

Advent 2022: Peace – Zechariah 9:9-10

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[0 : 00] Good morning, church. One of the wonderful things is that we have already sang much of my sermon. We have already read much of my sermon.

! When trying to find a definition for peace, I noticed that the majority of dictionary mentions that it is an absence of conflict or freedom from disturbance.

And this is true, but as I was reading the scriptures, peace seemed to be more than just an absence of conflict. And I love how a footnote in the ESV Study Bible puts it.

It says that the expression of peace had a much richer connotation. It goes on to say that the English word does not convey, or the English word conveys merely just like an absence of peace, but in the Hebrew, it actually displayed a positive notion of blessing, of joy.

And I think that this actually captures the idea of peace as seen in the Bible. Not just an absence of conflict or anxiety, but a positive blessing.

[1 : 33] And so there's also different aspects of peace. There is an objective external peace, such as peace between nations, peace in relationships, and peace between God and man. And that there is also an internal state of the heart that is at peace as well.

It is a feeling of rest and of well-being in the soul. In our text today from Zechariah chapter 9, verses 9 through 10, so hopefully you've already found it, it will touch on these aspects of peace, but we will primarily focus on peace between God and man and internal peace.

For you cannot have true internal peace of the soul without first having peace with God. But why do we even need peace with God?

And this very question actually drives us back to the beginning, when God created the world and placed Adam and Eve in a beautiful garden. And in that garden, God walked with them and had perfect fellowship with them.

There was full satisfaction, joy, and delight. There was peace between God and man, peace between Adam and Eve as husband and wife, and peace on all the earth.

[2 : 52] There was no death, no painful labor, no shame or conflict. As the Bible says, it was very good.

But when Satan deceived Adam and Eve, they sinned against God by partaking of the forbidden fruit and broke the perfect peace. There was no longer joy in the presence of God, but guilt, shame, and fear.

Adam and Eve no longer had perfect harmony in their relationship with one another. But they experienced for the first time shame, mistrust, blame shifting, and disunity.

Perfect peace was destroyed, and the relationship between God and man was shattered because of sin. Sin is the venom that kills peace.

When man chose death over life, sin would forever inhabit every human to be born into the world minus one. The seed of the woman who would crush the head of the serpent, as foreshadowed in Genesis 3.15.

[4 : 07] Until then, sin would reign, not peace. We see this as the Old Testament narrative unfolds. We do not read stories of peace, but stories of conflict.

We see Israel's unfaithfulness in the midst of their faithful God. And God, through his covenant, showed Israel how they might have peace in their community and with God, if they would be careful to obey all that he has commanded.

But as we see over and over again, sin reigned in their hearts, and they were unable to keep God's good commands. Since the seed of sin was planted in all human hearts, the fruit it bore was not peace, but conflict, pain, guilt, and enmity.

We can feel their hearts cry out, When will there be a Redeemer, a true King who will bring peace? And this leads up to the context of our passage today.

Israel was sent into Babylon as captives because of their sin against God and against one another by breaking his commands. God then mercifully brings them out of captivity and directs the king of Persia to allow Israel to rebuild the temple.

[5 : 29] The construction begins, but it is not at all like the old temple. And opposition arose that stopped the building of the temple for 15 years after the foundation had already been laid.

And in the middle of this, there is a lot of pain and conflict and strife and difficulty. And you can just hear the question launch forth, When will the Edenic peace be restored again?

Amen. And this is when the Lord sends the prophet Zechariah to encourage the people to press on in the work. He encourages them by the good promises of the Lord that will one day come to pass. One of these promises is of a coming righteous king. So let us put ourselves in their shoes as we read today's passage from Zechariah chapter 9 verses 9 through 10.

Verse 9 starts off saying, Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, your king is coming to you.

[6 : 45] Righteous and having salvation is he. Humble and mounted on a donkey. On a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem.

And the battle bow shall be cut off and he shall speak peace to the nations. His rule shall be from sea to sea, from the river to the ends of the earth.

I like to call this a Palm Sunday Christmas passage that teaches us much about God's plan to bring peace to his people.

I will break up the text into two sections. First, rejoice for Christ came to bring peace. And second, rejoice for Christ will come to establish peace.

So to start off, rejoice for Christ came to bring peace. Our passage starts off by calling the people of God to rejoice and shout aloud.

[7 : 52] Then he goes on to tell us of the object of their rejoicing. That is the object of their joy. He says, behold, your king is coming to you.

Here is a promise of a king who is coming. And this isn't the first prophecy either of the coming king. Israel knew that he was coming and they were waiting for him.

A king like David, but without sin. A seed of the woman who would crush the head of the serpent and bring peace. But as a kid song from Shilin says, Adam wasn't good enough.

Noah wasn't good enough. Abram wasn't good enough. And then he goes on through a list mentioning Isaac and Jacob and Joseph and Moses and Joshua, Samuel, David, Daniel, Jonah. They weren't good enough. And why were they not good enough? Because none of them were perfectly righteous. All of them had sin.

[8 : 58] And as I said, sin is the venom that kills peace. They weren't good enough. But as Shilin goes on to say in his song, it's only Jesus.

It truly is only Jesus. And this leads up to the next lines in Zechariah 9, chapter 9, verse 9, which talks about the character and the mission of this king.

It says, behold, your king is coming to you righteous and having salvation is he humble and mounted on a donkey on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

This verse shows us that the king is righteous and humble and bring salvation and that this salvation will result in peace. Christ lived a perfect life in obedience to God.

One scene that illustrates this is when Jesus was in the wilderness being tempted by Satan. Jesus did not sin, though he was tempted in the very same ways that Adam and Eve were tempted.

[10 : 06] He resisted the devil by submitting to God's word. He was perfectly righteous. And thus, he was actually able to bring salvation.

We know that under the old covenant, Israel had to sacrifice a perfect and spotless lamb to atone for their sin. Instead of God's wrath falling upon Israel, it would fall on a substitute in their place on an innocent lamb.

This system, though, did not sever the root and power of sin in the heart of man. It did, however, foreshadow the truly perfect lamb.

Zachariah's prophecy begins with, behold, the king who is coming to you. And John the Baptist, looking directly at this king, proclaims, behold, the lamb who takes away the sin of the world.

How did he take away the sin of the world? He died as a perfect substitute in our place. By taking the full wrath of God that you and I deserved.

[11:20] Since Christ was perfect and truly God, the shedding of his blood was perfect and effective to atone for our sin. Brothers and sisters, this is called penal substitutionary atonement.

Since he was perfectly righteous, he was able to bring salvation so that there is salvation and no one else. For there is no other name given among men under heaven in which we might be saved. Brothers and sisters, you are not good enough. You cannot save yourself. It is truly only Jesus. And this is great cause for abundant joy. So next from the passage, we see that the king is humble. The king, this king, Jesus, did not come as the Jews expected.

They expected an extremely powerful and strong ruler. A Messiah who would overthrow the Roman Empire by force and establish this kingdom on earth. But no, the one who made the earth, the one who gave life and breath to all men, came to the earth as a little human baby born in a dirty stable.

[12:44] Philippians 2, 5 through 8, as we read before the Lord's suppers, says, have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.

But he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant. Being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

And I love how a modern Christian hymn puts it when it says, how low was our Redeemer brought, the king who held the stars, lay helpless in a maiden's arms and pressed against her heart.

While sheep and cattle raised their voice, the babe could speak no words. The ever-flowing spring of joy had come to share our thirst.

This is one of the beautiful things about the Christmas story. Jesus came taking on human flesh. He was Emmanuel, God with us.

[13:59] And why is this so significant? Because this humble king came to us. In undeserving, unclean, and unholy people.

And invited us to come to him. He says, come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me. For I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Church, are you weak and burdened? Then come to him. Are you anxious about the weight of responsibility at your job, at your school, in your family?

Come to him. Are you stressed out about finances, about the future, about marriage or your singleness, about your kids? Then come to him.

[15:03] Are you working hard to try to earn your salvation by being just good enough to weigh out your bad deeds? Stop. Stop. You can't.

Stop and come to him. He is humble and gentle and lowly. And when he says, I will give you rest, this is another way of him saying, I will give you peace.

This leads me to the next point. Christ came as our peacemaker. The text says that the king is humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Now, you see, kings during the time of war did not ride on donkeys. They rode on war horses. So the very fact that the king is coming on a donkey signifies that he is coming to bring peace.

Let's read the account of the triumphal entry when Jesus, in a very tangible way, fulfills the prophecy of Zechariah in Luke 19. And we're going to start in verse 35 through 42.

[16:07] So if you want to keep your hand in Zechariah and flip there, you're more than welcome. Luke chapter 19. And we're going to start in verse 35. It says, And they brought it, that is a donkey, to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it.

And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. And as he was drawing near, already on the way down the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord.

Peace in heaven and glory in the highest. And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, Teacher, rebuke your disciples. He answered, I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.

And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace.

But now they are hidden from your eyes. This passage shows us in the crowd's proclamation of peace in heaven and glory in the highest that his coming was to bring peace.

[17 : 45] Not only that, Jesus said that the things that truly make for peace are hidden from your eyes. The following verses in this passage actually foretell of coming destruction.

What he is referencing was the peace he would bring through his death and resurrection was hidden from their eyes. For many, though, the light of what was hidden was about to dawn.

But one may say, Did Jesus not tell us in Matthew 10, 34, Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? I did not come to bring peace but a sword.

And what I would say is, Yes, you are correct. In Jesus's first advent, he did not come to establish peace on earth. This will come in his second advent, as we will see in verse 10 of Zechariah 9.

So what kind of peace did he bring? He came to bring peace between God and man. Remember how we mentioned earlier that the peace was broken because of sin?

[18 : 48] And sin is the venom that kills peace? So Jesus came ultimately to bring peace by taking care of our sin against the holy God.

And you know that you are a sinful person and completely undeserving of the love and mercy of God. I heard a preacher say this one time, and I think it's really helpful to help us realize, Yeah, we know that we're sinful.

He said, For if I were able to take every sinful action you have ever done, and every wicked thought you have ever had, and I were able to put it up on this projector, so that everyone here could see and watch, you would run away ashamed, embarrassed, because you know that you have said things you wouldn't want anyone to hear.

And you have done things that you wouldn't want anyone to see. And you have thought things that you would be embarrassed if somebody knew about. You know that you are sinful.

But more importantly, God knows it all. And he sees it all. You have broken his law.

[20 : 09] And God, being perfectly holy and righteous and good, cannot dwell with you and leave your sin unpunished. You are not at peace with God, but as the Bible describes it, you are an enemy of God.

He must punish your sin. And the only appropriate punishment for your sin against the holy God is an eternity in hell separated from him.

So how does the holy God dwell with sinners and yet still be holy? God punished his only son in your place. You see, Jesus Christ came into the world, born as a human baby, and lived a perfect life in obedience to God.

And as I mentioned earlier, he was truly man and truly God, fully righteous and holy. And on the cross, Jesus took all the wrath of God that you deserved. And he drank the cup of wrath and proclaimed, it is finished.

He suffered and died in your place so that if you believe in him and what he has done on your behalf, you can receive Christ's righteousness and eternal life.

[21 : 20] Christ makes peace between God and man by defeating your sin on the cross. Then on the third day, he rose from the dead, showing that he alone has victory over sin and death.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God, making intercession for his people. So if you have not believed in Christ alone for your salvation, believe in this good news.

You can never do enough to earn the favor of God because you have sinned against a holy God. But you can have peace with God because King Jesus, our peacemaker, came.

And if you have believed in the gospel, then as it says in verse 9 of Zechariah, rejoice. Rejoice that your king came and never stray from the gospel.

Realize that it is because of the gospel that you begin your Christian journey. It is because of the gospel that you endure and you stay the course. And it will be because of the gospel that you get to stand before the throne of God, clothed in white in the righteousness of Christ, giving him the honor and the glory do his name.

[22 : 42] So come to Jesus daily and rest in the peace that he offered and walk in the peace that he gives, knowing that Christ is currently in heaven interceding for you.

This should give us great joy. We know that he will one day come again, not on a donkey, but on a war horse. There will be war, but the end result of that war will be universal peace because Christ

will have the victory.

This leads us to the next section. In the first section, we said, rejoice for Christ came to bring peace. And now we will look at verse 10 of Zechariah chapter 9, which is rejoice for Christ will come to establish peace.

And I use the word establish because it means to set up on a firm or permanent basis. Christ will one day come to establish universal peace in the new heavens and new earth where righteousness will dwell.

So verse 10 from our passage says, I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem and the battle bow shall be cut off and he shall speak peace to the nations.

[24 : 01] His rule shall be from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth. Now in this passage, we see a time when there will be no more war and Christ's rule will be from sea to sea.

There will be peace among all the nations. This is making reference to the final state of things after Jesus' second coming. Consider the vision of the new heaven and new earth that John has in Revelation 21, 1 through 4 when he says, Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth.

For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more. Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore.

[25 : 15] For the former things have passed away. And what a beautiful picture. A new earth full of peace where there is no more crying, mourning, pain, or death.

And why? Because the venom of sin that kills peace will be no more. The nasty head of that ancient serpent will be crushed once and for all.

And the people of God will be fully clothed in the righteousness of God without a trace of sin. Praise the Lord.

I cannot wait for this day. So in Zechariah chapter 9, verse 10, we can see an already but not yet state in this passage.

There is a partial fulfillment of the ceasing of these physical weapons of warfare and the speaking of peace to the nations and his rule being from sea to sea that will one day be fully consummated at Christ's second coming.

[26 : 22] You see, the kingdom of God advances not based on military might from weapons, physical weapons of warfare, but it advances on the proclamation of the gospel.

It advances by the power of God in weak human vessels. Our warfare is no longer physical, but it is spiritual. So in a way, he has cut off the physical instruments of warfare, but war still exists and will exist until Christ returns and the final battle is done.

And in the second part of the verse, it says he shall speak peace to the nations. This is currently happening. How does he speak peace to the nations?

He speaks to the nations through us, his church, as we go out and take the gospel to our neighbors, our coworkers, our cities, our country, and to the far ends of the world to those who have never even heard of how they might have peace with God.

This is why Jesus says in Matthew 28, 18 through 20, all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

[27 : 51] And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. Brothers and sisters, it is through you that Christ is proclaiming peace to the nations.

And the reason that all the nations will be gathered before the throne of God is because someone who knew the gospel proclaimed the gospel to them. And through their proclamation, the Holy Spirit worked in their heart to bring them from death to life.

Then one day, this beautiful scene in Revelation will be fulfilled when John says, after this, I looked and behold a great multitude that no one could number from every nation, from all tribes and people and languages standing before the throne of God and before the Lamb clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands and crying out with a loud voice, Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

Brothers and sisters, Christmas is not about the gifts, the food, the decorations. It's not even about your family. These are wonderful things the Lord has given us, but Christmas is about rejoicing that Jesus Christ came into the world.

And as the angel with a multitude of heavenly hosts proclaimed in the Christmas story, glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace among those with whom he is pleased.

[29 : 31] I would like to leave you this morning with these final applications. One, because Christ came to bring peace, we should rejoice and be glad.

We should continually praise God for the work that Christ has done. Every day, we should delight in the gospel. And this is why, as a church, we sing the gospel, we pray the gospel, we preach the gospel, and together, we delight in the gospel.

Second, because Christ came to bring peace, we should also strive for peace with one another.

This will not be easy, but it is necessary.

It will take forgiving and asking for forgiveness. But in as much as we can, we are called to strive for peace and live peaceably.

Third, and because Christ came to bring peace, we should walk in peace now and not be anxious by praying. Philippians 4, 6 says, Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your request be made known to God and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

[30 : 53] It will not make sense to the world how you can have such peace in the midst of such trials. How can you have such peace at the loss of your job, the loss of a child, or a family member?

How can you have peace with the mistreatment of friends or loved ones, the social isolation and rejection?

How can you have peace in the midst of those? It's because you have peace with God, brother and sister. And guess what? You have access to Him because of that peace.

Therefore, you can cast all your anxieties on Him because He cares for you. And last in this section, and you can walk in peace now by trusting in your good God.

Romans 8, 28 says, And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good. For those who are called according to His purpose, know that if you are a believer, all circumstances, even the most painful and unimaginable ones, God is working together for your good and His glory.

[32 : 21] you can trust in His sovereign hands. John G. Payton, a missionary to a cannibal tribe, after suffering greatly, he said these words that have encouraged me greatly.

He said, Feeling immovably assured that my God and Father was too wise and too loving to err in anything that He does or permits.

I looked up to the Lord and I pressed on and struggled in His work. I love that. Brother and sister, our Father is too wise and too loving to make mistakes.

Therefore, you can walk in peace knowing that He who holds the stars cares for you. And secondly, because Christ will come to establish peace, we should have hope.

We know that this world is broken, that there will not be ultimate peace until Christ returns. But we have much hope and therefore have much peace because we know this world is not our home.

[33 : 37] We are just pilgrims passing through headed to our heavenly home where Christ is, where there will be perfect peace and perfect joy.

We look back to the work that Christ has done, but we also look forward to the work that Christ will do. We long for the day, but while He is still given breath in our lungs, let us press on to accomplish the work that He has laid before us each day.

And this leads me to my last application. because Christ will come to establish peace, we should share this gospel of peace. There is a broken world of people dying each day without having ever heard the gospel of peace.

Maybe no one has ever told them, or maybe the only thing that they have ever heard was a false gospel, a gospel of health and wealth and prosperity, a gospel of self-exaltation.

No matter the case, let's be faithful to share the gospel of peace of how an unrighteous, unholy, and unclean people can be reconciled to a good and holy God.

[35 : 00] Be a faithful witness that Christ may be known not only in our community, but also among the nations. Brothers and sisters, rejoice for Christ came to bring peace and rejoice for Christ will come one day to finally establish peace.

May these truths ring in your heart throughout this Christmas season as you celebrate the advent of our King Jesus. Let's pray. Amen.