheaval, social unrest or even Covid can take away the peace that is yours through Christ our Lord
  - iii. Merry Christmas and may you receive the gift of God's peace that passes all understanding through Christ our Lord, amen.