

Series: Christmas 2023 –

Title: THE ANGEL’S CANDLE: PEACE FOR YOUR LIFE

Text: Luke 2:9-11; 13-14

Luke 2:9-11; 13-14

⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

FEAR NOT

The Message at Advent

- FEAR NOT to Zechariah Lk. 1:13
- FEAR NOT to Joseph Mt. 1:20
- FEAR NOT to Mary Lk. 1:30
- FEAR NOT to the Shepherd Lk 2:10

The Message throughout the Scriptures

- Abram - Genesis 15:1
- Hagar - Genesis 21:17
- Isaac - Genesis 26:24
- Joseph - Genesis 46:3
- Moses - Numbers 21:34
- Gideon - Judges 6:23
- Elijah - II Kings 1:15
- Hezekiah - II Chronicles 32:7
- Job - Job 5:21
- David - Psalm 27:1 and many Psalms
- Isaiah - Isaiah 41:10
- Jeremiah - Lamentations 3:57
- Daniel - Daniel 10:12
- To The Nation of Israel - Zephaniah 3:16 et al
- Disciple - Mark 6:50
- To the Believers Matthew - 6:25-34

Fear comes upon us all at times

Fear of the unknown

Fear of consequences

Fear in circumstances

- Plato - We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light.
- Charles Stanley - Fear stifles our thinking and actions. It creates indecisiveness that results in stagnation. I have known talented people who procrastinate indefinitely rather than risk failure. Lost opportunities cause erosion of confidence, and the downward spiral begins.

Yet God speaks endlessly to His children to not live in a state of Fear

- We cannot cease experiencing the unknown
- We cannot avoid consequences
- We cannot circumvent life's circumstances

Yet we are called to not Fear

HOW CAN WE STOP BEING AFRAID

Psalm 56:3–4

³ When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. ⁴ In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?

2 Tim 1:7

For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

When the famous author Robert Louis Stevenson was a little child, he accidentally locked himself in his room and couldn't get out. As darkness came on, he became terror-stricken. When his father was unable to open the door, he sent for a locksmith; but while he waited, he talked to his son through the keyhole. Hearing his dad's soothing conversation and knowing he was there was all young Robert needed.

Understand that your heavenly Father is near and genuinely concerned about you.

You have the ability in HIM to triumph over fear!

HOW CAN WE STOP BEING AFRAID?

Through God's Power We Confront Fear

At times, God may nudge us to confront our fears, aiming to assist us in overcoming them.

- He desires us to realize that the ability to conquer lies within His presence.
- He resembles a father stationed in a pool, encouraging his hesitant child to leap into his waiting arms.
 - Initially hesitant, the child eventually perceives the father's reassuringly robust embrace and welcoming smile, taking the leap.
 - There's no chance the father will let the child come to harm!
 - This illustrates how God intends for us to place our trust in Him, regardless of the circumstances we face.

Through God's Love We Cast Out Fear

1 John 4:18

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

It's not merely our affection toward God; it's His deep affection for us.

It is not that we love Him but that he loves us!

- There's no need to be afraid; He cares for you deeply!
- You see, it's not solely God's might that prompts our trust in Him; it's His love.
- He holds a profound love for us, and even amid our trials, He works tirelessly behind the scenes for a greater purpose.

Romans 8:28

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Philippians 1:19

For I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance...

- Paul confidently asserts that he trusts God to rescue him.
- He goes as far as expressing that whether in life or in death, he cannot be defeated.
- If Paul lives, Christ is by his side; if he passes away, he will be with Christ.
- Paul found peace in God's love!

Through God's Desire We have a Sound Mind to Contain Fear

Fear is rooted in the Mind.

A sizable, aged Bible, a favorite of Abraham Lincoln during the pivotal Civil War years, readily opens to Psalm 34.

- Legend has it that within this passage, a particular section bears a smudge in the old Bible, suggesting that the President frequently placed his finger on that spot.

Psalm 34:4

I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears.

Delivered from Fears ... Delivered to What?

RECEIVE PEACE

Psalm 29:11

May the Lord give strength to his people! May the Lord bless his people with peace!

If peace is genuinely within reach for us, then how do we attain it?

- From what we've learned from Scripture, we can understand the pathway to peace. Peace emerges as a consequence of a deep bond with Jesus; it's a natural outcome of our connection with Christ. It flows out from that intimate relationship.

Calvin Coolidge - Christmas is not a time nor a season, but a state of mind. To cherish peace and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real spirit of Christmas.

John 6:33

...“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

In Galatians 5:22-23, peace is listed as a fruit of the Spirit.

In simpler terms, it's a result of our relationship with Christ, guided by the Spirit of God, and it manifests through various significant avenues.

TRUST GOD

Primary and most crucial way

Isaiah 26:3

You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.

C. S. Lewis - God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing.

As you consistently focus your thoughts on Christ and cultivate a strong connection with Him, you start to build trust through your personal experiences with Him.

- Our sense of peace doesn't just come from thinking about the Lord; it comes from placing our trust firmly in Him.
- The purpose behind deliberately directing our thoughts toward Him is recognizing His absolute authority over everything.

- With confidence, we believe that by keeping our attention on Him, He will soothe our hearts and bless us with peace.

Implied within our trust in Him is a facet of intimacy with God. When we engage in communion with Him—praying, listening, and seeking His guidance—His peace emerges from this kind of close relationship.

Prayer and Praise

They are directly tied to experiencing His peace.

Consider Philippians 4:4-7

Phil. 4:4-7

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. ⁵ Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Do you see the link here?

- The link is between the peace of God, which guards our hearts and minds, and the prayer and thanksgiving which precedes it.
- The bottom line is this: if we are really going to have peace, we must have a relationship with Him, and prayer and praise tap us into that relationship.
- When we are actively engaged in prayer and praise, we will be a recipient of God's blessings.

J. I. Packer - The peace of God is first and foremost peace with God; it is the state of affairs in which God, instead of being against us, is for us. No account of God's peace which does not start here can do other than mislead.

How wonderful it would be to live without any anxiety.

- That's precisely the promise God offers in these verses.
- Anxiety, essentially a synonym for fear, loses its grip when replaced by the peace that comes directly from God.
- When we exist within a trusting connection with God, fully aware that He's capable and willing to tend to our needs, we find freedom from anxiety, even in the face of challenges. This is genuine peace.

Walk With Jesus

Recall Jesus' words, which were read earlier:

John 14:27

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.

- What some perceive as peace in the world isn't genuine peace; it's merely the absence of visible conflict.
- Yet, this understanding fails to acknowledge that without addressing internal conflicts, authentic peace remains elusive.

David Wilkerson once wrote,

After much prayer, careful study and reliance on the Holy Spirit, I have concluded this about Christ's intercession for us. Jesus died on the cross to purchase peace with God for me – and He is in heaven now to maintain that peace, for me and in me.

Have you confronted the factors in your life hindering your experience of this true inner peace?

- Are there matters you're holding back from surrendering to God, preventing you from trusting Him entirely with your life?
- If obstacles exist between you and Him, it's crucial to address them promptly.
- Evading these issues only prolongs living without the inner peace you seek today.

Remember,

Psalm 29:11

The Lord will give strength to his people! The Lord bless his people with peace!

Have you attempted entering into the Joy that is offered which brings peace?

- Have you sought the Lord and experienced His deliverance from all your fears?
- Have you known the peace that can only come from the Lord?
 - A peace that this world cannot offer, but that only comes from a true relationship with HIM?
- Right here, within this gathering, someone may be grappling with fear. Hear me out—fear detrimentally impacts your physical well-being.
 - It steals away our inner calm, strains the nervous system, and fosters selfishness.
 - Fear hinders you from stepping out in faith, and without faith, it's impossible to please God.
 - Do you desire to overcome fear?
 - Come to the Lord today. He assures rest for the weary and burdened souls.