

December Teaching Theme: Advent

讲员 Speaker: Xie Fenfen

题目 Topic: For my eyes have seen your salvation

经文 Scripture: Luke 2:12

Monthly Theme: We are in the midst of Advent season on the Global Church Calendar. Advent means “the coming” and is a time when we both celebrate Jesus’ first coming and wait expectantly for Jesus’ return to make all things right. The Christian observation of Advent reorients us to a season of denial and self-examination rather than that of rampant accumulation, consumption, and self-indulgence so often experienced during the holidays. The Christian must choose formation in the ways of Jesus as opposed to the ways of the world. To explore what Advent seasons message to us we are going to examine Hope, Faith, Joy, Jesus’ Birth Narrative, and the Peace of God. This week we heard from Rev. FenFen on Luke 2:12. In light of Advent and our transition into the New Year, we are going to discuss the Peace of God - better known by the Hebrew word Shalom.

Resources:

Video: [Shalom/Peace](#) Video (Bible Project) [English]

Chinese Subtitles Available under Youtube settings.

Ice Breaker Question: How would you define the word “Peace”?

“Peace” in our modern English language means “the absence of conflict or war.” This meaning is sometimes used in the Biblical text but more often the Bible has a more robust idea in mind - “Shalom.”

Discussion Questions:

- (1) Read Jeremiah 6:9-15 together. Why do that the people say there is “Peace”? Why is there really “no peace”?
- (2) Read Luke 2:1-14 together. Why can the angels sing there will be “peace on earth”? In what ways does Jesus accomplish “Shalom” on our behalf? (Think beyond the passage).
- (3) Read Revelations 21:1-8 together. What characterizes the “New Heaven & New Earth” in this passage that helps us understand what “Shalom” will look like when it is fully realized?
- (4) Life is complex, full of moving parts, relationships, and situations. When any of these pieces of life are missing or broken your “shalom” breaks down and your life is no longer whole but needs restoration. What are some practices we can take up to begin experiencing “shalom” in our own lives?
- (5) This gift of peace with God, made available through Christ, places an ethical demand on the Christian to be “peacemakers.” True Peace is not just the “absence of conflict,” but requires taking what’s broken and making it whole, in our own lives, relationships, and in our world. What are some ways we can practice being “Peacemakers” in our context?

Important Notes (Pastor Will):

Notes on Q1: Shalōm becomes a pivotal term in the prophetic writings. It was the “false” prophets who, forgetting the conditions for national well-being within the covenant relationship, assumed God’s loyalty to Israel (Ps 89) would guarantee political peace forever (Jer 6:14; 8:15; Ez 13:10, 16; Mi 3:5). Against such popular but false security, the pre-exilic prophets proclaimed the coming judgment precisely as a loss of this shalōm due to Israel’s persistent disobedience, unrighteousness, and injustice (Is 48:18; Jer 14:13–16; 16:5, 10–13; 18; Mi 3:4, 9–12).

There was no “peace” because they were “greedy for gain” in economic and political power so they oppressed others and perpetuated injustice. No Truth-Telling.

Notes on Q2: Jesus accomplishes multiple levels of “Shalom” (peace) that we now experience by faith and will ultimately experience when Jesus returns to make all things right.

- Jesus made peace with God and Humanity through his death & resurrection (Romans 5:1). He restored to wholeness the broken relationship between humans and Creator God. We can experience this now through faith.
- Jesus models “Shalom” as the complete human we are made to be but have failed to be. We were created in the Image of God, called to rule creation as God’s representatives, Jesus fully takes up this mantle as the “Son of Man,” ruling as the “Truly Human One.” Now through Jesus’ life and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we are called to create “Shalom” in the spaces we occupy. We experience a taste of full “Shalom” now in our actions of faith (recall Sermon 12/06 on Christian Faith.)
- Jesus promised to bring about the fullness of “Shalom” upon his return.

Notes on Q3/Revelation 21:

- V1 “no longer any sea” - a vision of no more chaos, destruction, or evil. The sea is metaphorically used in Apocalyptic literature as the “depths of darkness that evil comes from,” characterized by unordered chaos.
- V3 & 7 - experiencing a fully restored relationship between Creator and creation, God and his people.
- V4 - death, suffering, and pain will be no more.
- V6 - a vision of providence. No longer any need or poverty. Not just a physical providence however but the ability to experience wholeness “drinking from the water of life.”
- V8 - hear what is being said before making assumptions. Evil, Corruption, Oppression, Broken relationships will be no more.

Notes on Q4:

Practices Ideas:

- Diving in Deep in your Relationship with God through the practice of Spiritual Disciplines.
 - Ex. Recall in Prayer and Thanksgiving God changes our perspective allowing us to experience “shalom” or insight in how to pursue “shalom.”
 - Bible Reading, Fasting, Commitment to Community, Sabbath, etc.

- Examining where you have potentially broken relationships and doing the hard work for restoring those relationships to health. This could include forgiveness, truth-telling, confession to wrong-doing, etc.
- Taking inventory of your physical health. God has created us as holistic embodied creatures who need to care for our physical self. Though we can't experience the fullness of physical "shalom" in our own doing or life, we should seek to care well for ourselves. Eating right, exercising, good sleep, balance work-life activities, etc.
- The same can be said of our mental and emotional health. We need to take inventory of these things, which is a foreign practice to start but will do you wonders..

Examples of Emotional Intelligence questions to ask yourself:

- How would I (or you) describe my communication style? Am I direct? Brash? Clear? Ambiguous? Subtle? Tactful? How would others describe my communication style?
- What effect does my communication have on others?
- How would I (or you) describe the way I make decisions? Do I tend to make decisions slowly or quickly? What factors influence me?
- How does my current mood affect my thoughts and decision-making?
- How would I (or you) rate my self-esteem and self-confidence? How do these qualities affect the decisions I make?
- What are my emotional strengths?
- What are my emotional weaknesses?
- In what situations do I find that emotions work against me, or cause me to do or say something I later regret?
- Am I open to other perspectives?
- Am I too easily swayed by the opinions of others?
- Should I be more or less skeptical? Why?
- Do I tend to focus on the positive or negative traits of others? Why?
- What traits in others bother me? Why?
- Do I generally give others the benefit of the doubt? Why or why not?
- Do I find it difficult to admit when I'm wrong? Why or why not?

Notes on Q5: The church is called to be unified through the "bond of peace." This requires humility, patience, truth-telling, and bearing with one another in love. Unity and Peace don't exist without these components.

- Ideas:
 - (i) Seeking justice and reconciliation.
 - (ii) Forgiving one another, not harboring grudges.
 - (iii) Acting in Non-Violence and refusing to promote violence (War)
 - (iv) Fostering environments of "barrier-breaking" hospitality.
 - (v) Loving your enemy and seeking their good (not at the cost of justice, but in the audacity of the Gospel - fight for justice out of love for the oppressed, not hate for the oppressor).

Sermon Summary (Elder Yin):

弥赛亚的记号

谢牧师, 12/27

一, 弥赛亚的记号

路2:12

洁净礼是马利亚, 与神是立约。

西面怎么知道这记号, 因圣灵, 不是圣诞节的记号而应该是弥赛亚的记号。
不是商业化的圣诞节。

记号重复出现

路2:34-35这孩子要造成兴起和跌到。西面这里其实用的记号

记号有祝福也有苦难, 歌: 马利亚你知道吗?

反对的记号意指, 弥赛亚记号祝福和牺牲, 马利亚的生耶稣喜事包含两方面。

基督进入我们, 有祝福也有受苦的一面, 希4:12-13, 挑战我们, 基督的信仰是对我们的挑战, 破碎我们, 今年有挑战, 其实是对的, 走在神的道路上, 蒙神喜悦的人是神要对付的, 神的道是活泼的, 是连接我们, 破碎的我们。成为完整。在基督里。神的道有功效的, 暴露我们的心里意念。神要让我们看到以前没看见的。闷心自问, 是不是让神掌管人生。是不是神所喜悦的

二, 西面的描写: 公义, 虔诚, 盼望, 圣灵, 启示, 未死前, 见神。通过查考圣经来查验, 通过服侍来查验。他一生就是要活出一个不与自己信仰矛盾的一生。常常我们活着试试神的真实性。印证神是否爱祂。西面不是, 是捍卫信仰。见耶稣诞生后, 可以去世了。Alfred delp 神父。刺杀希特勒失败后被捕, 双手绑着。写了很多圣诞反思。一九四四, 最后一天, 没有面包, 松了左手写反思文, 他祷告, 为什么苦难, 祷告给他带来力量和勇气。吊型, 活出不与信仰矛盾的生活。

西面说.....可以去世了。

救恩是.....照亮万人的光, 值得。我们可能未尝死味能进神的国,

Delp如果一个能发出一束光, 生命就值了

For my eyes have seen your salvation

Pastor Xie Fenfen

Luke 2:12-

1. The sign of messiah

Jesus went through Circumcision, later on, baptized by John the Baptist, he didn't need to do that, so to fulfill all righteousness, of Jewish rituals, and of purification of Mary

Luke 2:12 a sign, for the shepherds, a baby wrapped in a swaddling cloths, the shepherds recognized

Jesus, by that sign

A sign of Christmas

Nativity

Not just Christmas, Luke used the sign for the birth of Messiah, the arrival of King. Salvation came from this Jewish family

A quote of Alfred Delp, a priest, 12/27/1944 (WII)

Don't commercialize christmas, it's all about Jesus, not shopping etc

Luke 2:32-34 Simon, led by HS, got another sign—the target of dispute, or a sign of opposition.

These signs sustained the joy and pain, the song "Mary did you know?"

What did it mean "a sign of opposition", also "a sword will pierce your own life? " Your child will be a sign of opposition, meant that Mary's blessings included conflicts, tensions and sufferings

Heb 4:12-13

when we believe Jesus, we not only receive the blessings but also sufferings because of our believes. A knife of sacrifice

God also challenges us with these verses. Our faith is not chicken soup, Jesus should be the lord of our life, which changes our characters

2020 was a tough year for us all, we suffer it's a sign that we are walking in god's will. Those God favors are facing challenges.

The difference b/w believes and nonbelievers, our faith is a living faith.

God's words are double edged swords, expose our inner thoughts, rebuild our brokenness

2. My eyes have seen your salvation

Luke in 2:22 described Simon as a righteous, HS was on him, got the revelation of HS

Simon's devotion:

Careful, reverent, went through daily life like everyone else yet paid attention to the lead of HS

He was the kind of person, stable in his devotion, could be used by God, all his existence was for that moment, to make meaningful encounter with Jesus, afterwards he could be dismissed in peace, the true peace of Christmas displayed in Simon's life

The life of Father Delp

Arrested after failed assassin of Hitler, for half year in prison his hands were bound, at 37 years old he was hanged

He lived out his life, not contradict his faith. He got his strength through prayers

salvation: the light for the revelation to Gentiles and the glory for the people of Israel

End w quote from Delp "if there was a little more light and truth in the world through one human being, his life is worth living"