

Isaiah 9:2-7
“Jesus Is Our Peace”
Third Wednesday in Advent

December 19, 2018
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Vicar Otterman

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God, Our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

[Introduction: A World at War]

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ. The topic for today’s sermon is peace, specifically peace from conflict, fighting, and war. I did some research, and I found out that there are 61 different armed conflicts going on around the world right now. Approximately 136,144 people have died in these conflicts during the year of 2018.

If you look back in history, you will find that people have always been at war. War is something that humanity has never been able to shake. No matter how many people cry out for peace, we never seem to get much closer to it.

[War With God]

The reason we cannot make lasting peace with each other is because, ever since we were kicked out of the Garden of Eden, our world has been at war with God. From the moment humanity fell into sin, it has struggled against God, waring against His will, because God’s holiness demands that all sinful things be under His wrath. And in the weakness of sin, people believe that God is their enemy who wants to destroy them.

The problem with trying to fight God is that we cannot hurt Him – all we could do is disobey Him. And the problem with disobeying Him is that we end up hurting each other and ourselves in the process. Cain murdered his brother, Abel. Jacob fled from his brother Esau after stealing his birthright. Joseph’s brothers sold him into slavery. The strife between brothers became conflict between tribes which became war between nations, transforming family disfunction into global disfunction. Because there is no way to fight against the Almighty God, Creator of the universe, people end up fighting each other and fall deeper under God’s wrath.

[Agent of Peace]

But God had a plan to end the war. It would require sending someone into hostile territory to be born as a human baby. That person would need to be able to live a

perfect life, train others to continue the mission, and put himself on the line for the sake of peace. God knew just the man for the job, His Eternal Son, the Second Person of the Trinity through whom all things were created.

We can talk about God's plan like we talk about the plot of good spy movie filled with secret agents and political intrigue. God sends his best agent on a top-secret mission to end the biggest war of all time. But first He sends out other agents known as prophets to make preparations for the Hero. These prophets went around and spread the Word that God was going to send someone who would defeat the unrighteous and bring peace to the world.

Special agent Isaiah spread the word that the child who would be born would be called "Prince of Peace." Special agent Micah sent the details that operation "Prince of Peace" would begin in a little inconspicuous town called Bethlehem. And special agent John, a.k.a. The Baptist, recruited people to the cause and prepared the way for Jesus, God's ultimate agent.

[Mission Accomplished]

As with any good action story, there would have to be a confrontation with the enemy, a battle, and probably some bloodshed. There were some who thought that Jesus would take control of the nation and lead his agents in a victorious yet bloody battle against the evil Roman Empire.

But Jesus had bigger fish to fry than the Romans. He was going straight to the source, the power behind the powers of darkness. He was going to take down death itself, and he wouldn't have lead an army into battle to do it. For this mission, only the blood of one man would be necessary.

Knowing that His own death would satisfy all of God's wrath against humanity, Jesus let himself be taken in by the enemy. Never before could humanity touch God, but now that Jesus was both God and man, this was their chance to strike. This was their chance to kill God himself.

So the people arrested Jesus, flogged him, and hung him on a cross to die. Just as it appeared that the human rebellion had achieved a great victory against God by killing His Son, the truth and brilliance of God's plan was revealed. Jesus died knowing that he would rise to new life on the third day and that in doing so, the

chains of death that enslaved God's people would be broken, and the power of sin to separate us from God would be conquered.

The mission was a success. The plan was brilliant. What appeared to be a terrible defeat turned into the most glorious victory in history. God's wrath was spent. Jesus took all of it for us. Which means that now we no longer have to fear death, nor is there a reason to fight against God any longer. He won the war, not by crushing humanity, but by destroying our reason to fight.

[*The Fight Is Over*]

The war is over. Jesus took God's wrath upon himself and brought peace and reconciliation between heaven and earth. When we are with Jesus, death has lost all of its threat.

Of course, our sinful nature that wants to wage war against God still clings to us. It tries to trick us into thinking that God is against us and that we are still under his wrath. But unlike Adam and Eve, we have Jesus who has already reconciled us with God. He is present with us via the Holy Spirit in our Baptisms, and He forgives and strengthens us with his body and blood in the Lord's Supper. As long as we cling to the promise of life that we have in Jesus, sin has no power and no weapon that can sever us from our God.

Jesus is our Prince of Peace. The war is won. As the Apostle Paul writes, "since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (*Romans 5:1*) We were once far away from God but have been brought near to Him through the blood of Christ. (*Ephesians 2:13-14*) Thus, when there are wars and rumors of wars and when life bombards us with one thing after another, we can rest assured in the peace we have in Jesus. Amen.

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)
