

Keep Calm...Christmas is Coming
Peace is Here
Luke 2:14, John 14:27, and John 16:33

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Text Introduction: “Keep Calm...Christmas is Coming” is the theme of this year’s *Singing Christmas Tree*. We have adapted that, of course, from the popular phrase, “Keep Calm and Carry On” that was first developed by the British government in preparing her citizens for the Second World War. As I contemplated this phrase, I began to think what an appropriate phrase this is to communicate the truths of Christmas. In light of Jesus Christ bursting into our world to bring hope, joy, peace, and most of all salvation, we of all people, believers in Christ, should “Keep Calm and Carry On.” So, this Christmas Season, I am endeavoring to remind us of those reasons associated with Jesus’ coming that we have to “Keep Calm and Carry On.” Last week, we said that we should keep calm and carry on because God is here! Isaiah prophesied that His name would be called Immanuel, which translated means, “God with us.” Because God is always with us, we should keep calm and carry on.

Today, I want to consider a second reason. Not only is God here, but because He is here, peace is here. Isaiah prophesied some 700 years before the birth of Christ that “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, and Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6) Today we consider Jesus as the “Prince of Peace.” We live in a world looking for peace.

I read about this retired couple who became overcome by the threat of nuclear war to the point that they undertook a serious study of all the inhabited places on the globe. Their goal was to determine the least likely place affected by a nuclear war—a place of ultimate security and peace. They studied and traveled, traveled and studied some more until they finally found the place. And so in 1981, they moved to their new home - in the Falkland Islands. In case you have forgotten, their “paradise” became an intense war zone in 1982 in a war between Great Britain and Argentina.¹

Not only can we keep calm because God is here, but because He is here, **peace is here**. The idea of peace was communicated first by the angelic announcement of his birth to shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night. The truth of peace was further communicated by Jesus throughout His earthly ministry. Let’s put a couple of those texts before us and then contemplate for a few moments God’s ideal for us that we would be people who continually experience peace.

Text: Luke 2:8-14⁸ In the same region, shepherds were staying out in the fields and keeping watch at night over their flock.⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid, for look, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people:¹¹ Today a Savior, who is Messiah the Lord, was born for you in the city of David.¹² This will be the sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in cloth and lying in a feeding trough.”

¹ In a sermon by Rick Ezell found at <http://www.lifeway.com/Article/sermon-making-peace-with-god-reconciliation>.

¹³ Suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying:

¹⁴ Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and peace on earth to people He favors!

Notice that this introductory announcement of peace is tied to the coming of Messiah into the world. With this announcement comes the encouragement to not be afraid and the response of joy.

John 14:27 ²⁷ “Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Your heart must not be troubled or fearful.

Notice in this passage, which comes near the end of Jesus’ life as He prepares the disciples for his death, that Jesus communicates several things:

1. He is leaving His peace with them, so that even though they will no longer see Him, He intends for them to have His peace.
2. The peace that He is offering is His peace. The same peace that accompanies Jesus in these final agonizing moments of His life is the peace He is leaving.
3. He distinguishes this peace that He is leaving with the peace that might come from the world.
4. And, just as the announcement from the angels at His birth, this statement of His peace comes with the accompanying encouragement to not be troubled or fearful.

John 16:33 I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world.” I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world.”

Now, here at the end of His discourse to the disciples about His death, Jesus summarizes His offering of peace. Again, notice at least these things.

1. The peace that was to come was “in Jesus.” He is the source of the peace.
2. He acknowledged that there would be unpleasant events that would attempt to disrupt their peace.
3. Even in light of that which might seek to disrupt the peace, they will find their peace in Him.
4. Again, we are encouraged to not be troubled and instead “Have courage.” Why? He has overcome the world.

Peace—we all want that elusive five letter word. I imagine there is somebody here today who just says, “I want peace.” I want peace from my past. I want the security of peace for my tomorrow. I want peace in my home. I want peace with God.

Good news—Peace was the announcement of Jesus on that night of his birth and it was the promise of Jesus before His death. And to the one called Doubting Thomas, as we read in John 20:26, peace was the promise of Jesus even after His death and resurrection.

If we were to attempt to summarize these New Testament texts about peace, I think here is the way we could say it.

Peace is not in the absence of pain.

Jesus had pain. He knew the pain of rejection. He knew the pain of the cross and death. He knew the pain of anticipating death. He anticipated the pain of the disciples. And you know what? He knows your pain. When Jesus says that “in Him” we have peace, He is not saying that we will not experience pain. In fact, He gives us this encouragement, because He knows we will have pain.

Peace is not in the absence of problems.

Jesus foreshadows the problems. He announces the problems.

Peace is a person.

This idea of peace comes about in John 14-16 in several ways. First, in John 14:6, Jesus declared about Himself, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” This is a reference about the way to Heaven. Peace with God and eternity in Heaven is through Him. I am convinced that we will never arrive at peace about this life until we have peace about the life to come in eternity. This is the starting place to real peace.

Second, this idea is communicated in the role of the Comforter throughout John 14-16. He wanted the disciples to be comforted to know that He is always with them, and the Holy Spirit would provide this. Last time we said, that we can keep calm and carry on because God is here. Now we can say that because God is here, peace is here. If peace is in Him and He is here, we can have peace in a relationship with Him. That leads us to the third communication of peace being in a person.

John 15 tells us about how to remain in relationship with the one who gives us peace. We are “to abide” or “remain” in Him. Again, the relationship brings the peace.

Here’s the bottom line. You can search for peace in a lot of things—relationships, money, hobbies, the absence of problems, or move away to the Falkland Islands, but only one thing brings peace. Real peace is in a person.

So...

We trust in Him for everything including our eternal destiny.

We find our peace in His peace, not our peace.

We talk to Him about everything.

We seem to keep going back to the Prophet Isaiah in this Christmas series. Isaiah 26:3 is a good place to land this morning. “You will keep in perfect peace the mind that is dependent on You, for it is trusting in You.”