

BIBLE STUDY LIVE

Advent Bible Study Series: LESSON 3: "Prince of Peace"

Peace Is On Back Order

READ: Psalms 34:14

There is a lot of constant talk about peace. It is a daily subject in just about every corner of the world. There are a lot of people talking about peace, but there is not many people experiencing peace. In fact, in spite of the tremendous demand for peace, peace appears to be in short supply.

Here in my neck-of-the woods - "St. Louis, Missouri" has recently been at the forefront of many racial conflicts. Just this summer a white police officer Jason Stockley, was acquitted of the shooting death of a young black man. Mr. Anthony Lamar Smith was shot five times by the officer through the driver side window. When questioned, the officer explained that he thought he saw Smith go for a gun. A gun was found in Smith's car, but only the white officers DNA was found to be on the gun. In addition, during the pursuit, the officer could be heard saying over the radio "I'm going to kill that "mother-*explicative!*" After the judge fail to find Officer Stockley guilty, rioting and various other demonstrations against these perceived injustices continue to occur throughout the city. Nationally, the nation is still reeling from Charlottesville, Virginia white supremacist's attacks against those supporting the removal of confederate related statues. This protest resulted in dozens being injured and one woman being killed when an enraged white supremacist drove a car through a crowd of protestors. I could go on about North Korea's nuclear missile development or the recent unrest in the Middle East over President Trump's plan to relocate the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Regardless of the source of the chaotic disruptions, one common response can be heard. People all over the world are asking for "peace." But very little peace is being experienced in the world today... why?

Perhaps the psalmist in the above scripture can help us better understand why peace is so difficult to find and maintain. **QUESTION:** According to Psalms 34:14 - what should we do if we desire to experience peace? Well, it begins with us "departing from evil." We cannot ever expect to experience a harvest of peace and tranquility while constantly planting evil and dissention. I find it amazing how often the very people who complain about the unfair treatment they received from others are the very same people who start confusion and consistently contribute to the chaos. **QUESTION: READ: James 1:23 - 24.** How does a person "depart from evil?" It begins with the person coming in contact with the righteous light of Jesus Christ and his word and then honestly responding to the personal revelations experienced. In James, the apostle compares such an experience with a person who sees their actual image in a mirror, flaws and all; but then walks away and soon forgets what they experienced when looking into the mirror. No one peers into a mirror in order to see somebody down the street! But so many can find everyone else sin in the bible, and can hear everyone else shortcoming in the sermon except their own! Unfortunately, for those people, the modern church as we know it, doesn't work very well for them.

Secondly, the Psalmist instructs us not only to "depart from evil" but then do "do good." Just sitting in church on Sunday practicing holding the pew down to the floor with your behind simply isn't enough! Jesus' last words to his church were to "Go ye therefore into all the world." However, most of us have walled ourselves behind stained glass windows and enjoy the comforts of padded pews and air conditioned sanctuaries. We are supposed to be a "going church" for a "coming Christ!" **READ: Gal 6:10**

QUESTION READ John 13: 34 - 35

Why should we strive to especially do good to them of the "household of faith?" Christians are to display the goodness of God in ever perceivable manner. As a fellow believer, we are to assist our brothers so

that their life would provide a testimony to the unbelievers of the love we have for each other. Finally, having departed from evil, and now doing that which is “good” – we are now instructed to “seek peace and pursue it! **QUESTION:** Why must peace be sought after? Well, it’s been my personal experienced that trouble will find you but peace rarely does. I can think of a thousand things I can do that would result in me finding some trouble; however, peace is something that we must go after. Not only must we want it – we must be willing to pursue it! That is I must consciously do things that will help to attract peace in my life.

Understanding Biblical Peace: READ Isaiah 9:6

More than 800 years before the actual birth of Christ, the prophet Isaiah pens these Messianic words. Notice the verb tense the prophet uses in his opening clause – “unto us a child “is” born and unto us a son “is” given! He speaks in the present tense as if to proclaim this work has already been performed. This simply tells me that whatever God has purposed to do in my life is already done! “Has God said it and shall he not do it ...” In the scripture Isaiah enumerates many of the qualities, characteristics and attributes of Jesus Christ. He introduces Jesus as Wonderful (astonishing, magnificent, marvelous, awesome). Then as “Counselor” Nowhere in the bible has it been recorded that God asked anybody concerning what he should do? God never learns and consequently He requires no counsel from us! But, he is a marvelous counselor to us! Isaiah calls Jesus “the mighty God, the everlasting Father and concludes with referring to him as: “the Prince of Peace.” Let’s look a little closer into this concept of peace.

PEACE CAN ONLY BE RECEIVED FROM GOD: READ: 2 John 3:3 This peace is not a human invention. You cannot pray it down from heaven or fast it up from the earth. This peace is from God and can only be experienced in a right relationship with Jesus Christ.

PEACE MUST BE EXPERIENCED WITH GOD: READ Rom. 5:1 Having been justified by faith in Christ we can now and only now experience inner peace. This peace comes when our sins have been forgiven the Holy Spirit has come to dwell within us. This peace signals the end of our struggle between our will and the will of God.

IT IS THE PEACE OF GOD KEEPS US: READ Phil 4:7 I certainly thank God for that peace that comes “from” God and through salvation having now that peace “with” God – but I must admit I truly treasure this peace “of God!” The apostle explains that this peace “of God” is unexplainable. It surpasses our ability to understand it. This peace performs guard duty and it keeps my heart and mind from straying into chaos, fear and doubt. It’s a peace that doesn’t make sense to those who have never experienced it. **QUESTION:** What bible characters demonstrated this type of peace?

PEACE BE STILL READ Mark 4:39 One tremendous example of this “peace of God” can be witnessed in the New Testaments story about Jesus and his disciples in the storm on the sea. Here these disciples who were experienced fishermen and mariners in their own right had come face to face with a tremendous storm that tested the very fiber of their wherewithal. Now fearing for their lives some of them began to question why would God allow such a terrible thing to befall them. Furthermore, if Jesus was who he professed to be and if he loved them half as much as he declared he did, how could he be sleeping while we are suffering? **QUESTION:** How did Jesus respond and what did his response tell his disciples?