



SERIES: “What Child is This”

“Prince of Peace ”

Pastor Walt Quick

December 22, 2019

[Series Sermon Recordings](#)

SUGGESTED SUPPLIES

Note cards (or paper) and pens.

[Discipleship Resources](#)

QUESTIONS? Email Abby: abby@highrock.org

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

HOW TO USE: *The three sections below (connection questions, sermon questions, and application) represent the three connections we emphasize at Highrock: connecting to **God’s People**, connecting to **God Personally**, and connecting to **God’s Purposes**. Select at least one question from each section or create questions that are more specific to your group.*

CONNECTION QUESTIONS

Choose ONE of these that fits your group, or modify it so that it will fit your group better. These can make great **opening questions** or **ending questions**. If you have had a really in-depth conversation, ending on a light note can help transition to concluding your time together on a less intense question.

1. Weekly Check in: Use a few minutes at the beginning of your time to follow up on any action items shared from last week. Was there a next step or application challenge that they took on this past week? What did they learn about themselves and following Jesus?
2. Set a time for one minute per person. Then go around and share your highs and lows for the week.
 - a. Or: What stands out as a place, time, or person where you noticed God in your week?
3. What stood out to you from the sermon this week?

SERMON QUESTIONS

Use a **couple of the questions** below or make up your own. You can always begin with: “Do you have any questions about what you heard in the sermon this week?” Or, “What stood out to you from the Pastor’s sermon?”

1. **Sermon Reference:** *“In each of these moments it felt like life was fine, safe, ordinary even, but in an instant everything was different. All of a sudden the world around me felt like a threat, and I was made aware just how fragile I am. Have you ever experienced something like that? Everything is going good and then suddenly- boom! Chaos. Disruption. Terror. Sometimes these moments are big and dramatic,*

whether they are natural disasters or terrorist attacks. But often they're not, yet they can feel just as disruptive. Maybe it's a call from the doctor with a diagnosis that changes everything. A meeting with your boss that ends with your job on the line, or maybe gone altogether. A call or text in the middle of the night. An outburst from a relative around the holidays...If you ask any one of us, do you want to feel differently, do you want to feel peace we'd say "uh yeah, obviously." But the challenge for us is that we don't know how because there is always another Monday, or breaking news notification, or conflict at home."

- a. Think for a few minutes and then share: When you think of peaceful moments, or things being peaceful, what comes to mind?
 - b. Are there sounds, sights, smells, places, people that are peaceful for you to experience?
 - c. Consider a time you have experienced this type of interruption of "peace."
 - d. How might that experience/s put you on your toes trying to prevent that disruption again?
2. **Sermon Reference:** *"We try to engineer peace on our own terms, but that doesn't tend to really work out either. You may have heard the expression "looking for love in all the wrong places" and that can apply for peace as well. This can work out a few different ways. Some of us will self-medicate in an effort to escape from the disruptions and conflicts in our lives. We're so tired from being "on" all day that when we get home we just want to disengage... We think we're getting peace, but really we are just ignoring reality, which leaves us even more ill-equipped to deal with disruptions when they come...Others of us will try to find peace through self-protection. Nothing can get to me if nothing can get to me! And because many of us are smart and successful, we know how to craft our worlds in a way that means nothing can affect us if we don't want it to. Maybe we're not contained to a literal **castle** or **bubble**, but we are able to carefully control our space."*
- a. Do you tend to engineer peace in your life or in your relationships? What does that look like?
OR, Have you experienced being on the receiving end of someone trying to manufacture peace/control?
 - b. In your day/week what are some of the ways you work to manage disruptions to order and peace?
 - c. Are there spaces which feel out of control or where you feel more on-guard than others?
 - d. Or, in the absence of being able to control those stressful "interruptions" what are some ways you manage the feeling of not being in control, feeling anxious, overwhelmed, stressed?
3. **Sermon Reference:** *"If we were walking around at night and all of a sudden the sky light up around us, we'd probably think we were being attacked. We'd feel vulnerable, we'd want to find cover, we'd be afraid just like these shepherds were because we are so used to being in a world in which disruption is characterized by violence and chaos and fear. **(Luke 2:10)** But something different was happening that night. This wasn't like any other intrusion. The first thing the angel tells them is not to be afraid. Because what's breaking in isn't cause for alarm, but cause for rejoicing! The angel is bringing "good*

news of great joy for all people.” The one they have been waiting for has come. **(Luke 2:13-14)** And with him comes a proclamation- “peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

- a. Consider what Pastor Walt shares above in the sermon reference. What do you make of Jesus being the **Prince** of Peace?
 - b. What do you make of Jesus having authority to bring peace?
 - c. Even though they were experiencing the presence of God, it was so different and unexpected, they were afraid. Can you relate to the Shepherd’s reaction? Why or why not?
 - d. What might disruptive peace look like in your life?
4. **Sermon Reference:** *“But what if peace weren’t something we had to create on our own, but were simply invited to receive? This is what the angels were celebrating with the shepherds! Friends, God’s favor rests upon you, and with it comes his peace. It is good news of great joy for all people! When we say yes to the Prince of Peace, we receive that same peace. God sends the Holy Spirit so that we might be peaceful like Jesus was peaceful. Jesus was a non-anxious presence in the world. Some take this to mean that **Jesus** was just some idyllic, indifferent, la-de-da kind of guy. He wasn’t bothered by anything at all. But that’s not what Jesus was like, and that’s not what it means to be non-anxious. It is abundantly clear that Jesus cared deeply about injustice and sin and evil. **(Matt 21:12b-13)** He overturned tables in the Temple that were exploiting people who desired to connect with God. **(Luke 19:41-42)** He wept at the hard-heartedness of Israel. **(John 11:38 MSG)** He approached the tomb of his friend Lazarus with great anger towards death, even though he knew he was going to raise Lazarus from the dead! And it is that knowledge that made Jesus non-anxious. Jesus had peace because he knew how this story was going to end.”*
- a. What are some of the examples you have of Jesus being peace to people in difficult/ emotional/ threatening times? What do you notice about how Jesus acted or spoke?
 - b. Share about a time you were feeling stressed/anxious and someone was a non-anxious presence for you. What was that like? How did it help? What was it that they did or didn’t do (or say)?
 - c. What might it look like to hold the tension of discontent with things that are hard and un-peaceful with the knowledge that God will bring ultimate justice in the end?
 - d. Are there ways you might ignore the peace God is inviting you into by holding on too tightly to anger and frustration?

APPLICATION

1. **Sermon Reference:** *“Peace should be baked into the culture of any healthy church. **(Matt 5:6)** After all, Jesus called us to be peacemakers in our world. At Highrock we have a “passing of the peace” in our liturgy, which has been practiced by Christians for centuries, but in a way that is very different than we experience now. For us it is a greeting, a chance to say hello to those sitting near us, which makes sense in a larger community. But back when churches were much smaller, the passing of the peace wasn’t*

about saying hi- it was about reconciling with people in the church who you might have conflict with...Brothers and sisters, our entire world is different because the Prince of Peace has come. We no longer need to be afraid or anxious or concerned that suffering will be the end. And so even as we wait, we wait with hope, because one day Jesus Christ will make all things new. This is one of the incredible gifts that we have been given this Christmas.”

- a. This advent season, what would it mean for you to bring peace to those around you?
- b. How can peace break into the lives of your neighbors, friends, and colleagues?
- c. Are there ways that you can surprise those around you with something unexpected and wonderful, just like Jesus surprised the world with his coming?
- d. As you consider the example of the ancient church reconciling with those in their community before communion, is there someone who you might need to reconcile with?

CLOSING

Summarize the key points of your discussion and encourage people to **share one action step** they could take during the next week based on what they have shared. **Take time to pray together.** Write those down and start next week by checking in with how it went, or better yet, check in during the week!

RESOURCES

SERMON SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

Luke 2:8-18

“And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

*“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”*

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.”

SCRIPTURE STUDY: 5Cs

If you are interested in studying the scripture more deeply, one method is to use the 5 Cs. Read through the passage and move through each C. The goal is not to move through them quickly, but to really consider each section. If you wanted to study the passage together, you, as the leader should take some time beforehand to complete the Cs and it can be helpful to have group members come prepared with the first 3 already considered. Then, as a group, you can briefly talk over some of the points and have a longer conversation about curiosities and conclusions. This study tool will be posted within all of the discussion questions.

- **Context:** What is the literary context of the passage? What comes before? After? Context within whole book? Relation to main idea of section, book, testament, whole Bible?
- **Christ:** How is Jesus revealed here? If in OT, prefiguration, typology, prophesy, implications for Christ's person and work? How is he needed, anticipated, fulfilled?
- **Crux:** What is the main idea? Try and find a section of the text that states it and have reasons for why that is the main idea? How do the other points support it?
- **Curiosities:** What is surprising about this text? Controversial? Mysterious? Shocking?
- **Conclusions:** What are the implications for our lives? Application? How do we think, feel, and act in light of this text?

READING THE BIBLE

[Pastor Dave has provided a few suggestions](#) for Bible reading plans, daily devotionals, and Bible commentaries to help you understand God's Word as you familiarize yourself with it.