



“Peace According to Luke-Acts”

Theme: Advent- Peace by Piece

Scriptures: This week’s meditation moments are a bit different. As a church, we will be focusing on peace throughout this Advent season and no gospel author talks about peace as much as Luke. So naturally, we will be using Luke-Acts to study biblical peace. Each day you will read a few scriptures about peace and by the end of the week, you will have read every mention of peace within Luke-Acts! Look at you, soon-to-be peace expert.

Weekly Memory Verse: “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth *peace* among those whom he favors!” Luke 2:14

Family Activity for the Week: The Prince of Peace is coming! Have you shared His joy and love with others? This Advent Season, the weeks leading up to Christ’s birth, take time to share the Good News with others! One of my favorite Christmas songs has always been The Little Drummer Boy (for KING & COUNTRY has an awesome version). Maybe I love this song because I grew up playing the drums, but the line “Then He smiled at me” has always brought tears to my eyes. Have you seen a baby smile at you? It’s pure joy, love, and peace all rolled into one! But then, to have Jesus who is fully man and fully God smile at you as you have brought to Him all you have to offer? Oooohh, what feelings this would stir within all of our hearts! Get out your pots and pans, your wooden and metal spoons, whatever would be great to beat, and then have a blast beating your “drums”, smiling, laughing, and remember that Jesus loves you so fully there is no place you can go without Him being right there beside you!

Monday, November 30 – Read Luke 1:79, Luke 2:14, Luke 2:29

- ▲ Luke 1:79- This placement of peace by Luke was no accident. Remember, the gospel authors are great writers! They use foreshadowing and parallelism amongst other writing techniques to help place emphasis where emphasis is due. Luke 1 is the grand introduction of the incarnation. Right before the birth of Jesus, Zechariah is prophesying about what is about to happen and his prophecy ends with a word that should ring in our hearts: peace. Peace is coming! Peace has come. Peace will come again.
- ▲ Luke 2:14- Again, this placement of peace by Luke was intentional. Remember in 1:79 when peace was used as a grand introduction to Jesus? Well in this verse, Jesus has just come. Take a moment to admire the beauty of Luke’s writing: literarily speaking, peace engulfs the birth of Jesus. Luke wants you to know that the coming of Jesus was the coming of peace. They are interchangeable. There is no peace outside of Jesus Christ. Peace is the result of God’s favor extended to us through the incarnation.
- ▲ Luke 2:29- Gosh, this verse is so beautiful. This is the fulfillment of God’s promise to Simeon in a verse. He was promised that he wouldn’t die until he saw the Messiah. When Simeon saw Jesus, he picked him up and sang aloud! Simeon then knew he could die in peace because he held peace in his arms.

(Message Notes and Meditation Moments for November 21-22, 2020 – For more, go to www.summitdurango.org)

Notice in verse 30 how Luke links peace and salvation tightly together. To Luke, knowing Jesus means knowing peace which means knowing salvation. This is the process.

Prayer: *Dear Jesus, thank you for coming to earth to redeem me. Thank you for extending the opportunity for relationship with you that I may come to know eternal peace. Also, thank you for the gift of salvation given to me through your unfathomable love. Amen.*

Tuesday, December 1 – Read Luke 7:50, Luke 8:48

- ▲ Luke 7:50- This verse is found within the classic story of the woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. We know her sins were many, but she was still saved because her love was great. Jesus held her up high as an example to be followed. Talk about a humbling moment for the disciples. Notice what Luke did here. He connected forgiveness -> love -> faith -> salvation -> peace. We like to think of all these concepts as stand alone but not Luke. We must forgive. We must love. We must be faithful. If not, we will not know the salvation and peace found only in Jesus Christ. Also note that Jesus empowered and uplifted women. Jesus did not join in communal belittlement or shaming of women. Watch out for who you inherently uphold due to systematic patterns.
- ▲ Luke 8:48- This comes from the story of the hemorrhaging woman. She suffered for 12 years, and then decided enough was enough. As word spread through her village that Jesus was a healer, she felt hope. She went where Jesus was and grabbed onto his robe, desperate to experience the great Healer. The audacity of this woman! What's even more breathtaking is Jesus' response. He asks her to show herself. When she does, Jesus publicly honors her. He tells her that her big faith will propel her into a life of peace and wholeness. Can you imagine this story unfolding today? That woman would probably get called "crazy" and "irrationally emotional" as she desperately elbowed her way to Jesus. These terms are often used to keep women in line with a behavioral pattern expected by society. But the response of Jesus to this woman is an invitation to us all: be free. Be free to recklessly pursue Jesus- the great healer. Passionately pursue peace. Wholeheartedly grab onto wholeness. Jesus sees and honors your great faith. Daughter, great is your reward.

Prayer: *Dear Jesus, thank you for teaching me what it means to uplift the oppressed and the afflicted. You have pursued me, no matter my sin, passionately. Help me honor my neighbors, especially those who have been systematically dishonored. Forgive me, purify me, and redeem me. Amen.*

Wednesday, December 2 – Read Luke 10:5, Luke 10:6 (2), Luke 12:51

- ▲ Luke 10:5- Here Jesus is instructing people on what it means to live on mission. This is the story of some of our earliest missionaries in a sense. Where is Jesus sending them exactly? To their local, surrounding towns. Being a missionary has never required traveling abroad. They are being sent out to declare peace to all people. More than that, Jesus indicates that they should be first to extend peace to others. That is, to acknowledge the presence of God in the midst. These people are to be the pursuers and the tone-setters. Being on mission involves a God-driven assertiveness and peace to all people is the reward!
 - ▲ Luke 10:6 (2)- Continuing on from verse 5, what happens when someone rejects your approach and extension of peace? Jesus says not to worry about it. Because your very extension of peace to your neighbor indicates that peace is in you. No person can steal that. Their rejection just means that peace isn't in them. This is heartbreaking though, because a rejection of communal peace is a rejection of Jesus and ultimately salvation. Remember that peace according to Jesus is inextricably tied to justice. So communal peace does NOT mean making nice with injustice and sin. Reject oppression. Reject injustice. Reject sin. In doing so, you are participating in the ushering in of peace for all people which was and remains the desire of God's heart.
 - ▲ Luke 12:51- This verse is a tough one, but it's meaning is clear. Jesus is peace. So those who reject Jesus, reject peace. This rejection will naturally bring about division amongst people- even families. Don't take
- (Message Notes and Meditation Moments for October 31-November 1, 2020 – For more, go to www.summitdurango.org)

this personal. Division and strife are the results of free will. We get the freedom to choose what we want. The incarnation is an invitation- choose peace just as Jesus chooses you! More than that, choose peace for everyone. Are there any areas of your life where you benefit off the oppression of someone else? Consider habits such as buying discounted items at the high cost of slave-like working conditions for women and children in factories abroad. We have a duty as Christians to resist oppression that benefits us because that is a violation of God's desire of peace for everybody.

Prayer: *Dear Jesus, help me pursue others with Your message of peace as if every day of my life were a mission to do so. Empower me to pursue peace within myself and with all my neighbors. I know that whatever I do for the least of these, I do directly for You. Amen.*

Thursday, December 3 – Read Luke 14:32, Luke 19:38, Luke 19:42, Luke 24:36

- ▲ Luke 14:32- This verse comes from a section of scripture that is bad news for the wealthy because peace does have a cost- all your worldly possessions. While this isn't necessarily a call to sell all you own, if you have found yourself very comfortable on this earth then you will struggle to pursue a relationship with Jesus that is based on life beyond this earth. Getting comfortable in a place in which you are just passing through is dangerous. Our prized possession must be Jesus or else we will not know peace.
- ▲ Luke 19:38- Here, Jesus is riding into Jerusalem on a colt. Disciples of Jesus are singing out and proclaiming that Jesus isn't just peace on earth, he is peace in heaven too. The incarnation was the ushering in of cosmic peace! That's big time. Isn't there something beautiful about not even heaven knowing peace until we were redeemed? The whole universe conspired for us. Hallelujah! Some of the Pharisees watching this occur asked Jesus to tell his disciples to shut up and Jesus essentially says, "Okay, but then the rocks will cry out." Even the rocks were in line to celebrate our redemption!
- ▲ Luke 19:42- This verse is a call to all Christians. If we claim to know and love Jesus but cannot put in the effort to lay aside the bias and oppression that lives in us, we will be blind to peace. According to Luke's understanding, this means we also miss out on salvation- ouch! This is exactly what happened to God's beloved Jerusalem. They grew too accustomed to how things were "supposed" to be that they fought against the new thing God was doing through Jesus. God is actively at work redeeming our world today, too. What do you find yourself fighting against? Could it actually be God's redemption at work that you are resisting?
- ▲ Luke 24:36- This verse is powerful because of its context. Jesus is appearing to his disciples for the first time after his death and resurrection. The disciples are stressed and fearful and anxiety ridden. Jesus' greeting to them is not simply customarily correct. He is commanding them to lay aside their anxiety and fear in order to believe. Don't be afraid. Don't doubt. Christ died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again. Believer, be at peace.

Prayer: *Dear Jesus, purify every corner of my heart. Help me fill my cup with peace given to me only by You. I lay down my fear and doubts before you. I choose to believe! Amen.*

Friday, December 4 – Read Acts 9:31, Acts 10:36, Acts 15:33

- ▲ Acts 9:31- Acts is a book in which we see the gospel grow some legs. Followers of Jesus begin to form worshipping communities which we now call the church. This scripture tells us that peace is an essential building block of a healthy church; and in this case the fruit of peace within the context of a congregation is growing numbers.
- ▲ Acts 10:36- Peace for all can only come through Jesus Christ. We hear this all the time today, but Luke proclaiming this was actually an act of resistance. Augustus was considered lord and savior during that time period. So Luke is posing a challenge and placing himself in danger by denouncing Augustus' lordship and proclaiming Jesus'. He's saying Jesus is Lord and he/she whom governs is not. Today that would sound like: Jesus is Lord and our president is not.

(Message Notes and Meditation Moments for October 31-November 1, 2020 – For more, go to www.summitdurango.org)

- ▲ Acts 15:33- Here, the gospel is reaching its gentile audience- just as Jesus intended! Yay. When listeners were “sent in peace” it means more than saying goodbye with well wishes; it means they sent listeners off more whole, more at peace, and more complete than they were when they came. This is the meaning and fulfillment of shalom.

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, thank you for the gift of the church. Help me release anything I think I have control over and remember that you are Lord of my entire life. With You, I am complete and at peace. Amen.*

Saturday, December 5 – Read Acts 16:36, Acts 24:2

- ▲ Acts 16:36- Peace is used falsely here and Paul won’t have it. Paul, amongst others, had experienced unjust oppression via unlawful imprisonment. The Roman magistrates who abused Paul’s humanity and freedom tried to passively dismiss Paul’s experience by letting him quietly go through a third party to which Paul responds, “No. They need to come speak to me to my face and own up to their sin.” While this could be seen as a mode of conflict resolution, Paul is not trying to make nice with the Roman magistrates. In fact, he is being deliberately argumentative and confrontational. He was holding them accountable to what was just no matter how uncomfortable or dangerous. This passage is a warning: beware those who use the word “peace” to cover up cowardice. If peace is stolen from any of us, it’s stolen from all of us.
- ▲ Acts 24:2- Peace is used falsely again here. Peace is not the absence of that which annoys you- it’s the presence of Jesus. Notice how when peace is abused in a story, violence and the abuse of God and/or God’s people follows. May the peace found only in Jesus Christ rule our hearts and our minds to the glory of God and restoration of the world.

Prayer: *Dear Jesus, help me see through misused peace. I know that peace can only be found in You. Allow peace to rule my heart and my life now and forever. Amen.*