

“The Way of Peace”

Advent Series: The Dawn Is Breaking

Texts: Isaiah 11:1-10 • Romans 15:4-13 • Matthew 3:1-12

Big Idea: *The peace of God comes not by avoiding conflict but by the transforming reign of the righteous King.*

INTRO: OUR BROKEN IDEAS OF PEACE

- Many people say what they want most for Christmas is **peace**.
- But our default definition of peace is usually small:
 - the absence of irritation,
 - a quiet room,
 - a break from stress,
 - a moment of uninterrupted calm.
- Scripture teaches a deeper truth:
 - **Biblical peace (shalom)** is not the absence of difficulty, it is the **presence of wholeness**. Not everything going *my* way, but everything being restored *God's* way.
- Advent reminds us:
“The peace of God doesn’t come by avoiding conflict, but by the transforming reign of the righteous King.”

I. ISAIAH’S VISION: THE ROOT OF PEACE

(Isaiah 11:1-10)

A. A stump... and a sprout

- Israel’s royal line is pictured as a dead **stump**, ie, a failed kingdom.
- But God brings hope: “**A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse.**”
- God brings peace from unexpected places. “I’m not done... My peace will come.”

B. The Spirit-Filled King

The Messiah will be marked by:

- wisdom & understanding,
- counsel & might,

- knowledge & fear of the Lord.

C. The World He Brings

- Predators live peacefully with prey.
- Children lead animals once feared.
- Harmony replaces hostility; creation is healed.
- **Not a Hallmark painting...the healing of the world.**

D. True Peace

- Peace is not fragile — it is **transformative** under the true King's reign.

II. ROMANS 15: PEACE THAT FLOWS FROM HOPE

(Romans 15:4-13)

A. Jesus Fulfills Isaiah's Promise

- Paul quotes Isaiah: **"The Root of Jesse will come... in Him the Gentiles will hope."**
- Peace is for **all people** — Jew and Gentile alike.

B. Paul's Advent Prayer

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing..."

Notice the order:

1. **God** is the source of hope & peace.
2. He is the One who **fills** us.
3. Peace is the **fruit of believing**, not circumstances.
4. The Spirit causes hope to **overflow**.

C. True Peace

- Biblical peace doesn't wait for all problems to vanish.
- It is born from trusting the God who is making all things new.

III. JOHN THE BAPTIST: THE ROAD CREW FOR PEACE

(Matthew 3:1-12)

A. Prepare the Way

John calls out: “**Prepare the way of the Lord! Make His paths straight!**”

B. How Do We Prepare?

One word: **repentance**.

N.T. Wright’s insight: “**Repentance is the road by which peace travels.**”

C. What Repentance Does

- Fills in valleys, lowers mountains, straightens crooked paths.
- Repentance is the demolition before renovation — removing moldy boards, tearing out rot, taking things to the studs.
- Peace doesn’t come from avoidance but from **transformation**.
- The King must reign in **every part** of our hearts.

IV. THE KINGDOM PEACE WE LONG FOR

1. Peace is relational.

- Peace is not a technique; it is a **Person** — Jesus.
- It comes through walking closely with Him, being shaped by His wisdom and presence.
- Peace grows as our relationship with Christ deepens.
- The peace of the kingdom is rooted in the unchanging character of the Prince of Peace.

2. Peace is restorative.

- God’s peace heals what sin has shattered — relationally, personally, communally, even creation itself.
- It doesn’t ignore wounds; it binds them up.
- Wherever Jesus reigns, broken places don’t stay broken — they become testimonies of restoration.
- Peace is **wholeness restored**, not conflict avoided.

3. Peace is confrontational.

- The peace of Christ refuses to coexist with sin that destroys shalom.
- God lovingly confronts the lies, habits, addictions, and injustices that wage war on peace.
- Renovation requires demolition; healing sometimes requires painful intervention.

- Christ's peace is gentle with the humble but unyielding with the forces that enslave His children.

4. Peace is missional.

- God's peace is global and communal — drawing all nations to worship together.
- The church is meant not just to experience peace but to **extend** it.
- As we embody justice, compassion, and truth, we become outposts of Christ's peace in the world.
- Peace fuels mission — it is not an escape from God's work but participation in it.

V. MAKING STRAIGHT THE PATHS FOR PEACE

John's message becomes deeply personal: we prepare for the Prince of Peace through **repentance, reconciliation, restoration, and surrender.**

1. Repent where the Spirit nudges.

- Repentance is God renovating us, not shaming us.
- Reflection questions:
 - Where have I made excuses instead of surrendering?
 - What habit or attitude needs to be torn out?
 - Where have I resisted God because the demolition felt uncomfortable?
- **Repentance is the road by which peace travels.**

2. Reconcile where relationships are strained.

- Peace is relational and pushes outward.
- Reflection questions:
 - Is there someone I need to forgive or apologize to?
 - Is there a conversation I've been avoiding?
- Avoidance is not peace; the Prince of Peace calls us toward healing.

3. Restore what you have neglected or broken.

- Peace sometimes requires repair work, not denial.
- Reflection questions:
 - Where do I see signs of neglect spiritually, relationally, emotionally, financially?
 - What step toward restoration can I take this week?
 - Where have I settled for "patching holes" instead of letting God rebuild?

4. Trust the King who brings peace.

- Only Jesus can give peace; our role is surrender.
- Reflection questions:
 - Where have I been acting as if peace depends on me?
 - Where do I need to say, “Lord, I trust You here”?
 - What would change if I believed God is already working to restore this?
- Peace is the fruit of surrender, not striving.

CLOSING INVITATION

- Let God’s Spirit shine into the hidden corners of your heart.
- Let Him reveal the crooked, broken, and resistant places — not to condemn but to prepare.
- **Because the King is coming.**
- And wherever He reigns, **peace grows — fiercely, beautifully, transformatively.**

Reflection for the Week:

“What path in my life needs to be made straight so the peace of Christ can enter freely?”