

Prince of Peace

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[0:00] Isaiah chapter 8, 11. The Lord spoke to me with his strong hand upon me, warning me not to follow the way of this people. He said, Do not call conspiracy everything that these people call conspiracy.

Do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it. The Lord Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy. He is the one you are to fear.

He is the one you are to dread. And he will be a sanctuary. But for both houses of Israel, he will be a stone that causes men to stumble, and a rock that makes them fall.

And for the people of Jerusalem, he will be a trap and a snare. Many of them will stumble, they will fall and be broken. They will be snared and captured. Bind up the testimony, and seal up the law among my disciples.

I will wait for the Lord, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob. I will put my trust in him. Here am I, and the children the Lord has given me.

[1:09] We are signs and symbols in Israel from the Lord Almighty, who dwells on Mount Zion. When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God?

Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony. If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn. Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land.

When they are famished, they will become enraged, and looking upward will curse their king and their God. Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness.

Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past, he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future, he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles by the way of the sea along the Jordan.

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light. On those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned. You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy.

[2:30] They rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as men rejoice when dividing the plunder. For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor.

Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire. For to us, a child is born.

To us, a son is given and the government will be on his shoulders and he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and peace, there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. Glory to God in the highest. Amen.

[3:40] And peace to men on earth. This old world is yearning for peace, isn't it? She's weary of war, she's limping along with open battle wounds and yet still hating and being hated, still fighting and quarreling and killing with nations that delight in war who will not cease their troubling.

someone has said that since the beginning of the human race, there's never been a generation that has been without war, bloodshed, and violence.

That there's always been war going on somewhere on the planet. Now, I'm no historian to confirm that statement, but from what I know about biblical history and from our own world, it sure bears the ring of truth.

Human history is one long story of wars and rumors of war. And so this battle-weary world is longing for peace.

We're being told that the number one issue in the next presidential election is security. It's peace. People want to live without fear.

[4:53] People want to rest secure, uninterrupted by terror. Perhaps you saw it on the day of the terrorist massacre in San Bernardino.

A bystander was interviewed who simply said, this has got to stop. And woe be to you if you're running for president and don't have a plan to make it stop or don't promise us that you'll stop it. But our world is weary and longing for peace in other ways as well. It's not only terrorists who disturb the peace, is it? There's all sorts of crime going on in our cities.

Battles in Congress and on the Supreme Court. A divided country. Problems in the schools. Problems in the workplace. Racial violence.

Domestic violence. All sorts of broken relationships. Fatal diseases. Destructive storms. Financial troubles. Disturbing moral problems in our land.

[5:58] All disrupting the peace that we so desperately want. And so we go on singing, let there be peace on earth. But there is no such peace on earth.

Well, as someone said, that's the mess we're in. How did we get here? How did it all come to this? Well, we start back in the beginning. And what the Bible teaches us is that in the beginning the God of peace made us to live in perfect peace.

He made us to live in harmony with himself. In harmony with each other. And in harmony even with our environment. So we came from God's creating hand hardwired for peace.

peace. And that's why in this world of strife we long for peace. And we can sympathize with that bystander. It's got to stop.

Because we instinctively know that this is not the way it's supposed to be. Shalom is the way it's supposed to be. We were made for peace, not for war.

[7:09] We were made for tranquility and a sense of well-being, not for fear and terror. But that short-lived peace was destroyed by sin.

In Adam's sin we all rejected the way of peace and we sided with Satan in that cosmic war against God. And when sin entered the world so did death.

And death by murder and by violence and by bloodshed. And so quickly that was seen in the first family when the older boy came, rose up one day and took his unsuspecting brother out into the field and there murdered him.

That's Genesis 4, folks. That's just the chapter right after sin's entrance into the world. It brings violence.

It brings bloodshed. It brings terror. Two chapters years later, Genesis 6, we learn that the earth is so full of violence that God himself says this has got to stop and he wipes the earth clean of all human beings except for Noah and his family in the ark.

[8:27] But then Noah's family was still part of that family of Adam and Eve, the fallen family, that gave birth to people with fallen, sinful, selfish natures.

and so the earth was again soon filled with violence, bloodshed, and war. And this has dominated the scene on earth ever since. That's how we got into this sad state.

Sin has destroyed the peace. peace. But let's be sure we understand the problem aright. If we locate the problem with peace out there, in a few nations that are causing trouble, in some radical terrorists out there, we've missed the message of the Bible.

The root problem of peace is not out there. It's in here, in the heart of every single one of us. In Romans 3, Paul draws a conclusion about the whole human race.

It's like he's in a rodeo and he rounds up the whole human race. First the Jews, then the Gentiles. They're all rounded up. And he says, there's not one righteous among them.

[9:44] No, not one. And he goes on to say of us all, quoting from Isaiah 59, the way of peace they have not known.

The way of peace they have not known. Notice there is a way of peace. There is a path that if you walk it, you will enjoy peace.

It's God's way. Proverbs 3 says, wisdom's ways are all pleasant ways and all her paths are peace. that's the way of peace.

It's walking with God, with his wise commands. Psalm 119, 165, great peace have they who love thy law, and nothing will cause them to stumble.

God's laws are the guard rails on the path of peace, and those who love his law have great peace. They're the paths of righteousness, and the fruit of righteousness will be peace.

[10:49] The effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever. So there is a way of peace, but alas, they do not know it.

They do not experience it. They do not take it. They do not walk it. For we all like sheep have gone astray, and we've turned every one of us to our own way.

So instead of the way of peace, we've said, no, I want my way. And so we've stepped out of the way of peace, and we have followed our own way. We've turned to crooked roads, Isaiah 59, and no one who walks in them will know peace.

Can words be clear? Isaiah 48, 18, if only, God says, if only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river.

What's a river like? Well, it just keeps flowing. It's flowing, and there it's coming. It's just coming at you, and it just keeps going on and on, uninterrupted.

[11:55] Your peace would have been like that if only you'd paid attention to the path of peace, the way of my commandments, walking with me in them. Stand at the crossroads and look.

Ask for the ancient paths. Ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said we will not walk in it.

And as long as we are at war with God, there can be no real peace within. Every one of us came into this world enemies of God. Romans 8, 7 says that the sinful mind is enmity against God.

It's hostility toward God. God. And it shows it by not being subject to the law of God. It won't submit to God's law.

That's the mind at war with God. God says walk in the way of peace. And we said no, I will not walk in it. I want to go my way. And that's war with God.

[13:02] James 4, 4. You adulterers and adulteresses, don't you know that friendship with the world is enmity with God. Anyone then who chooses to be the friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

And that's every one of us. Every one of us come into this world fighting against God.

And that's why there is no peace, says my God, for the wicked. For the wicked are like the troubled sea which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and mud.

Do you get the picture of man without God? It's not a picture of the quiet crystal blue beaches of Bermuda that you see in the travel brochures.

That's not the picture of the sea that Isaiah is painting, that God is painting. No, it's the troubled sea. It's the tossing sea. It's the sea that's been whipped up by stormy winds.

[14:11] It's the sea that's unable to rest, always churning, and its churning waters go down to the bottom and they bring up the muck and the mire and the mud and the seaweed and they just cast it upon the shore.

That's the wicked. That's the man, the woman, the boy, the girl without God who's turned their back on the way of peace and has gone their own way.

There's no rest for them. And those churning waters are the churning of unfulfilled desires in their hearts.

They want things and they don't get it and so it's churning, you see. It's the churning of a guilty conscience that's condemning them and it's ever there.

It's the churning of troubles in this life and having to go through them without God. It's one worry after another, one suffering of the hard consequences of sin after another.

[15:16] How can they have peace with God when they're at war with Him? How can they have peace within when they're at war with God, knowing in their conscience that He's coming back to judge me and to punish me and that there is only and always only a breath between me and eternal torments?

How can such a person have inner peace? No, they are like the troubled sea. There is no peace, says my God for the wicked.

That's the root cause. It's the heart that's at war with God. That's the root cause of all the disturbance of the peace inwardly and outwardly.

God. There is no peace with God and therefore no peace within and no peace with others. James says that all the outward fighting and warring and killing and strife that goes on in our world comes from sinful desires that battle within us.

You want something but you don't get it. You kill, you covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel, you fight, you do not have. There's the trouble.

[16:39] It's the heart trouble that causes the failure of peace. And that sinful, selfish heart that demands our way is going to bump into other sinful, selfish hearts that demand their way.

And therein is our strife. Neither one of us want God's way. we want our way. And that's the potential for war. In homes between nations, in churches, in schools, in workplaces, the sinful, selfish heart is a nightmare waiting to happen.

It destroys the peace. Well, you know, it was no different. In 700 B.C., there was a new world power on the rise, Assyria.

spreading its terror and darkness and fearful gloom over all the world. And it was precisely then that God sent his people Israel, a promise of peace by the prophet Isaiah.

To us, a child is born. To us, a son is given. And the government will be on his shoulders. He will be called wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting father, prince of peace.

[18:03] And of the increase of his government and peace, there will be no end. He will sit on David's throne, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. peace. What a king. What a prince. A prince of peace.

I wonder if we grasp the magnitude of that promise. Of the increase of his peace, there will be no end. No end to this peace that he brings.

He himself will make an end of war and abolish peace and establish peace that will never end. Not on some distant planet, but on this very blood-stained earth.

It's so worn with war and constant strife. Right here, he will establish peace forever. That wasn't the first prophecy of this peacemaking king, and nor would it be the last.

[19:12] We sang of Micah's prophecy as he spoke of a coming ruler from Bethlehem who would arise and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, and they will live securely.

For then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth and he will be their peace. And so they can dwell in security because his greatness will extend to the ends of the earth.

There will be no place where his peace does not reign. He himself will be their peace. Micah 5.5. So the Old Testament sprinkles these bright promises of peace among the generations of war.

So that war-weary people longing for peace might not lose heart, but even more importantly might put their hope in the only one who can bring peace, the prince of peace, the king of peace, the God of peace, Jehovah Shalom.

The Lord is our peace. He's coming, the prophet said, and he is the one who will establish peace for us. He is the one who himself is our peace and he makes war cease to the ends of the earth.

[20:33] He breaks the bow, he shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire. All the instruments of war, what will they become? Fuel for the fire. And it's under his reign that swords will be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks and nations will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.

No more terrorist training camps in Pakistan, no more West Point, no more Annapolis, no more training for war, for there will be no more war.

He comes to bring an abiding peace. Now that's the promise folks for this world. And what is and what is promising to be so far apart that we may wonder can it really be many centuries past without any sign of this peace or of this peacemaker, this prince of peace.

Long lay the world in sin and error pining till he appeared. Two thousand years ago when the time had fully come, God sent his son into the world to be born of a woman born under the law to redeem those who were under the law.

The prince of peace came out of the ivory palaces into a world of woe and of war he came. and he came even when Israel was under the heel of that great war machine, the Roman Empire.

[22:15] There had been 400 years of silence in heaven. God was not speaking to his people through the prophets as he had in the Old Testament.

Not a word from God, silence. And she pines away under the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Greeks, the Romans.

And suddenly God begins to speak once more to his people through angels and prophets. You remember John the Baptist, the last of the Old Testament prophets was sent first as a forerunner to announce and to introduce the prince of peace to Israel.

And John was born while the humanity of the Son of God was still developing within the womb of the Virgin Mary. Jesus, the Son of God, is still a fetus in Mary's womb And his cousin John is born! And when John was born, you remember his father Zechariah was enabled to speak once again. And speak he did. He spoke by the Holy Spirit this prophecy concerning the destiny of his little baby, boy, John.

[23:31] Luke 1 And you, my child, you will be called a prophet of the Most High, for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven, to shine on those living in darkness, darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet, where?

Into the path of peace. He's coming, this one that Isaiah said would come, the child born to us, the son given, the prince of peace.

He's coming to us, and John, you'll go before him, and he's coming from heaven to shine upon us in the midst of our darkness and gloom, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Because we've missed the way of peace. We've turned away from the way of peace. We have not known the path of peace, but the prince of peace will come and guide our feet back into the way of peace.

And on the night when this prince of peace was born, an angel announced his birth to some shepherds outside of Bethlehem today in the house of David, a savior has been born to you.

[25:07] He is Christ, Messiah, the Lord. And that's just what we need, a savior, to save us from God's wrath, to save us from our sins.

And suddenly the whole sky lights up, with a great company of the heavenly hosts, praising God and saying, what are they saying? Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to men on whom his favor rests.

Peace on earth. This is why he's here. This is the effect his coming will have.

This baby will bring glory to God in the highest and will bring peace to men on earth. he's the one who will bring this peace to earth.

Now the fourth question. I haven't told you how we're dividing this. We're to number four. We've got five or six. How, how does he bring peace to the earth?

[26:11] How does he bring this promise peace to earth? Well, he does it in two stages. And at his first coming, he dealt with man's greatest need of peace with God. Remember we said there will never be true peace with ourselves, with our neighbor, with the environment, until we first have peace with God.

So when he came the first time, he came to establish, to work out a salvation, that there might be peace between God and man. That's the fountain from which all other peace flows.

peace. So Jesus comes as the ultimate peacemaker. The only mediator between God and man. There's the warring parties.

We're at war with God. And because of our sin, God is at war with us. Everything in our nature is anti-God. We want our own way, not your way. And everything in God's holiness is anti-sin.

There's a problem for you. How can God and sinners dwell together when their very natures are so opposed to each other? Well, there is one to come between, but only one.

[27:20] There's just one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. And so in his first coming, he goes about the work of reconciling these enemies, making peace between them.

And he does it in an amazing way. Isaiah told us how he would do it. The same prophet that said the prince of peace is coming and of his peace there will be no end. Do you know how he will establish peace?

He was wounded for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. Now hear it. The punishment that brought us peace was upon him and by his stripes we are healed.

How does he establish peace between the holy God and sinful men? The punishment that brought us peace was upon him.

That takes us to the cross, doesn't it? It takes us to the heart problem. Sin is such an offensive thing to God. It strikes at the very being of God.

[28 : 36] It would ungod God if it could. Sin is the thing that God hates and the thing that brings down his wrath and his eternal punishment.

And so God cannot be at peace with us as long as our sins are unpunished. He must. He is determined to punish our sins and nothing will stop him.

But in boundless mercy, God has laid on his own son the iniquities of his people. He has made him who had no sin to be sin for us.

And once our sins were laid on him, he bore them to the cross, the place of punishment. And there on the cross, he was punished for our sins.

And because he bore all the punishment of God's wrath that we would have endured forever and ever, our sins are blotted out.

[29 : 39] They're wiped off of the books, the record books of heaven. They no longer stand against us. They've already been punished. God's wrath has already fallen upon them.

And so he has brought us peace. The punishment that brought us peace was upon him. The apostle Paul says the same thing, Colossians 1:20, Christ made peace through his blood shed on the cross.

Though you were enemies of God, he reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight without blemish and free from accusation.

How can a sinner be free from accusation before a holy God? Well, God punishes his sins on Jesus Christ. And because he paid it all, there's nothing left to pay.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[30 : 51] Peace with God comes through justification. It comes from God declaring us righteous. No more declared a sinner. Why not? What happened to those sins? He put them to Christ's account and he was punished for them and he put all of Christ's righteousness to the account of each one who believes so that we're counted righteous before God.

And therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Notice it's justified by faith.

Faith always looks away from self, always looks away from anything of my doing. It always looks to another, even to Jesus and his righteousness and it receives and relies upon him as he's offered to us in the gospel.

And that's how we have peace with God. And when we have peace with God, we also get peace within. We get the peace of God when we are at peace with God.

What is the peace of God? Well, it's that deep inner sense that it is well with my soul.

[32 : 07] On my bad days, on my days that are like the troubled sea, it's well with my soul. Because the punishment that Christ took for me has brought me peace with God.

He's for me. He's no longer against me. In this trouble, today's trouble, he's with me, he's for me, he's in me, he's around me, he's under me. He's no longer against me.

It is well. All is well. All is well. He's mine. That's the peace of God.

The peace of God. Since God is no longer condemning us, my conscience is no longer condemning us. When through faith in Christ our trust is, justice smiles and asks no more.

And if the justice of God is asking no more from me, then I can smile too. And my conscience can smile on me and say, no longer guilty. You're right with God.

[33 : 22] He's for you. He's with you. And my soul takes a deep breath and says, all is well. That's the peace of God.

What a blessed thing it is to have this inner peace. A heart at peace gives life to the body, the Proverbs say. The peace of God that transcends all understanding guards your heart and mind in Christ Jesus.

It garrisons, it surrounds, it protects your mind and your heart. Because when we're at peace with God, we enjoy the peace of God. You see how Jesus is bringing peace to the earth, making peace with God, putting in the hearts of his people the peace of God.

peace of God. And then he so works in our hearts that he gives us peace with others, peace with one another.

You see, being joined to the ultimate peacemaker Jesus, we now become peacemakers ourselves. His spirit dwells within us. It's Jesus who says, blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the sons of God.

[34 : 45] Who are the sons of God in this world? They don't go around with an S on their forehead. They don't have a particular dress or some marker.

No, Jesus says you'll know them because they're peacemakers. Those are the sons of God. Those are the ones that know the peacemaker, the prince of peace because they've been set free from their idolatrous love of self.

Do you know what causes problems between John Heaney and other people? It's my idolatrous love of self. I love myself. I want my way. It's going to be my way or else. I want to get the last word in.

That doesn't make for peace, does it? Because there's other people that are just like John Heaney and they want their way and there we have the clash of wills and there we have the warfare. But when Jesus Christ saves us, He saves us from that idolatrous love of self. And now He's teaching us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

[35 : 55] And the Holy Spirit within us is producing the things that make for peace. peace. The fruit of the Spirit is peace.

And He makes us peace loving. We're now willing to make personal sacrifices to maintain peace with others. We don't have to get the last word in. We don't have to have it our way anymore.

We want God's way. And though others are for war, we are for peace. And when a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

So we let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts. We make every effort to maintain the unity of the body in the bond of peace. As much as it depends on us, we live at peace with all men.

And we do those things that make for peace. You see, we've been made peacemakers by the Prince of Peace. So that even in this life, and especially in the church, and in our relationships with other believers, we're able right now to taste the peace of God on earth.

[37 : 06] A foretaste of the perfect peace to come. So through Christ, even now, we enjoy peace with God, the peace of God inside, peace with each other.

But this peace on earth is not yet all that was promised. It's not perfect, is it, brothers and sisters? That perfect peace, without interruption and without end, will only be realized when our Prince of Peace comes back the second time.

And he's coming with salvation for his people and judgment for his enemies. You see, this peace, this world peace, it will not come by thinking world peace.

You've seen those bumper stickers, haven't you? If we could all just think world peace. No, it won't come that way. We will not usher in this world of peace.

It will not come by man's collective efforts at bringing world peace. It will rather come in spite of all man's failures at peace.

[38 : 22] And in the fullness of time, just as he came the first time, in the fullness of time, so in the fullness of time, Jesus will come back the second time.

The prince of peace will come back the second time. It will be his bodily return to judge the world in righteousness. It will take one final battle to bring this abiding peace.

And he will totally crush Satan's head beneath our feet and cast him and all of his minions into hell. And he will destroy all his enemies, all those who have not obeyed the gospel of peace, who have not accepted his terms of peace, to repent and to believe on him.

And they will be cast into hell where day and night they will never know peace and never know rest forever. And then the prince of peace will make everything new.

He'll make a new heavens. He'll make a new earth, the home of righteousness. He'll finish the work of sanctification on his people and every one of us will be sinless without spot or blemish like our Lord Jesus Christ.

[39 : 40] He's coming to make a new heaven and earth, the home of righteousness where the effect of righteousness will be peace. And the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever.

And when all the people dwelling on that new earth are righteous, then peace will reign on earth in perfection.

And at last the shalom that we all long for will happen and it will be the way it's supposed to be. Everyone living at peace with God, with one another, peace inside, peace outside with their environment.

And nothing will make us afraid. Even the wolf and the lamb will lay down and feed together. And you, you will go out in joy and be led forth in peace and the mountains and the hills will break out in song and the trees of the field will clap their hands peace.

And he will be your peace. This is the one born of Mary. This is one who came to be the prince of peace, to bring glory to God and peace on earth to men on whom his favor rests.

[40 : 59] I come to point five and it's this. Will you be there to enjoy this glorious peace forever? Will you be there? It all depends on what you do in this life with the gospel of peace.

Isn't that a beautiful phrase? It's rightly called the gospel of peace because it comes offering the terms of peace. If you would have peace with God, here are the terms.

It's not keep all my commandments and work harder and do more good than bad. No, it's just own your sin and come and throw yourselves upon Jesus Christ for mercy.

trust in him to save you. Turn from your own way that you've been going and come back to God's way, the way of peace. He is the God's way of peace.

Come to him. And there can be no peace with God apart from running up the white flag of absolute unconditional surrender.

[42 : 08] You can't cut deals with the prince of peace. It's absolute surrender. All I am, all I have, all I want to be, have mercy upon me, Jesus, and he'll save you.

Do you know Christ is present in the preaching of his word, and he's making the offer of peace again this morning. It's the most amazing thing. You can find it throughout the scriptures. He, personally, through his instruments, is here making this offer of a peace treaty with all who are at war with him.

He's filled the earth with his ambassadors to make his appeal through us. And so I plead with you, on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

Make your peace with God. Come and surrender in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ. Let them come to me for refuge.

Let them make peace with me. Yes, let them make peace with me. That's his voice. Come to me, all you are weary and burdened.

[43 : 21] You weary with all the strife and terror and fear and nagging conscience? Are you burdened down with all your troubles that have arisen because you are striving against your maker?

Come to me, Jesus says, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. If you come to me, I'll give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your soul.

For my yoke is easy and my burden! light. Can you say that about your burden of sin is it light?

Is it easy? Jesus' burden is light and easy. Has your burden of sin given you rest? Soul rest?

That sense that all is well because God is mine, Christ is my Savior, he is my peace with God. Do you have soul rest?

[44 : 29] That's what he gives to all who come to him. As the prince of peace came riding into Jerusalem for the last time, he said, if you, only you, had known on this day what would bring you peace, but now it is hidden from your eyes.

They had the prince of peace among them. They had the only one who could ever make them at peace with God. And they missed!

him. He was a stone of stumbling, a rock of offense. They took offense at him, they stumbled over him, and they missed their opportunity for peace.

So unnecessary. Do you know, what we've heard this morning is God's announcement to you, who this is, and why you need him. You need him.

You're at war with God because of your sin. Jesus takes the punishment that brings us peace. if we will just come and turn from our sins, trust in him to save us.

[45 : 38] Beware of false peace. There's always been those to preach peace, peace, when there is no peace. They dress the wounds of my people as if they were nothing severe.

They don't call my people to repent. They promise you can keep your sin and no harm will come to you. Peace, peace. God's love is unconditional. He loves us all just the way we are.

There's no coming judgment for you. That's just for them and them. Peace, peace. Ezekiel refers to these false prophets as men who, when they see the breaches and the breaks and the cracks and the walls that surround the city, instead of repairing them, they just put a thin veneer of whitewash over them so that it looks good.

But it's not good. And God says, I'm going to bring a storm so violent that will bring your wall down. And you will be destroyed in that day along with your false peace.

I want to warn you to beware of all the voices that are promising us peace today apart from the prince of peace and full surrender to him.

[46 : 55] Politicians, preachers, false religions, counselors, all telling us peace, peace.

Get rid of all the negativity, all the feelings, just wipe these guilt feelings away. Just think peace. And it won't stand up the day of judgment.

But Jesus is God's way of peace and he gives real peace. The gospel is a gospel of peace and it brings tidings of great joy.

I want to see you there. I want you to be enjoying that full peace in this life and forevermore come to this Savior today. Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with you all. Amen.