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**The Second Sunday of Advent - Peace**

**By Pastor Chris Cleary**

**Luke Chapter 2 verses 8 to 20**

1. **Introduction**

What a wonderful account of such an **amazing event!**

Last week in **Isaiah** we explored Isaiah’s prophecy on the **future** birth of a child - **“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.”**

**We focused on Hope and Isaiah’s hope for God’s people in the coming of a saviour - the Messiah. While this morning we are going to focus on Peace, and Jesus as the Prince of Peace.**

Whilst reflecting upon this morning’s passage, I was struck by **verse 15, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened.”** I have this picture of the shepherds discussing what they had seen and heard, and determining that they would go and see this baby - **the Messiah.**

**They made a positive decision - they understood that the announcement the Angels had made was a big deal and required some action!**

It reminded me of when a child is extremely excited for you to **‘come and see’** something?

* Perhaps they have been doing craft - have made something - and they want you to ‘**come and see’** it.
* Maybe they have found something they find unusual and they want you to ‘**come and see’** share this new discovery.
* Or, perhaps it’s Christmas morning and they want you to ‘**come and see’** all of the presents under the tree!

**Well, this morning I invite you to ‘Come and see’ - ‘Come and see’ the Messiah - ‘Come and see’ The Prince of Peace.**

1. **The Prince of Peace - What does this really mean?**

Before we explore this morning’s passage, let’s take a look at **Christ as The Prince of Peace,** and just what is meant by **Peace** in this particular title.

Most people think of peace as ‘**a** **state of harmony in the absence of**[**hostility**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hostility)**and**[**violence**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Violence)**’.**

In a [societal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Societal) sense, people more often think of peace as ‘**a lack of conflict (perhaps even war)’,** or simply ‘**a time of quiet, free from noise with a chance to reflect and think’.**

However, the **Peace** we are talking about here is much, much deeper than what is usually thought of when considering the meaning of the word.

**Here, Peace is a hope and reassurance that goes way beyond what a fallen world can offer.**

**Philippians Chapter 4 verse 7** says this about Christ’s peace, **“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”**

His peace **engulfs** our very being; it is **guaranteed;** it is **permanent and eternal.**

**So, this morning, ‘Come and see’ - let’s meet The Prince of Peace.**

1. **Luke Chapter 2 verses 8 to 20 - The incredible Event**

In this early chapter of **Luke’s Gospel** we find Joseph and Mary in Bethlehem having travelled from Nazareth to register for Caesar Augustus’ census. And what a journey this would have been! **A journey, of around 90 plus miles, which would have taken them several days to complete. It was a significant and challenging journey** for the couple, especially considering Mary's advanced pregnancy.

And now, the baby **has** been born – and as with the birth of most babies – **an announcement was made!**

**To family and friends? To prominent religious figures? To people making the same journey as Mary and Joseph? NO!**

**It is announced to an unknown group of shepherds; humble people, lowly people, people who were often looked down upon and even ridiculed by others in society.**

And the Angel of the Lord speaks clearly and boldly to the shepherds – saying **‘Come and see’ - the Messiah - The Prince of Peace.**

**So the shepherds went to see! But what did they see?**

**Well of course they saw a baby! But once they’d seen - what did they do?**

**Well, verses 17 to 20 tells us very clearly.**

1. **They “spread the word of what they had been told about the baby.”**
2. **They went back to their flocks “glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen.”**

**All of this because of a baby? What an amazing response!**

**But why?**

Because God had **revealed** to them **amazing things about this baby -** things that declared this baby was **special,** and while all babies are special - to their parents, family and friends - **this baby was special to every person on earth - in that time, before that time and in the future beyond that time!**

**So, on thinking about all of this I feel compelled to speak to you this morning about 3 points:**

1. **The “gift” of Jesus**
2. **The “greatness” of Jesus**
3. **The “glory” of Jesus**

**The 3 Points**

1. **So, *‘Come and see’* *the* *gift* *of Jesus*.**

The angel wasn’t there to harm them. The angel was there to tell them something significant. The angel was there to tell them about **the greatest gift** the world would ever receive.

Take a look at **verse 10 – “But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.”**

We see in **verse 10** this **proclamation of the gift.**

It’s quite something that God chose first to reveal Jesus birth to a group of unknown shepherds.

Shepherds were lowly people, and not very well thought of within their culture. They were often dirty, ceremonially unclean, and usually not respected by others within the community.

**Yet, good news of great joy was even for shepherds.**

This **gift** is available to **all** **people**. Every person, every family, every tribe, every nation, every ethnicity, every economic class, every age, every man, every woman, every child, every region, every language, every position, every talent, every lack of talent, every generous person, and every greedy person. **He is for all people!**

**So, everyone - ‘come and see’. ‘Come and see’ the gift of Jesus.**

**Have you seen Jesus for the gift that He is? A gift we have done nothing to deserve.**

1. **So, *‘Come and see’* *the greatness* of *Jesus.***

The shepherds hear about how great this child is.

First, the angel says, **“Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.”** The greatness of Jesus!

However, God is not done showing the greatness of Jesus with just this one angel. Look at **verses 13 and 14 - “Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.”**

In this unroyal setting, with the humble birth of a baby, in front of lowly shepherds, **God vividly shows them, and us, the greatness of His Son!**

**Peace on earth came, and it came in a great way.**

**Have you seen the greatness of Jesus? Have you received the peace that only He can give?**

1. **So, *‘Come and see’* *the glory* of *Jesus.***

We’ve already heard about the multitude of the heavenly host present before the shepherds. There were perhaps thousands of angels present, we don’t know.

**What a magnificent sight this must have been.**

Yet, this was not enough for the shepherds. **They wanted to actually see the baby with their own eyes. They wanted to see Jesus!**

Take a look at **verse 15** **– “When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”**

They wanted to ‘**GO’** and ‘**SEE’!**

**After the shepherds came and saw, they reported the glories of Jesus to others!**

**Isn’t this what all of us should do after we experience Jesus?**

And all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them!

**The glories of God were on full display through the baby, Jesus Christ.**

**They found the Prince of Peace. They experienced “the peace of God, which transcends all understanding”; a hope and reassurance that goes way beyond what a fallen world can offer.**

In the middle of a cold night they sought Him out, and the impact of their encounter with Jesus was **life changing.**

They returned to their flocks, the cold and hard life they led, still as **‘an** **unknown group of shepherds; humble people, lowly people, people who were often looked down upon and even ridiculed by others in society’, but different – and why?**

**Because they had found their Saviour, the Prince of Peace,** and His Peace had filled their very being.

**That regardless of the hardships of their life they** **couldn’t help but glorify and praise God and tell others about their experience.**

1. **Conclusion**

**Not** **just** a baby!

**Not just** a baby - but a child that **would grow in to a man** - who **would give His life for humanity!**

This is **the Son of God - God Himself!**

**He is the greatest gift that we, and the world, has ever had!**

**He is worthy of all glory and all praise!**

**So, ‘Come and see’:**

1. **The gift of Jesus**
2. **The greatness of Jesus**
3. **The glory of Jesus**

**Have you found that perfect Peace in Him? - “the peace of God, which transcends all understanding.”**

If so, who have you told about **your experience of a life with Jesus?**

**This Christmastime,** why not invite others **to ‘Come and see’ - the Prince of Peace.**

**And all the people said - Amen.**