

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
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The Way of Peace

Luke 1:46-55

December 8, 2019

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INTRODUCTION: During the month of December, it's possible to go out nearly every night of the month. And more than possible, it's highly likely that you'll get caught up in the horrendous Nashville traffic. If you decide to go to Opry Mills or to see the lights at the Gaylord Opryland hotel, you are in for a really long wait in traffic. And you'll see angry people honking their horns and doing other things to express their anger. Such behavior is ironic because that's the complete opposite of why Jesus came. Jesus came to bring peace.

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 9:6

*“For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.”*

I have two points to my message today:

- Mary chose the way of peace.
- The Jews wanted peace without the person of peace.

Today, we lit the second candle of Advent which represents peace. We talk of world peace and people living in harmony with one another, but peace begins in the individual. If a group of people are at peace, it's not because peace was forced upon them. It's because as individuals they chose peace. The result of people individually choosing peace is a *group* of people able to live in peace.

There are times when peace is the end result of war, but really, if there is peace, it's because people surrendered and the victors chose peace which is in turn accepted by the people. We tend to think of peace, I believe, on a large scale, but we need to think of peace as an individual decision and a lifestyle that will spread. When social

media gets replayed many times, it's called going viral. We need peace that goes viral in this world, don't we?

MARY CHOSE THE WAY OF PEACE

Let's look at the peace of Mary when she found out she was pregnant with Jesus.

SCRIPTURE: Luke 1:46-55

And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸ for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed,

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name.

⁵⁰ His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

⁵² He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.

⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful

⁵⁵ to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors."

EXPLANATION: Mary, being educated in a Jewish home, would have heard the prophecy from Isaiah 7:14 and knowing full well she had not slept with a man, she knew that she was the virgin mentioned in the ancient prophecy.

I've wondered how many would have believed her when she told them she was pregnant but had not been with a man.

- Her cousin Elizabeth believed her.
- We conclude by reading earlier in Luke 1 that Elizabeth's husband, Zachariah, believed her.
- An angel appeared to Joseph, Mary's fiancé, and he believed her.

Here are some things I want you to notice about Mary when she found out she was carrying the Messiah in her womb:

- God did not ask her. He chose her. Mary was at peace with that.

- Mary was not married, had not had sex with a man, and she was pregnant. She was at peace with that. Our text this morning, Luke 1 verses 46-55 reveal to us she knew the history of her people. She knew the scripture which gave her peace.
- Whether people believed her or not, however, didn't seem to be important to Mary. She knew the truth, and she had *peace* because she knew the truth.
- When the angel appeared her, her young life would never be the same, ever again. Yet she had peace.

APPLICATION: Knowing the truth of the scriptures gave Mary peace. This could have been a terrible crisis for Mary had she not known the truth of the scriptures. It's the same way today. John 8:36 says the truth will set you free. It is important to know the scripture! How can I convince you of that? I hope you read the scripture and try to memorize it. That's when I can really help you.

There is a song in Isaiah 26.

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 26:3-4

You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. ⁴Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD himself, is the Rock eternal.

EXPLANATION: Back to Luke, verse 30 says, *“Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God.”*

So she was probably afraid at the sight of the angel as many in scripture were but was she afraid over the news? No, she chose to trust God. She knew from scripture that God always keeps his promises.

So peace was her choice. It's possible in the middle of chaos to choose peace.

THE JEWS WANTED PEACE WITHOUT THE PERSON OF PEACE

While there were many Jews who believed, there were also many who did not! Their idea of peace on earth was that peace would come through a Messiah who would kill their enemies. They did not, in any way, see that Jesus was the way of peace and the way to peace. He completely messed up their theologies.

As you know the Pharisees created additional laws to keep people from breaking the Old Testament laws. The Sadducees were a sect within the Jewish society who had their own ideas...then you had the rabbis and the priests. They all doubted that Jesus was the messiah. They refused to believe he was the messiah. They didn't want his peace. They just wanted a messiah to get rid of their enemies so they could continue being Pharisees, Sadducees, rabbis, and priests. They wanted peace *their way*, not God's way.

They did everything within their power to defame Jesus. He wasn't the Messiah they expected. They wanted an earthly king that would return Israel to its greatness. They did not truly want a spiritual kingdom. They were more interested in earthly things.

Look at their characteristics:

- Some doubted that Jesus was the Messiah – there's no peace in doubting.
- They refused to believe Jesus was the Messiah – there's no peace in unbelief.
- They were paranoid that Jesus' teaching would spread and unseat them – there is no peace in paranoia.

If they really wanted peace, they would have chosen the person of peace. But no, they wanted peace their way.

Think of those in scripture who found peace because of Jesus:

- There were the Jews who believed
- Mary Magdalene
- The woman at the well
- The demoniac
- The Apostle Paul
- And many, many others

APPLICATION: If you want peace in your life you must choose the person of peace. A person hearing this may say, "I've found peace without Jesus. I've found peace through meditation, or nature, or whatever..." And perhaps you've found a

level of peace without Jesus. But you only have a level of peace, not complete peace.

SCRIPTURE: John 16:33 In John, Jesus says this:
*“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.”*

Jesus had a lot to say about peace:

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 24:6 reads:
“You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed.”

That’s the same thing Gabriel said to Mary. Do not be alarmed. Do not be afraid. Instead, choose peace.

CONCLUSION: Earlier in my message I said that we tend to think of peace on a broad scale, and that’s understandable based on the times in which we live. When we watch the wars between nations on the screens in front of our faces, we hope for peace. Sometimes there is a peaceful resolution to turmoil, sometimes there is not. We want an end to the war in Afghanistan. We want the troops to come home.

Yes, sometimes there is peace on a broad scale, but I am convinced that peace begins in the individual. Peace is something we choose.

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Sincerely, Paul Gunn
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