

The Wonderful, Mighty, and Everlasting Prince of Peace

Isaiah 9:1-7

KV 9:6b

“And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.”

What is the first thing you think of when I say the word “peace?” For many people, peace means the absence of conflict or wars. For some, it might mean dominating your inner turmoil and finding your true self, sort of like what Buddhist monks or your yoga friends strive for. For others in our church, peace might be a feeling you get when you realize that winter break starts tomorrow or when you sit down to look at nature in the middle of a beautiful park. However, I’m here to tell you that this peace is something more. True peace is the Wonderful, Mighty, and Everlasting Prince of Peace. Last Sunday, we studied about the hope that our Prince brings. This week, we will continue to build on the theme of “The Light of Christ in a Broken World” and learn about the true peace that only our King Jesus can give in this broken world. We will learn that only He can give true rest, true restoration and a true relationship with our Father God. Let’s prepare our hearts to meet this Prince of Peace. Let’s pray.

I. A light has dawned

Look at verses 1-2. Isaiah, one of the greatest prophets in Israel’s history, spoke this prophecy during the 8th century BC, during a tense time in the kingdom of Judah. Judah was surrounded by the enemies of Northern Israel, Aram, and Assyria and led by corrupt rulers. The people of Judah were lost and were living in the darkness of a broken world. Despite the bleak outlook, Isaiah prophesied that God would bring light to His people. He would send a Messiah, the light of the world, who would banish their gloom and distress and would honor Galilee of the nations. God would honor this promise when a man named Jesus of Nazareth appeared in the hill country of Galilee, preaching the good news about the kingdom of heaven.

In verses 3-5, Isaiah mentions that the result of being in God’s light is joy and enlargement. When we are with God in his light, joy fills our hearts. This joy is not something that we find in ourselves or make up. It is a gift from God, who gives us the power to rejoice in the face of our enemies. With this joy, we are able to confront this dark world as Gideon and the 300 men did when they faced off against the Midianite empire. We know this joy because someone greater than Gideon was born in an animal feeding bin to bring redemption from the power of darkness and death. We see a preview of this redemption in verse 5 when we see how the warriors’ boots and garments rolled in blood are used as fuel for the fire, referring to complete victory in battle. In God’s kingdom, the yoke of oppression and sin are shattered and everything is made new.

II. Prince of Peace

Let’s read verse 6-7 all together (NIV). *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from*

that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. So far, Isaiah has been building up his narrative until the climax of this prophecy, the arrival of the Messiah. Light heralds joy, which then brings us into a vision of victory and justice and righteousness that comes from God. However, for all of this to actually happen, we need a Messiah who can understand our pain and bondage in the world of darkness. We need a Messiah who can atone for us perfectly.

With Wonderful Counselor, Isaiah characterized a Messiah who was full of wisdom, encouragement and faithfulness. A counselor is more than a friend. He or she is someone in your life who can speak wisdom and help guide you through difficult situations. All of the students who are sitting here with us have at one point in their academic career interacted with a career counselor, who would recommend to add or drop this class or that. Most of us not in school have a person who they can call on to receive practical advice or encouragement. When Jesus was on this earth, He gave counsel on how to live a beautiful life of love and sacrifice that stood in direct contrast with the way of the world.

John 1:1 shows us who the Mighty God is. It says that in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He is the Logos, the Son of the Triune God, who has no beginning and no end. Did you know that there are more stars in the sky than the grains of sand in all the beaches of the Earth? Did you know that there are more than 37 trillion cells in the human body? Light travels at a speed of 670 million miles per hour but did you know it takes 93 billion years for light to travel at top speed across the entire universe? The Mighty God who created all of this is the only one who can truly protect and defend us.

When Jesus was referred to as Everlasting Father he was acknowledged as the source and author of all eternity, as the Creator Himself. Jesus made a profound statement about his place in the Trinity in John 10:29-30. He told his disciples that “My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.” We need Jesus, our Everlasting Father, especially in a world full of broken families. We need a true father who can be with us through the thick and thin, through the ups and downs of this life. Only Jesus can fix that broken corner in our hearts which desperately longs for a true father.

Now we are getting to the good part. Prince of Peace is a title that encapsulates all the titles that come before it. As I was studying this passage, I realized that it is only when there is infinite wisdom (Wonderful Counselor), omnipotence (Mighty God), and eternity (Everlasting Father) that you can get true, lasting and infinite peace. Peace is the end product of all of those things. It is the fruit of the Holy Spirit and the result of wrong made right, of injustices and brokenness fixed. It is God Himself. Ultimately, peace means true rest through the Lord of the Sabbath, true restoration through justice and righteousness and a true relationship with God that results in *joy*. Let’s go over each of these points one by one.

First, *peace means true rest through the Lord of the Sabbath*. Jesus told us in Matthew 11:28, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” We need rest because every day we are locked in a spiritual fight with our sinful selves and with forces that are in active opposition against God. Rest comes from dwelling in God’s presence and is a state of reorientation, of turning our hearts and minds from our selfish selves to Him. The famous preacher Billy Graham once said, “The rest that Christ

gives is not a piece of negation. It is founded upon something positive – Christ himself. He said, ‘Come unto me and I will give you rest.’ There’s no rest in any other direction.” Christ himself is the rest on which we can build our lives. One way we engage in this opportunity to enter God’s rest is by spending time with Him and learning His ways. We call this the Sabbath. As we engage in our daily Sabbath, we must know that there is no rest in any other direction.

Second, *peace means true restoration through justice and righteousness*. The great writer CS Lewis once said that we are like houses and when we meet God, He comes in to rebuild the house. At the time, we do not understand what God is doing and it hurts when He demolishes the parts of us that are tainted by sin. But in the end, we are restored and remade in God’s image. Our ancestor Adam made the decision for all of us when he decided to reject God’s love. However, the second Adam, our Prince of Peace, came to restore us and make things right in this crooked and unjust world. We see this promise in verse 7. Through the unending government of the Son of David, we are promised justice and righteousness, the fruit of this peace. We are promised that God will accomplish this no matter what. Nothing will stop him from bringing about the restoration of justice and righteousness.

Finally, *peace means having a true relationship with God*. It doesn’t take much to see that we live in a seriously messed up world, a world that has decided to reject a true relationship with its Creator. After the Fall, we decided to seek peace by filling ourselves with the distorted peace left behind by sin. We still see these false peaces today. Many people try to find peace through religion but they end up getting a conditional peace, achieved only by following a set of rules like the Five Pillars of Islam or the Eight Fold Path of Buddhism. In the secular world, people think they will have peace when their political party wins or when they scroll through the mindless algorithms of Youtube or TikTok. Most of us professionals think there will be peace when we get the next promotion or house or car or when we finally retire from our jobs and go on a cruise to the Bahamas. But all of these versions of peace, which are lies from the evil one, are never able to satisfy. This is because true peace comes from having a right relationship with the Prince of Peace and accepting His will for your life.

Many of you know me but most of you probably don’t so I’ll briefly tell my story of how I am coming to walk with the Prince of Peace. I grew up in Chicago and spent my childhood in this church, of which I have only fond memories. In 2012, the Lord called my family to move to the other side of the United States, a place called Portland, Oregon, which was one of the first American cities to hold a naked bicycle parade and legalize psychedelic mushrooms. It is also the home of Voodoo Donuts and the hilarious show *Portlandia*, in case you were wondering. For me, though, it was anything but a home. When we first moved, I felt like I was like a little chick left to survive in a spiritually sick environment. Our church consisted of just four people who were my family members. In the space of our quiet house, we were worshipping God earnestly but at the end of the day, I was lonely. In the midst of this loneliness, however, the Prince of Peace walked with me and gave me His living word. I did not know it at the time but my King Jesus was walking with me. He counseled me when I was being bullied during my middle school years. He was my Mighty God when our family struggled to keep the faith in secular Portland. This everlasting Prince of Peace comforted me through his word and encouraged me through godly parents and close friends. During this period of my life, I got glimpses of this Prince of Peace.

In 2020, I had a crisis of faith. After years of struggling with the problem of evil and many other questions, I decided to walk away from Christianity. In my mind was the all consuming question: how can the Prince of Peace stand by and do nothing in a world that does not have peace? I explored different religions and beliefs and all the versions of peace that the world offered me. But at the end of the day, I was still left walking in darkness. I saw and felt for myself firsthand the gaping pit of fear that consumes those who are not walking in the light. Over time, a series of revelations from God allowed me to realize that the evil on this earth was entirely self-inflicted by a world opposed to true peace. Slowly but surely, the Prince of Peace drew me back to Him and it was by His grace that He stopped me from wandering for many more years. As He lay hanging on that old rugged cross, my Prince offered His broken body and blood as the answer to my question. After a long struggle, I surrendered to His will and accepted him as my true peace. When I did so, He sent me the next best thing beside Himself: my beautiful wife, Gloria.

I confess that I struggle at times to walk with the Prince of Peace. As someone who has grown up in the church, I struggle with the problem of knowing a lot *of* Jesus but not *about* him. At times, I feel that I am coming to know him and can see his face clearly. Other times, I feel very far away from the Prince of Peace when I am isolated in my shame and sin. Six months ago, I began to suffer from uncontrollable jealousy and envy towards a fellow medical student friend who was a Christian. I came to envy this brother because he was taller, more handsome, smarter, more athletic, and more faithful to the word than me. On top of this, the fact that he was a white American made me cognizant of how inferior I felt as a minority and Asian American. Every waking moment, I would unconsciously compare myself with this person until I thought that I was going crazy. At one point, I thought I needed to go see a psychiatrist and get screened for an obsessive disorder. During moments of desperate prayer, I cried out to the Prince of Peace and asked for freedom from this spiritual torment. To be fair, I didn't experience anything that would qualify as a life changing event in an UBF testimony. However, what I did experience was a gentle wind and a whisper of assurance that the Prince of Peace was walking with me. Through this struggle, Jesus helped me to see the light of life and the need for true peace, the peace that fills and expands and makes me whole. The Prince of Peace still loved me despite my inner Pharisee nature, my brokenness, and self-righteousness. In this storm of life, my King gave me true peace. He gave me Himself.

Christmas season is approaching. After this message, I hope that you have come to know what peace really means. Peace means that the Messiah came as the Wonderful, Mighty, and Everlasting Prince of Unending, Joyful, and Just Peace. It means that the King of Kings came as a son, as a child so that we can truly experience restoration and hope and love and joy. When the Son of God defeated death, the first words he spoke to his fearful disciples in a crowded room were "Peace be with you." With his arrival, death, and resurrection, my King brought the peace that makes us whole again. With this peace, He showed us a preview of the new heavens and the new earth. He showed us a peace that gives us true rest, true restoration and a true relationship with God. So how should we act? I think the answer lies in accepting the person who is described in our key verse, the second half of verse 6. "*And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.*" In the end, it is only when you and I walk with this Prince of Peace that we are made whole in a broken world. It is only when you and I accept the Wonderful, Mighty, and Everlasting Prince of Peace in our hearts, that we can finally experience Sabbath rest and be found in Him, forever changed. Amen.