

Peace to those with whom God is pleased

We live in an insecure world where we long for peace and security, a hope and a future, good news when we're flooded with bad news. Christmas is a time for such.

Luke 2:8-14 And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. 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. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

1) An assurance of good news for the humble

- Throughout history God called shepherds, spoke to shepherds, anointed shepherds, and used shepherds as analogies.
- God could have sent his angels to announce the news of Jesus' birth to the religious leaders, the wealthy and influential of society, learned men, the king. But he didn't. He chose to tell a group of humble shepherds who were watching their sheep.
- It is the humble who receive the good news from God. It is the proud of society who normally reject it.
 - James 4:6 But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."
- The rich man is proud in his wealth, the learned man is proud in his knowledge, the man in authority is proud in his position. However, even they had to be humbled before Jesus could use them for his glory.
- Paul was a learned man with much to his advantage in this world, but God had to humble him before he could bring glory to God.
 - Philippians 3:7-9 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.
 - Acts 9:15-16 But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."
- The angels appeared to the shepherds who were terrified at their presence.
 - The angels then reassured them of good news of joy for all people
 - Good news always brings joy
 - The angels told them not to fear. The humble who trust God and are recipients of good news have no need to fear.
 - Perfect love casts out all fear and it was perfect love who was born of a virgin in Bethlehem and wrapped in swaddling cloths.

2) Hope for all people

- Luke 2:10 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.
- In the midst of hopelessness God breaks through to give us good news of great joy.
- Israel had been living under oppressive colonial regimes for hundreds of years before Christ.
 - They returned from captivity from Babylon about 515BC
 - They were conquered by Alexander the great 332BC and lived under the Greek empire.
 - The Romans captured Jerusalem in 63BC
 - Israel was living under Roman rule when Jesus was born and during his lifetime.
- It is living under such circumstances that good news of great joy was being received for all the people.
 - It was news of the birth of the Saviour, Christ the Lord
 - Finally, their liberator from oppression was here! The one they had been expecting for hundreds of years.
 - This truly was good news for all the people.
- We know that Jesus came as a very different type of liberator than what the Jews were expecting.
 - He was to be a saviour from sin and the wrath of God to come, not a political liberator from oppressive rulers.
- Nevertheless, this was good news.
 - I’d rather live under oppressive rule than under the pending wrath of God.
 - However, if freedom from both can be attained that would be better.
- Although hope of salvation is for all people, not everyone receives it.
 - 1 John 2:2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.
 - John 1:11-13 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

3) Peace to those with whom God is pleased

- Luke 2:13-14 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”
- Only those who God is pleased with receive peace.
- So, who is God please with?
- Those who have been justified by faith
 - Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.
- Those who do His will
 - Hebrews 13:20-21 Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.
 - This is in thought, attitude and action.
 - Justification always has its outworking in obedience to Christ and transformation to be like Him.
- To have peace:
 - Be humble. It’s the humble who will receive the good news of a Saviour given to us.
 - Walk in the hope that such a salvation gives us
 - Believe who Jesus is and what he’s done for us and
 - Live in obedience to his will in thought, attitude and action