

PRINCE OF PEACE ISAIAH 9:6 (E)

Eastern Europe was a hot-bed of political intrigue during the 18th century. In the century when our country would fight for its independence, some very important diplomatic struggles were happening between France and Russia. Matters were very tense between the two countries. Empress Elizabeth of Russia was among the strongest and most extraordinary monarchs of those days. And she was very suspicious towards King Louis 15th of France. That is until Lia Da Bo Mont showed up on Russian soil from France. Lia was a breath of fresh air. Lovely in her beauty, delightful in her wit, with a scintillating personality. She quickly took Russia by storm, and became a favorite for Empress Elizabeth. It was not too long before she gained the queen's confidence and was invited to the palace for a private conference. It was only then, in the secrecy of their solitude in the palace, that Lia revealed to Elizabeth her true identity. She had been sent to Russia by none other than Louis 15th, and cutting open the binding of a book, she gave to the Empress a letter signed by Louis himself. King Louie had known for some time that there were certain officers in the Russian court who were opposed to France, and were intercepting and changing any communications between the monarchs. And so, in the interest of peace, Louis had hatched this daring diplomatic maneuver. He had disguised a captain in his army named Charles Deone, and had sent him to Russia as Mademoiselle Lia Da Bo Mont. Louis would be assured that this communiacae, a request for diplomatic relations and peace, would be delivered directly to Empress Elizabeth herself. And as a result of this daring move, peace would be restored between Russia and France- they would

not go to war. And France, then would remain stable so they she could devote her attention and give encouragement to another war that would soon begin on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean- our revolutionary war. Some historians claim that we could never have ultimately won our war of independence without the support of France. But it was Louis 15th's pursuit of peace with Russia that even made it possible for that support to be given.

People have always been interested in peace, and they have designed ingenious plots in their attempts to secure peace. But the history of mankind is somewhat represented by this brief anecdote. For one effort for peace so often leads to another participation in war. The history of mankind is the history of war after war after war with brief periods of peace interspersed as interludes. In spite of our inner desire to live in peace, we seem to always find ways to continue to make war against one another.

We have been privileged as a country to not have a major war fought on our soil during any of our lifetimes. Yes, we have been involved in many wars as a nation –from World Wars 1 & 2 right up to this present war in Iraq, but we have not had to experience the destruction of war personally in our back yards. Yet there has arisen a new threat today –the threat of terrorism. So the department of Homeland Security has been formed in an attempt to defend us against terrorists who would love nothing more than to wipe out millions of innocent Americans. The vast majority of people living in the world today are longing for a lasting peaceful environment. Yet in so many parts of this wounded planet that we call earth, people continue to suffer under the ravages of war. And throughout this

entire global village, people live their lives under the cloud of the threat that some self-deceived terrorist will gladly take their life with his in some kind of perverted sacrificial act to his god. All the while, we speak and long for peace, real peace, true and lasting peace.

In the midst of his war torn world, Isaiah introduced a Messiah who was to come whose name would be "Prince of Peace." His peace would be unique in that it would be more than just cessation of war. Yes, one day this Messiah will bring an end to all external conflict. But His peace would be much more than just that. This prince of peace would have the ability to bring inner tranquility. I like the definition that George Morrison gives to Biblical peace. "Peace is the possession of adequate resources." That's what Jesus Christ can give to us. Adequate resources to deal with any situation in life- no matter how seemingly advantageous or tragic. Christ can bring true and lasting peace into our lives for his name is prince of peace.

During this Christmas season, we have been looking at the names of Jesus Christ given by the prophet Isaiah hundreds of years before his coming.

He would be called wonderful- showing his distinctiveness in our lives

He would be called counselor- because he helps us with decisions in life

He would be called the mighty God- for he alone is strong enough to deal with the demands of life

He would be called everlasting father- for as the originator of all that is eternal he came to give to us a new eternal dimension in life.

And now this morning- He would be called the prince of peace.

READ Isaiah 9:6.

ISA 9:6 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.

I would like to discuss with you 4 evidences of Christ as the prince of peace on this Christmas Sunday morning.

1. Jesus Christ evidenced his name "Prince of Peace" in his personal character.

We are very suspicious on one who speaks of a desire for peace but is very pugnacious in his personal life- always looking for a fight. We also question one who is always talking about inner peace while personally evidencing high levels of anxiety.

Such was not the case with Jesus. He came as the prince of peace, and he evidenced his name in his life and character. While others were fretting and sweating in that small ship in the midst of that life-threatening storm on the sea of Galilee, Jesus was asleep in the back of the boat. While the demoniac at Gadara struck terror into the hearts of the disciples, Jesus calmly approached him and addressed him. When Peter declared war in the Garden of Gethsemane, pulling out his sword and attacking Malchus the soldier, Jesus calmly brought peace to the situation. In every scene of his life that was filled with stressful agitations, we never find Christ manifesting anything but peaceful character. He never appeared

to be in a hurry, yet he always had time for everyone. He was the epitome of one who had inner peace. This certainly should not surprise us for his name is prince of peace. And Jesus Christ certainly lived up to that name.

2. But notice secondly with me that the major work of Christ performed on the cross of Calvary was designed to bring peace between man and God.

Colossians 1:19-22 says, "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in Him (Jesus Christ), and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation."

As a nation, we are most fearful of those who have the potential to do the greatest damage to us. That is the reason for our concern to protect ourselves against Al Qaeda –because we experienced their destructive hatred on September 11, 2001.

If we have a natural tendency to fear those here on this earth who have the potential of doing the greatest bodily damage, how fearful should we be of God, who is able now only to bring unlimited bodily damage, but who also has eternal destruction in his hands. Jesus demonstrated this perspective when he said, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both the soul and body in hell." (Matt. 10:28) As we consider the potential of destruction that God has, it should bring great fear into

our hearts.

But happily, the prince of peace has provided reconciliation, peace between God and humans through his atoning death upon the cross. Now we can have peace with God. And this peace is not like the cheap counterfeit so often offered by the world- a short-term peace at any cost postponing the inevitable for another generation to handle. No, this is a peace based upon the solid foundation of righteousness.

God's holy and righteous demands have been met in Christ's death. The perfect and sinless lamb of God has paid the penalty for sin so that now it would be contrary to God's just nature to invoke punishment on those who have received His complete pardon. Because Christ died upon the cross, we can have peace with God- a peace not based upon a flimsy treaty or an emotional feeling, but a peace based upon the fact that our sins have been atoned for. They have been paid in full. Righteous demands have been met. As the Psalmist said, "Surely his salvation is near those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land. Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other." At the cross, righteousness and peace met and kissed each other. Peace with God was attained through Christ's meeting the righteous demands of God.

Isaiah later on in his prophecy would make a beautiful statement with regards to the relationship of righteousness and true peace. Listen to it found in Is. 32:17- "The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever." Isn't that an insightful statement. True peace, lasting peace can only come as the by-product of righteousness. And that kind of

peace brings eternal confidence. That kind of peace is offered to the Christian because of the cross. Because God's righteous demands have been fully satisfied, the believer who knows complete forgiveness of sins has true and eternal peace.

3. But notice further that the companionship of Christ is evidence of his being the prince of peace. We can imagine the inner turmoil that the disciples were undergoing as Jesus was preparing them for his upcoming death. They had not planned on this. Their ideas had included a Messianic Kingdom, an overthrow of the Roman government, a Theocratic Rule with Christ, and many other glorious dreams, but the death of Christ was certainly not a part of their thinking. So when Jesus began to reveal to them the fact of his upcoming death, and the necessity of it for their spiritual good, they were finding these new concepts hard to accept. It was in the midst of Christ's final lecture to them, on the very night in which he was betrayed, just before the first celebration of the Lord's Supper, that he reassured them of his continuing companionship which would continually bring peace to their hearts.

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." John 14:27.

Jesus freely admitted in this statement that there is a counterfeit peace that is offered by the world. There is that temporary cessation of trouble that can be found in a bottle, or in drugs, or in other temporal means of finding peace. But the problems come back after the high wears off, and they come back worse than they were before. This is not the kind of peace that Jesus Christ offers with his companionship. The peace that he promised to leave with the disciples was his

very person. "I will not leave you as orphans, he said to them; I will come to you."

John 14:18.

Jesus Christ can bring true and lasting peace into our hearts. His very presence brings that peace because his name is prince of peace. When we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, when we invite him into our lives, he comes and dwells with us forever. And because he is the prince of peace, it is only natural that he would bring peace into our lives. As we receive him into our lives and commit ourselves to follow his direction for us, we begin to see life from a different perspective. The problems that weighed so heavily upon our shoulders before now begin to build character in our lives as our faith and confidence grow. We have that inner assurance that all is right between us and our creator. We have the potential to really love and care for other people. Our minds turn from criticism of what we do not have to appreciation for all the good gifts that He brings into our lives. And then we are in a position where he can bring even more good gifts to us, for we can now handle even greater blessings. Christ's presence with us brings peace into our lives, for his name is prince of peace.

4. Yes, His character was evidence of his name- prince of peace. The cross and all that His death accomplished was evidence of his name- prince of peace. His continuing companionship bringing peace into our lives is evidence of his name- prince of peace. But I want you to notice one more evidence with me in closing.

His coming is going to be the final evidence of his name- prince of peace.

The Bible says that in the last days there are going to be many who cry "Peace,

Peace" - but there will not be peace in this world. There will still be wars throughout the earth. No one will be able to bring the lasting peace that we so desperately desire. But there is coming a day when Christ will return as the prince of peace, and he will bring with him true and lasting peace.

Listen to these words written by Paul to the church at Thessalonica. These words were written in the context of future events- the people were confused about what was going to happen in the future.

Turn to and READ 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

1TH 5:1 Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, ² for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

1TH 5:4 But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. ⁵ You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. ⁶ So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. ⁹ For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁰ He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Could not these verses written during the first century be an appropriate commentary on our world today? Peace and Safety are the bywords today. Treaties that will guarantee our peace. Assurances that will abolish war. Yet with

all the assurances, wars continue throughout the world, and any thinking person can see how shallow another signed treaty like so many others that have been broken can be.

But there is one coming who will finally bring peace- because his name is prince of peace. Therefore, let us encourage one another for it appears that his coming is going to be soon- perhaps even this next year.

Jesus Christ- his name is wonderful, counselor, mighty God, everlasting father, prince of peace. But as we conclude our series we must ask ourselves in light of our study- what is our name? In light of this last paragraph which we read from the pen of the Apostle Paul in I Thess. 5- are we alert spiritually or are we spiritually asleep?

Most importantly, are we one who has put on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet? Are we clothed with the helmet salvation and the breastplate of faith and love? Have we accepted Jesus Christ as our prince of peace? If so, we can conclude this year with peace in our hearts and enter this new year with confidence.

His name is wonderful- He fills our lives with wonder. This shows His distinctiveness in our lives.

His name is counselor- he gives direction and guidance to our lives.

His name is mighty God- he alone is able to meet the demands which life places upon us, and he does so abundantly through his unlimited power that fills our life.

His name is everlasting father- he is the originator of all that is eternal.

Everything he touches becomes touched with eternity, and when he touches our life, we immediately have a new dimension in life, an eternal dimension.

His name is prince of peace- he alone can calm the disturbances of life. And he has evidenced himself as prince of peace by his character- he lived the life of perfect peace, by the cross on which he died so that we might have peace with God, by his continuing companionship by which he brings peace into our lives through his presence, and by his promise to finally bring eternal lasting peace to this earth when he comes again for us. If we have experienced these evidences in our lives we can enjoy the peace that the Prince of Peace brings into our lives today and also have great confidence as we look forward to his promised coming again to bring eternal peace to this world.