

GLENWOOD COMMUNITY CHURCH

December 6, 2020

The Father's Peace

*John 14:15-31*

Ben Cunningham

[song: "Breath of Heaven"]

*Pastor Nathan:*

Thank you, Corrine, for opening our worship service so well. Welcome, it's good to see you here. It's good to be together. Welcome to those of you who are joining us online at home; we're glad you're a part of our gathering today. Speaking of opening our worship service well, I also want to-- thanks to the teams who went and cut down those trees using very large saws, I think, and also to those who came and decorated them. What a great way to just set the mood and tune our hearts to the Lord this advent season.

This morning, after this service at 11:45, Eric and Lindsay Meland - who are right down here - are going to be in here sharing about their ministry in Hungary. They have been busy at work, and God has been busy at work this year, despite COVID, working in Hungary, and they'd love to share with you about what that's looked like. They're here in the states, and they're going to be here through the beginning of January and then head back. So, they'd love to have you. You're all welcome; we have space. Also, if you're tuning in online you can go to this url, [glenwoodcc.org/meland](http://glenwoodcc.org/meland), and watch the live stream.

Would you join me now in prayer as we begin our service?

Lord, hear our prayer. Let our cry for help come to You. Do not hide Your face from us. When we are in distress, turn Your ear to us. When we call, answer us quickly. Lord, the words of the psalmist ring true for us today. Many in our body are weighed down by concern, concern for those who are sick, concern for those who are preparing for a procedure at the hospital, for those who are out of work, for those who are mourning the loss of a loved one this holiday season, for those in the middle of strife with friends or conflict with family, Father, for those who feel all alone today and for those who fear what tomorrow may bring. Lord, we know that we are weak and feeble. We're tossed around by the storms of life. Our faith and our obedience shrink so quickly when darkness falls and the path narrows. But Father, we know that You have not forgotten us. We know that we are more valuable to You than the birds and the flowers. And yet today, for many, our hearts are still so heavy. Have mercy on us, Father. Hear our cry for Your help like we read in the Psalms. Strengthen our faith and our obedience. Preserve us by your Spirit, that we might do Your will. The brokenness of creation, the chaos of our world, the power of the evil one-- we know these things are greater than us, but they are not greater than You, O God. You're the Creator of this world, You brought order out of the chaos, and in Christ You have won victory over the serpent. Sin, death, the spiritual forces of darkness have been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And today we gather as Your people because You have won the victory, not us. Father, we need You. We need You to revive us again today by the power of Your Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead. Strengthen our faith in His work for us, a complete forgiveness won, of a home that He's gone to prepare for us for all eternity. And Father, give us His resolve to follow where You lead, to say no to sin, to seek righteousness, to use our gifts and talents for Your kingdom, to tell others the good news that has broken into our dark world. Lord, Your years go on through all generations. In the beginning You laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain. They will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing, You will change them and they will be discarded. But You remain the same, and Your years will never end. Our hope is in You alone. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

*Ben Rico:*

Amen. Thank you, Nathan. As we continue in worship today, Nathan and I are going to lead all of us in a responsive Scripture reading. We're going to look back at the truth of God's word, the everlasting and powerful truth that He has given us in Scripture to learn, in this case today, about peace: what is real peace and where does true peace come from, even in our search, recognizing that there's a reason we have to search for peace, and there's a God who so loved the world that He sent His Son to bring us peace with Him again.

So, as we read this morning, we're actually going to ask this half of this room to read with me, and the other half of this room will read with the esteemed Nathan Nymeyer. And even for those reading from home, we welcome you to join us and-- you do have the opportunity to choose who you would rather read with, and we won't hold it against you in either case. Well, actually I should speak for myself; you can talk with Nathan later. But in any case, we do relish the opportunity to praise our Lord together, that He has given us peace. But as we long in this advent season for peace in so many different ways, we do look forward to the return of Christ, and in that we long for peace that only He can bring to His people. Let us go to Scripture together. Would you read with me?

[Scripture reading]

[Isaiah 57:14-21]

Ben:           And it shall be said, "Build up, build up, prepare the way, remove every obstruction from my people's way."

*Nathan:       For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:*

Ben: "I dwell in the high and holy palace, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit,

*Nathan: to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.*

Ben: For I will not contend forever, nor will I always be angry;

*Nathan: for the spirit would grow faint before me, and the breath of life that I made.*

Ben: Because of the iniquity of his unjust gain I was angry, I struck him; I hid my face and was angry,

*Nathan: but he went on backsliding in the way of his own heart.*

Ben: I have seen his ways, but I will heal him;

*Nathan: I will lead him and restore comfort to him and his mourners, creating the fruit of the lips.*

Ben: Peace, peace, to the far and to the near," says the LORD, "and I will heal him."

*Nathan: But the wicked are like the tossing sea; for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up mire and dirt.*

Ben: There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."

*Nathan: II Chronicles 15:27. And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him, "Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin."*

Ben: The LORD is with you while you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you,

*Nathan: But if you forsake him, he will forsake you.*

Ben: For a long time Israel was without the true God, and without a teaching priest and without law,

*Nathan: But when in their distress they turned to the LORD, the God of Israel, and sought him, he was found by them.*

Ben: In those times there was no peace to him who went out or to him who came in, for great disturbances afflicted all the inhabitants of the lands.

*Nathan: They were broken in pieces. Nation was crushed by nation and city by city, for God troubled them with every sort of distress.*

Ben: But you, take courage! Do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded."

*Nathan: Micah 5:25. But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,*

Ben: from you shall come for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.

*Nathan: Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel.*

Ben: And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.

*Nathan:*     *And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.*

Ben:           And he shall be their peace.

Would you pray with me?

Heavenly Father, we thank You for Yourself being our peace. We thank You that in Christ we have the hope of peace, reconciliation with our God, and even here on this earth now, as children of our heavenly Father, peace in our own hearts, the wonderful peace with You, God. We pray that You would show us today the many ways that we seek peace outside of You. Convict us of those ways, and help us to even more fully long for the real peace that we have with You in Jesus Christ. In Jesus name, Amen.

Annaliese will sing, "O Come O Come Emmanuel." And as we long together for real peace in God, as we long for the return and final peace in Christ, would you please stand and, with me, would you raise out your arms. Lift out your hands; raise your arms as we long together for God's peace.

[music: "O Come O Come Emmanuel"]

*Ben Cunningham:*

Let's start by going to the Lord in prayer this morning.

Great God, we do confess that You are our peace. We are full of trouble, of conflicting priorities and desires. And this morning, God, we simply seek for Your peace. Would You give us Your peace this morning. By the power of Your Holy Spirit

because of the accomplished work of Your Son, give us the peace that only You can provide. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

One songwriter spoke of the year 2020 in this way: "For many, 2020 has felt like one long groan." Between the pandemic, struggling economy, the isolation of quarantine and online school, civil unrest, racial injustice, wildfires, hurricane, noisy election, and divisive public discourse, this year has reminded us again and again of our mortality, lack of control, and collective brokenness. As 2020 comes to a close, we long perhaps like never before for hope, love, joy, and peace. In other words, 2020 has primed us for the ache of advent.

Advent is a season of hopeful waiting in the midst of a world that has a diverse portfolio of anxieties and trouble. Advent simply means "coming," and it focuses on the first coming of Jesus Christ in order to stir expectation and hope for His second. For the month of December, we're going to change course from I Peter and look at a great section of Scripture, at this issue of advent in the Upper Room Discourse in John 13-17. Go ahead and open your Bibles with me there.

We're going to look at the beginning part of this discourse in John 13:1-4 just to give us some context for what's happening; here's what it says. *"Now before the feast of the Passover, Jesus, knowing that His hour had come that He would depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had handed all things over to Him, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, got up from supper and laid His outer garments aside; and He took a towel and tied it around Himself."*

As the Passover feast nears, the Passover Lamb prepares. His hour had come, and Satan's scheme, it was a go. And Jesus, as He prepares for this brutal departure, He doesn't find sympathy and compassion and help from His disciples. Instead, He extends His love towards them in preparing them for His absence. It wouldn't be

long before these disciples would be scrambling and scattered and looking for lasting peace.

Can you resonate with the need for peace? Right now, today? Many of our holidays have been a strange mixture of joy and disappointment and a lot of other things. And this morning we get to look at a peace that doesn't just last until the next governmental order or political crisis or social failing. This morning, we're going to discover that when Jesus departs according to plan, He also leaves His peace behind. And it's not only for these disciples who were in this room, but it's for us as well.

Jesus, in chapter 13, has washed His disciples' feet, and He begins to address their troubled hearts by telling them that He's preparing a place for them and that He and the Father are working in unity in this effort. And we pick it up in John 14:15-31. I'm going to read it in whole, and we won't be going verse by verse; we're going to kind of see the cycles that John has for us in this text. So John 14:15-31. Jesus says,

*"If you love Me, you will keep My Commandments.*

*"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, so that He may be with You forever; the Helper is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him; but you know Him because He remains with you and will be in you.*

*"I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you. After a little while, the world no longer is going to see Me, but you are going to see me; because I live you, also will live. On that day you will know that I am in the Father, and You are in Me, and I in you. The one who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and the one who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will reveal Myself to him." Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, 'Lord, what has happened that You are going to reveal Yourself to us and not to the world?' Jesus*



*answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will follow My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our dwelling with him. The one who does not love me does not follow my words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.*

*"These things I have spoken to you while remaining with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and remind you of all that I said to you. Peace I leave you, My peace I give you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, nor fearful. You heard that I said to you, "I am going away, and I am coming to you." If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe. I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he is nothing in regard to Me, but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded me. Get up, let's go from here."*

Verse 27 is going to be our home base this morning, and we're going to look at four different aspects of the peace that Jesus leaves when He departs. John's writing style is a little bit different in that it's cyclical and he'll revisit themes, and so that's why we'll do that a little bit differently this morning.

So first, notice the environment in which Jesus speaks these words. You could look in any direction in this upper room and find anxiety. The biggest issue and the biggest anxiety producer is the fact that Jesus is going to be leaving. He says over and over again-- Verse 19, *"After a little while, the world will no longer see me."* Verse 25, *"These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you."* Verse 30, *"I will not speak much more with you."* --and over and over again. If you read the entire discourse, He just keeps saying it, again and again. And it's easy to miss the weight of that statement. But if you don't know how the story ends, and you've left your career, and you've left your homeland, and you've temporarily left your family to follow this rabbi who has presented very upside-down ideas and created new

categories of thought for your theological and biblical understanding, which you're still in process of knowing and coming to conform your life to, to hear that He's leaving would have been devastating. You'll notice as you read this section that this section is full of questions, because the disciples are reeling from this news. So, that's the main anxiety producer in the room.

But it's not just that. Not only is Jesus leaving, but evil is present. Jesus says in chapter 13 that someone is going to betray Him. Satan enters into Judas to begin this work of betrayal. Peter boasts of his great allegiance to Jesus, to which Jesus tells him, "You're going to defect three times." So evil is present. Betrayal is present. Jesus says in verse 30 that the ruler of this world, referring to Satan, is coming.

And last, Jesus Himself is troubled. Both in chapter 12 and in chapter 13, John tells us that Jesus is deeply troubled. And that's new for the disciples. And it's because Jesus knows what's going to happen in these next few days.

And so this is a very, very strange scene to decide to say the words "Peace I leave with you." It would have sounded very bizarre. But it's precisely because their hearts are going to be tempted to be anxious and tempted to be fearful in the not too distant future.

And so what does this show us? First, it shows us that the peace that Jesus leaves behind is not the absence of difficulty or the arrangement of favorable circumstances, that Jesus issues this promise in the midst of paralyzing uncertainty. And thank God for that, right? I mean, think about the situation we're in right now! Imagine if our peace was dependent on COVID kind of dying out, and the government getting stable, and these social issues being resolved. Imagine how long we would wait. But here, in the midst of chaos, Jesus says, "peace is available to you."

Jesus specifies. He says, "the peace that I am leaving with you is not the version that the world gives." Well, what is that? What is the peace that the world tries to give us? It's this knock-off version of peace that's either out of reach or out of touch. It's either out of reach because people try to insulate themselves through wealth or through political power, and they have this temporary short-term experience that they can buy their way out of things or they can swing their weight around to get what they want and create kind of a false peace. But many people are not in that boat. And even the people who are, it doesn't last very long. So it's out of reach. So the world is left to presenting peace that's out of touch. We get these generic, "we're all in this together" type of commercials that sound great. And this initial presentation that sounds so attractive and possible, and yet then you look at the fine print, and you get down to the details, and you realize that these offers of peace cannot touch man's fundamental problem, and we cannot create the kind of unity and peace that the world desires just by rearranging some of this deck furniture, right? That's not going to work. So it's either out of reach or it's out of touch. It's like the false prophets in Isaiah and Ezekiel who would prophesy and say "Peace, peace!" when there was in fact no peace at all.

Have you ever tried to calm your troubled heart with the world's version of peace? I've noticed an uptick in my own stress levels these days. And I don't know if it's because of all the decisions around holidays, or the fears in my life are getting a little more complicated, or what the source of that is. But last Saturday I was pursuing the world's version of peace through productivity. I had eaten well - right? - Thursday, Friday, those were going-- got a little stir crazy thinking of something to do. So, my great cure to stressing about things that I can't control is to fix or repair the things that I can control. And as bizarre as it sounds and as stupid as it is from the outside, I thought a clean garage was just going to be the ticket. If I could just get the garage settled-- Needless to say I did not find the peace I was looking for, and neither did my family either-- found an irritable husband and father, for which I had to repent.

And by Monday I kind of realized what was happening, and I sat down on the chair in my bedroom as an anxious person, kind of typing out thoughts and feelings, which led to prayer, which led to God instructing and giving hope. I also realized I was preaching on peace this Sunday, of all things, which was timely. And I sat down an anxious person, and I got up a person with peace. And my circumstances hadn't really changed.

Where do you go looking for peace? Could it be that our lack of peace is indicative that we're looking in the wrong place? Jesus says that His peace is not as the world gives. That His peace is not due to the absence of something, but due to the presence of Someone. So what could be so substantial and glorious and massive to foster peace in us even though there are prompts around us to worry? What could be that glorious?

Which leads to our second point, that the peace that Jesus leaves behind is given in proximity to a Person. Look at verse 16 and 17. *"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper so that He may be with you forever; the Helper is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him; but you know Him because he remains with you and will be in You."* Look at 26, a similar promise, *"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and will remind you all that I said to you."* Peace is a Person.

And Jesus says, "There will be another Helper that is sent," meaning He is the first Helper, the first *parakletos*, the first advocate or counselor. And He has cared well for His disciples; He's told them what to do and taught them about the kingdom and been patient with them and convicted them and all the things that were needed. You see, these disciples' true fear is being spiritually orphaned, to be left without God and left without resource. And if Jesus was going away, then how was this going to work? And Jesus says, "another Helper is coming, the Holy Spirit."

Let's look at the second Helper. He is, first of all, a teacher. He is the Spirit of truth. It says, "*He will teach you all things,*" - which is a lofty goal for a teacher - and bring to your remembrance all that Jesus said to them. Jesus is saying, "Guys, class is still in session; the education will continue; help is still here; you will know what you need to know when you need to know it." And John actually shows that the Spirit does this earlier on in His Gospel. He goes out of his way to show this in John 2:21-22. After Jesus says that He'll rebuild the temple in three days, John comments, "*But the temple He had spoken of was his body. After He was raised from the dead, His disciples recalled what He had said; then they believed the Scriptures and the words that Jesus had spoken.*"

Do you see what that was the result of? How does the church shift through all the theological and cultural issues that it faces in the book of Acts? How is that possible? How do you and I come away from sitting down and reading God's Word being spiritually benefitted and enlightened and illuminated to the truth that should orient our lives? How does that happen? By the personal ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit. What a gift we've been given in the Spirit, this second Helper who is a teacher!

We also learn in verse 16 that this Helper will never leave. It says, "*I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper*"-- and these would have been so important for the disciples to hear-- "*so that He may be with you forever.*" He's not going to leave. That Christians will never be alone, never lacking in divine resource, no matter how lonely we may feel. This holiday season, we have the Holy Spirit.

And in verse 17, it says that He'll be closer even than Jesus was. He says at the end, "*You know Him because He remains with you and will be in you,*" which fulfills this massive promise from the stream of the Old Testament, like Ezekiel 36 when He says, "*I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.*" This promise is massive, and it's why Jesus is able to say things like John 16:7, "*But I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away; for If I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you.*"

Imagine! We look from a position of envy at these disciples who could walk and interact with Jesus. But Jesus is saying that we're in an advantageous position because of the nearness of the Spirit.

We see, too, finally, that this Spirit is a sign to the disciples. It says in verse 17 that the Spirit is one "*whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him.*" And the reason why the world cannot receive the peace that Jesus gives is because it comes through the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit; it's a fruit of the Spirit. In other words, peace that Jesus gives is not a completed task list; it's not a mindset; it's not an environment. It's a Person; it's proximity to a Person. This is how Jesus is able to offer peace in these crazy circumstances.

In thinking of an example of that, there was a missionary named John Patton who describes being hunted by the people he was trying to serve. And he ended up hiding in a tree waiting. And here's an account of his description of what this experience was like. He says, "Being entirely at the mercy of such doubtful and vacillating friends," - overstatement of the year, - "I, though perplexed, felt it best to obey. I climbed into a tree and was left there alone in the bush. The hours I spent there live all before me as if it were but of yesterday. I heard the frequent discharging of muskets and the yells of the savages, yet I sat there among the branches as safe as in the arms of Jesus. Never, in all my sorrows, did my Lord draw nearer to me and speak more soothingly in my soul than when the moonlight flickered among those chestnut leaves and the night air played on my throbbing brow as I told all my heart to Jesus. Alone, yet not alone. If it be to glorify my God, I will not grudge to spend many nights alone in such a tree, to feel again my Savior's spiritual presence, to enjoy His consoling fellowship. If thus thrown back upon your own soul alone, all alone, in the midnight, in the bush, in the very embrace of death itself, have you a Friend that will not fail you then."

The presence of the ministry of the Holy Spirit is of massive import to the believer. And we see that it's through this channel that the Father and the Son also, we experience communion with Them. And this makes sense of kind of the bizarre

statements that Jesus says that seem to contradict-- that raised Judas's question in verse 22 when he says, "Lord, how is it that we're going to know You and interact with You, and yet the world won't?" Well, it's because the Holy Spirit is the means by which we commune with the Father and the Son. Jesus says, if you look back in verse 21, He says, *"The one who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me, and the one who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will reveal Myself to him."* 23, *"Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will follow My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our dwelling with him.'"* We commune with the Trinity because of the sent Holy Spirit.

Question: how much of what we fear, or are anxious about, would be alleviated simply by remembering that God is not only near to us, but indwelling in us? If peace is proximity to a Person, then this changes how we should pursue peace, doesn't it? We can pursue peace through accomplishment. Like, many of you right now may think that my peace is contingent on getting my Christmas cards out and getting my presents bought and figuring out what in the world am I going to do with my plans with my family-- and as soon as all those things will be resolved, I will have everlasting peace. I mean, you feel that in this season, right? There's times when we can think our peace is attached to our accomplishment. We can think that peace is found in certain places: homes during the holidays, or being on hike out in nature, or in a calm bath, or something. But here, this is saying that peace is found in proximity to a Person.

D. A. Carson says, "The successor Jesus has appointed is not ill-suited to His task, far from it." Listen to this: He is to be to us what Jesus was to His own disciples during the days of His flesh. Let us worship and be thankful. Let us familiarize ourselves with the ministry and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Thirdly, the peace that Jesus leaves assumes an active and obedient faith. That's peppered throughout. In verse 15, *"If you love me you will keep My commandments."* Verse 21, *"He who has My commandments and keeps them is the*

*one who loves Me.*" 23, *"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word."* Verse 24, *"He who does not love me does not keep My Word."* It's this, by repetition, Jesus is explaining that proximity assumes obedience. Proximity assumes faith. Knowledge that Jesus is the Son of God means that you'll listen to Him, and proximity to the Holy Spirit means that as He illuminates His word, that it will have an effect. D. A. Carson says, "Loving Jesus, obeying Jesus, and having faith in Jesus constitute elements of an indivisible whole." That's a great way to describe what is assumed here behind the words of John. Because we can't claim to love and believe in the Lord Jesus, and then distrust what He says and answer only to ourselves. If that's the pattern of our life, then we don't yet understand the glory and the majesty and the wisdom of our Lord.

Now, this certainly doesn't mean that we're not without sin. This is one of the gracious aspects of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, right?-- is the temporary but targeted discomfort that He creates in the children of God when we sin, when we chase false peace, and we run after empty cisterns. And He's willing, in His grace, to starve those faulty affections so that we would find real life again. Notice the grace that comes to us through conviction of our sin and through the ministry of this Holy Spirit. His surgery is specific; it's restorative; it's our grace.

Jesus, as we find in our text, is our example in this. Look at verses 30 and 31, specifically 31, He says, *"But so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father has commanded me."* This is how Jesus navigates the trouble of the cross; He submits His will to the Father and obeys Him. So, the peace that Jesus leaves assumes an active and obedient faith.

Question: is our lack of peace a byproduct of a lack of submission to Jesus? Is our fear simply the result of not trusting in what God has said? And I don't say that glibly; I don't say that like it's the easiest thing in the world. But is there a relationship between those two that-- say we're anxious about our status as God's child. Romans 8:15-16 says this: *"For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you've received the spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry,*



'Abba! Father!' *The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.*" That's a promise to claim for an anxious heart. Are you intimidated by the power of sin? Does temptation seem inevitable? Galatians 5:16. *"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh."* Are we fearful of death? Maybe that's got a grip on us in new ways because of what's going on. Romans 8:11. *"If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to you mortal bodies through the Spirit who dwells in you."* Are you so troubled and distraught that you don't even know what to pray for? You don't know where to start? The Spirit helps you then as well. Romans 8:26, *"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words."* See, the peace that we seek, John assumes there's a backdrop of trusting in His words and following through and obeying what He says. So, maybe a part of how we approach troubled hearts or anxiety is to revisit the authored work of the Scripture, right, and return to these promises and to trust what they say.

Lastly, the peace that Jesus leaves is only possible because of Jesus' coming and leaving. The peace that Jesus promises assumes His first advent, right? And it also assumes the events of the weekend that would follow John 14. Jesus is our peace as we were reminded of from Micah 5 earlier. That from long ago it was predicted that there would be one who would come who would be this Prince of Peace, this embodiment of peace for God's people, and that He would be a shepherd. *"He would shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, and the majesty of the name of the LORD His God. And they will dwell secure, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth. And he shall be their peace."* That's what Micah prophesied. And so, this promised ruler and shepherd is God's peace. And where the angels announced when Jesus was born, for good reason, *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased."* It's kind of a foreshadowing of this peace that Jesus will leave behind. When God came to earth, the Prince of Peace came to earth and made peace possible.

But just because the peace of God arrived on earth doesn't mean that we would necessarily share in it. We were hostile to His help. We didn't want the peace that he offered. So Jesus, by His death, would crush the head of the serpent by being crushed on our behalf. And, ironically, when Jesus diverted the wrath of God onto Himself by dying on the cross, peace terms with God were forged. The blood of the cross was God's signature to permanently purchase His people, and it was the events that would follow that would allow our Lord to say, *"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you."* He arrived as the Prince of Peace, and He became the terms of our peace as He left. As it says in Romans 5, *"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

And so, this advent season, praise the Prince of Peace who suffered in order to leave peace behind. In all this effort in leaving peace behind, He meant for us to find it, right? He expects that His people will thrive and live off of the peace that He leaves through the ministry of the Holy Spirit while we wait for the final version of that peace to arrive. And it will.

So, to revisit; questions to talk about over thanksgiving leftovers if you're fortunate to still have them. One, where do you go looking for peace? When we look for peace, what are we looking for? Something or someone? Are we lacking peace because we lack an active and obedient faith? And lastly, are we remembering that peace is God's accomplishment, not ours?

He left us peace that we may have it, so may the Holy Spirit lead us and prompt us to find new avenues of peace that flow from this Gospel. As we prepare our hearts of communion here in a minute, I want to encourage us to take a minute to reflect. I would like for us to consider how Christ's sacrifice has made peace possible, and ask the Holy Spirit to give you insight into how God's words specifically addresses what's troubling your heart today. Your need for peace is a need for proximity to a Person, and because of what Christ has done, we have access. So let's take a minute to do that before we take communion together. Let me briefly pray.

Heavenly Father, I pray You would use this time. Thank You for Your offer of peace in the midst of troubling times. And thank You that Your offer was secured by the death and resurrection of Your Son. Give us insight. Help us to chase the ways that we chase false peace, and give us peace because of Christ. We pray in His name. Amen.

Let's take a minute to reflect. You can also ready the elements that we'll be taking in just a moment.

[music: "Be Still My Soul"]

As we finish preparing the elements, we'll return to the upper room to hear from Luke 22. It says this, *"And when the hour came, He reclined at the table, and the apostles with Him. And he said to them, 'I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.'* And He took a cup and when He had given thanks, He said, *'Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.'* And He took the bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke and gave it to them saying, *'This is my body, which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.'* And likewise the cup, after they had eaten, saying, *'This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.'*" Let's partake of both elements together.

Let me pray.

Father, we thank You for forging the way of peace. We thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ. And we pray that we would not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, we would make a request known to You. You are a near Holy Spirit; help us. Help us to experience the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension, all our understanding, and may You guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. We thank you for the Holy Spirit. We

pray for His leading and for His power in our life to find peace. In Jesus' name,  
amen.

*Ben Rico:*

Amen. In this last song, would you worship with me as we praise our God of peace,  
as we praise the God who designed a plan to bring us to peace with Him. Would you  
praise our God with me?

[music: "O Praise the Name"]

Amen. Our God is good. Go in peace.