

Advent Series

Week #1 The Peace of His Presence

聖誕降臨節系列 第一周 祂同在的平安

No other holiday, on the globe, is as celebrated or recognized as this one. WHY?

全世界沒有任何一個別的假日像聖誕一樣被認識和慶祝，為什麼呢？

Let's look at the history. 讓我們來看看歷史。

Jesus was born into a tribe that believed they had been chosen by the One True God to show the world the One True God.

Which sounds nice, but this particular tribe had been conquered again and again and again. Egyptians, Babylonians, Assyrians. One super power after another had taken their turn beating up this tribe, invading their land, taxing them to death, often hauling them away to foreign nations. Making their lives miserable. 耶穌出生在一個被相信是被唯一真神揀選來向世界展示這位唯一真神的民族。這可能聽起來很棒。但是這個明祖在歷史上一次次的被外族征服——埃及人，巴比倫人，亞述人。一個又一個的大國欺壓這個民族，侵略他們的土地，對他們課以重稅，並把他們流放到陌生的國家，使得他們的生活極其悲慘。

This kept happening. All the way up until the moment we meet a girl named Mary and her fiancé Joseph. In fact, when the Romans came to Jerusalem, they built their military headquarters next to the Jewish Temple, and, they intentionally made it noticeably taller. The Caesars believed they were sons of god sent from heaven to bring about a universal reign of peace and prosperity. They had a familiar sounding saying: "There is no other name under heaven by which people can be saved than that of Caesar". Caesar Augustus was called the "Prince of Peace". Because Peace is what he came to deliver. So the Romans went marching all over the known world. They conquered village after village, demanding that people acknowledge, literally, "Caesar is Lord". They paid for their military enterprise through taxation. THIS, by the way, is why we read, in Luke's Gospel, the birth story of Jesus starts with these words: 這樣的事持續的發生直到瑪麗亞和約瑟的時候。當羅馬帝國到達耶路撒冷時，他們將軍事總部就設在猶太人的聖殿旁，而且故意把它建的比聖殿高許多。凱撒大帝們相信他們是從天而來的神的兒子要把平安和繁榮的統治帶到各地。他們有一段熟悉的說詞：“在天下除了凱撒再沒有別的名人們可以靠著得救”。凱撒奧古斯都被成為“和平之君”。因為他要帶來和平。所以羅馬的軍隊踏遍了整個他們當時已知的世界，要求人們承認“凱撒是主”。他們通過課重稅來支持他們的軍事帝國。這是為什麼我們在路加福音福音中介紹耶穌出生的故事中讀到下面的話。

Luke 2:1

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

路加福音 2:1 Chinese Union Version (Traditional)

當那些日子，該撒亞古士督有旨意下來，叫天下人民都報名上冊。

The people were being registered, so they could be taxed, so the empire could expand. The Romans would roll into town and they would demand you that recognize Caesar is Lord. And if you did, then they considered you part of the empire. If you didn't, they had this device they'd hang you on this thing called a cross, in order to make an example of what happens when you resist Caesar.

人們被註冊，這樣才能收稅，使得帝國可以繼續擴張。羅馬人到每個鎮上，要求人們承認凱撒是主。如果你這樣做了，他們就當你是帝國的一部分。如果你不這樣做，他們就把你吊死在十字架上，以警示抵抗凱撒的後果。

That, is how they MADE peace. Submit, and you' ll have relative peace. Resist, and you' ll rest in peace. :)

他們就是這樣來製造和平的。歸順，你就有一個相對的平安。抵抗，你就安息。

- U2 band U2樂隊的故事

Then, we read about an angel showing up to a teenage girl named Mary. And he delivers some news.

- Listen to what he says:

Luke 1:28-36

“Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you! Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.

路加福音 1:28-36

Chinese Union Version (Traditional)

28 天使進去，對他說：蒙大恩的女子，我問你安，主和你同在了！

29 馬利亞因這話就很驚慌，又反復思想這樣問安是甚麼意思。

30 天使對他說：馬利亞，不要怕！你在神面前已經蒙恩了。

31 你要懷孕生子，可以給他起名叫耶穌。

32 他要為大，稱為至高者的兒子；主神要把他祖大衛的位給他。

33 他要作雅各家的王，直到永遠；他的國也沒有窮盡。

34 馬利亞對天使說：我沒有出嫁，怎麼有這事呢？

35 天使回答說：聖靈要臨到你身上，至高者的能力要蔭庇你，因此所要生的聖者必稱為神的兒子（或作：所要生的，必稱為聖，稱為神的兒子）。

- Do you hear how revolutionary this is?

Do you understand how subversive this is? 你聽到這個有多有革命顛覆性嗎？

“You shall call his name Jesus.”

That name isn' t a name as much as it' s a statement.

It means, “Jehovah saves” . That meant volumes to the Hebrews, which is a tribe that Jehovah had delivered from the clutches of previous empires. Empires like Egypt. “，可以給他起名叫耶穌”。這個名字不是一個尋常的名字，它的意思是“耶和華拯救”。這個名字對猶太人的意義是非常重大的。因為耶和華神以前曾將猶太人從其他的帝國下拯救出來。就是像埃及這樣的帝國。

by naming him Jesus, it' s like saying, “God is going to REPEAT history.” He' s going to get you out of the miry clay. This child? He will be your deliverer. he goes on, he will be the son of the most high. That' s ripped from the language of the Roman conquerers. he will have a throne, and he will rule, and his kingdom will have no end, and he will be called ‘the son of God. Every bit of this is a reference to the rule and reign of Caesar.

把嬰孩命名為耶穌就好像再說“神將重複歷史。”祂將把你們從苦難的泥塘中救拔出來。這個嬰孩將是你們的救贖者。天使還接著說，這嬰孩是至高神的兒子。他將有王位，掌王權，他的國度沒有止境，他會被稱為神的兒子。這一切的話都直指凱撒的王權和統治。

Rome has its foot on the throat of the Hebrew people, and now it looks like God might be up to something.

羅馬將鐵蹄踏在猶太人的脖子上，現在看起來神要做些事。

So, Mary, she responds, and few verses later we read Mary's song that she offers back to God.

我們聽瑪麗亞是這樣回應。

Luke 1:51-56

He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.

路加福音 1:51-56 Chinese Union Version (Traditional)

51 他用膀臂施展大能；那狂傲的人正心裡妄想就被他趕散了。

52 他叫有權柄的失位，叫卑賤的升高；

53 叫飢餓的得飽美食，叫富足的空手回去。

54 他扶助了他的僕人以色列，

55 為要記念亞伯拉罕和他的後裔，施憐憫直到永遠，正如從前對我們列祖所說的話。

56 馬利亞和以利沙伯同住，約有三個月，就回家去了。

Luke 2:7

And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

路加福音 2:7 Chinese Union Version (Traditional)

7 就生了頭胎的兒子，用布包起來，放在馬槽裡，因為客店裡沒有地方。

Do you see this? Who writes the story of God this way?

The Christ should be born in a palace.

The Christ should have been among nobility or royalty.

It should have been a grand affair. 你看到了嗎。誰會這樣寫神的故事呢。基督應該生在王宮，在皇公貴族當中，不是嗎？

God enters the scene amidst images of homelessness, • refugees, • exclusion, • poverty,

And helplessness. 但神卻以一個無家可歸的，逃難的，被排斥的，在貧苦中的，無助的形象出現。

Maybe that's why, when you listen to the stories of Jesus, he's always on the fringes.

也許這是為什麼耶穌總是到被邊緣化的人們那裏去。

By the way, quick question: If you were living at the turn of the century back in 1 B.C., and you had to make a bet about whose influence would be more pronounced throughout human history, who would you have bet on: 如果你生活在公曆前一年，你要打賭誰在人類歷史上的影響會比較大，你會選誰？

Augustus Caesar,

凱撒奧古斯都

Or this obscure baby born to an oppressed minority in the corner of the largest economic and military empire the world had ever seen?

還是這個在最大的經濟和軍事帝國一個角落裡被欺壓的族群中生下的一個不知名的嬰孩。

Well, here are some interesting thoughts: 下面是些有趣的想法

1. Augustus Caesar is dead.
2. Nobody worships Caesar anymore.
3. The Roman Empire crumbled, and exists only in history books.

1. 凱撒奧古斯都已經死了。
2. 今天也沒有人敬拜凱撒奧古斯都。
3. 羅馬帝國瓦解了，只存在與歷史課本中

1. Jesus is not dead.
2. Hundreds of thousands of people view Jesus as the most important figure in their life and worship Him as God.
3. The Kingdom of Jesus is ever-expanding, even today. 而，

1. 耶穌沒有死。
2. 千千萬萬的人們視耶穌為他們生命中最重要的人物而且敬拜祂。
3. 耶穌的國度直到今天還在一直擴張。

It is tale of two empires. 這是兩個不一樣的帝國的故事。

It' s about crushing people vs. loving them It' s about bondage vs. liberation

It' s about oppressing them vs. freeing them It' s about killing people vs. dying for them. 是關乎鎮壓人民 vs 愛人民， 綑綁 vs 解放， 壓迫 vs 自由， 殺戮人民 vs 為人民死。

It is a story about another way, then the way of Caesar. 是關乎不同於凱撒的另一條路。

This is revolutionary news of a new Lord, one who doesn' t deliver peace through coercive military violence, but through sacrificial service.

這個關於一位新的主的革命性的消息， 這位主是不通過武力的脅迫來製造和平， 而是通過犧牲的愛。

He took the cross,

- which was a symbol of forced peace and power structures,
- and he turned into the symbol of absolute peace and divine love.

他選擇了十字架。這本是一個強迫的和平和權力結構的符號， 因著耶穌變成了完全的平安和神的愛的符號。

And it isn' t relative peace. This is transcendent peace. This is a peace that can live without closure, without resolution, and still be content and even happy because our satisfaction is now at another level, and our source is beyond ourselves and our circumstances.

且這平安不是相對的平安， 而是超越的平安。這個平安是可以在事情沒有結束， 沒有解決方案時仍然有滿足和喜樂， 因為我們的滿足從另一個高度而來， 我們的泉源所在超過我們自己和我們的環境。

The yearning, the unsettledness, the worry, the anxiety, the fear about the future - in peace they vanish.

那些渴望， 不安， 擔心， 焦慮， 和對於未來的害怕 —— 在平安中這一切都消失。

This is peace for anyone anywhere, no matter the circumstances.

這個平安是對任何人在任何地方， 與環境無關。

Isn't that the kind of peace we're all looking for?

In his presence, we find Peace.

那不就是我們要尋找的平安嗎？在祂的同在裡，我們找到平安。

It's why the angels announced. 這是為什麼天使宣告道——

Luke 2:14

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

路加福音 2:14 Chinese Union Version (Traditional)

14 在至高之處榮耀歸與神！在地上平安歸與他所喜悅的人（有古卷作：喜悅歸與人）！

Because in Jesus we find peace.

因為在耶穌中我們找到平安。

A peace rooted in the trust that THE LIFE Jesus gives us is deeper, wider, stronger, and more enduring than anything else we could experience anywhere else.

根植在相信耶穌給予我們的生命是比其他一切更深更強更持久之上的平安

There's a saying of sorts that has accompanied this season for centuries.

這是為什麼許多個世紀我們都在聖誕節時這樣說

Come Lord Jesus

主耶穌請祢來

It's an invitation, and, it's an admission.

這是一個邀請，也是一個承認。

It's an invitation extended from those who have been oppressed and imprisoned, to the same Jesus who invaded the world over 2000 years ago.

It's an invitation saying, “It looks like we're standing on some pretty shifty ground. We've found ourselves in some miry clay, and we could use some help.”

這是邀請從被欺壓受囚的人們發給2000年前到來這個世界如今仍是一樣的耶穌。這邀請說“我們站在流沙似的地面上，我們在深潭中，我們需要幫助”。

And, it's an admission.

It is an admission of the incompleteness of life.

It's our acknowledgment of the work that is yet to be done.

It's us, coming to grips with the brokenness of a world that is around us.

這也是一個承認。承認生命還不完全。工作還未完成。我們看到周圍世界的破碎。

When we utter those words, “Come Lord Jesus” we are changing our loyalties from power and success, to the kingdom of Jesus.

當我們說“主耶穌請祢來”，我們就改變我們的忠誠，從成功和權力，轉至耶穌的國度。

Benediction 祝禱

May you be Men and Women who encounter the True Prince of Peace.

願你們成為經歷真正和平之君的的人。

And may he dwell in your hearts and minds.

願祂住在你的心和你的心思意念裡。

And may his calm, his confidence, his love, flow from him to you, and from you, to those around you. 願祂的平靜，信心，和愛從祂流入你的裡面，且由你流入你周圍的人們。