

THE WONDER OF
CHRISTMAS

The Wonder Of Peace

Matt VanCleave
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GROUP ICE BREAKER

What is a holiday tradition you would like to change or start?

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S NEXT STEPS

What, if any, next step did you commit to last week, how did it go?

- I will honestly examine where I have placed my hope.
- I will renew my hope in Christ in this season of waiting.
- I will resist the temptation for instant gratification in my journey with Jesus.
- I will rejoice in the promises of God to me.

MESSAGE SUMMARY

The greatest need we have at this time of the year is peace. For over two thousand years now, part of the rhythm of the life of the church has been the season of Advent, to remember the coming of the Prince of Peace, and God is calling you to let the peace of Christ rule in your heart. Dallas Willard said, "The peace of Christ is the settled assurance that because of God's care and God's competence, this universe is a perfectly safe place for me to be."

How do you let the peace of Christ reign in your heart? One way that is not an option for followers of Christ is to try to make the primary goal in life to live in peaceful, comfortable circumstances. We're called not just to peace, but the peace of Christ, which is not so much about the external world, although it will have consequences for our circumstances.

There are three strategies for pursuing peace, and the first is *Thinking*. Choose a word of Christ to dwell on. The idea is to have the thoughts of Christ, the things that he taught you to dwell in you, to run through your mind so that they overflow into your life.

The second strategy is *Singing*. Sometimes a song can bring peace in a way that nothing can, it strengthens the soul. Singing forms you, and prepares your heart for the peace of God.

The third strategy is *Praying*. There's a real close connection between worry and prayer, and you need to allow worry to become a cue for you to pray. God just waits to take your worries, so give them to him.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What gives you the most stress or anxiety during the holidays?
2. What are some of the different things people mean when they use the phrase, “peace on earth?” How does the peace of Christ?
3. Dallas Willard said, “The peace of Christ is the settled assurance that because of God's care and God's competence, this universe is a perfectly safe place for me to be.” Discuss this statement and your reaction to it.
4. How much of your peace is related to or found in comfortable circumstances?
5. Of the three strategies for pursuing peace, *Thinking*, *Singing*, and *Praying*, which is most natural for you and why? Which is most challenging for you and why?
6. What’s an area of your life that needs the peace of Christ?
7. What is something you could do this week to bring peace to your family, neighborhood, or community?

NEXT STEPS FOR THIS WEEK (COMMIT TO GROW)

Use these as a guide to take your next step and commit to what you learned this week:

- I will not make the peace of Christ a search for comfortable circumstances.
- I will choose a word of Scripture to dwell on so my thinking leads to peace.
- I will use singing as a way to prepare my heart for the peace of Christ.
- I will think of worry as a prompting from the Holy Spirit to pray.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- Luke 2:10-14
- Colossians 3:15-17
- John 13:21
- 2 Corinthians 11:28
- Philippians 4:19
- Isaiah 26:3
- 1 Peter 5:7
- Philippians 4:6

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

- “The peace of Christ is the settled assurance that because of God's care and God's competence, this universe is a perfectly safe place for me to be.” Dallas Willard

PRAYER REQUESTS

Take time to share how you can be praying for each other over the next week:

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