



ADVENT WEEK TWO: THE PROMISE OF PEACE

December 8, 2019

Pastor Brad Williams

BIBLICAL TEXT(S)

MAIN TEXT(S):

Exodus 2:23-25; Exodus 3:7-12; Luke 4:17-19; Jeremiah 29:4-7; Matthew 5:9; Luke 9:24-25

SUMMARY

Peace is something that we all want, but it's something that is so very hard to find. However, the Bible tells us that Jesus has come to bring us peace. It's one of the things that we celebrate in the Advent season. But what is true peace? In Hebrew, the word for peace, "shalom", means more than just stillness and calm. It speaks of human flourishing in every area of life. That is the type of peace that Christ came to offer and that's the same type of peace that we are called to share with the world around us.

However, we can only offer the world this type of peace if we actively engage the world around us. An important passage from Jeremiah 29 gives us some important insight on how we can do this well. Jesus has come to bring peace and he has sent us into the world to share this peace with all of God's children.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage and the speaker's message, helping them understand and apply the teaching.

LEAN IN

These are icebreaker/warm up questions, mostly just to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the word "peace"?
2. What is the most peaceful place you can think of?
3. What is your favorite Christmas treat?
4. What example or story stood out to you in Sunday's sermon?
Why was it significant to you?

LOOK DOWN

These are questions on the passage and observations about what's been read.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. In Exodus 2:23-25, what were the Israelites doing and why?
What actions did God take? What do you learn about God from this passage?
2. In Exodus 3:7-12, what does God do in response to Israel's circumstances?
Who does God send to do his work?
3. According to Luke 4:17-19, what did Jesus come to do?
4. Where are the Israelites when God gives them the directions in Jeremiah 29:4-7?
What does God tell them to do? What are they to seek?
5. What do you learn about making peace from Luke 9:24-25 and Matthew 5:9?

LOOK OUT

These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. Where are people crying out to God today? What circumstances in our own day and time are similar to those of the Israelite people in Exodus?

2. Who are people in history and in our own day that God is using in a similar way that he used Moses? Who is or has worked to bring about more peace and justice in the world in a way that honors God?
3. How is Jesus still working in the word to accomplish the things listed in Luke 4:17-19? What is the church's work in that task?
4. How is our situation in the world similar to that of the Israelites in exile? How might the words of Jeremiah 29:4-7 apply to Christians in the world?
5. Pastor Brad said on Sunday that the exiled Israelites had three options for how they operated within the Babylonian city. They could live outside the city and keep to themselves, they could give up their own identity and become Babylonians, or they could live within the city while retaining their own culture. Which position does Jeremiah 29 encourage the people to take? What are the advantages of this way of life? What are the challenges?

LOOK IN

These are questions that help you consider personal application.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. Is there a particular cause/people/organization that you are particularly passionate about? How might God be calling you to be his hands and feet in that space?
2. How do you think Jesus has already fulfilled the words he read in Luke 4:17-19? What parts have yet to be fulfilled? Do you think you have a role to play in that? What might that be?
3. Looking at those three ways that the Israelites could live within the city, which one most closely matches how you and your family currently operate in our world and why?
4. What do you think it looks like for Christians to live out the "third way" today, living in the world while giving ultimate allegiance to Christ? What is most challenging about living this way? What might be holding you back from this way of life?
5. What does God's call to Moses in Exodus 3 teach you? What kinds of things has God called you to in the past? What might God be calling you to now?

LIVE IT OUT

These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life.

Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. Has God been calling you to something new? Whether it's for something big or small, if God's call is on your life, it can be exciting and terrifying. How can your group pray for you as you seek to answer His call?
2. What one thing can you do this week to work to bring a little bit of peace to your city? This might look like committing to pray/doing a prayer walk, reaching out to a neighbor you don't yet know, volunteering to coach a team or run a club, or anything else you can think of.
3. The "third way" of living in the world is not easy to live out. We usually tend to isolate ourselves and live in a Christian bubble or live in the world and minimize our faith. What could you do this week to engage more either with the world around you or with the church? How can your group pray for you as you do this?