

In his epistle, James compares two kinds of wisdom: wisdom from the world and wisdom from heaven. One way to identify heavenly wisdom is that it is peace-loving. This is the wisdom that Jesus embodied, and calls us to spread as peacemakers in the world.

*Where do you see the world's wisdom at work today? How do we avoid being pulled into worldly attitudes?*

We are not only called on to avoid conflict, we are called on to sow peace.

*What opportunities has God given you to sow peace in your family, neighborhood, church, work, or friends?*

### **WRAP-UP**

The Good News is the Jesus was born the Prince of Peace. He brings peace between us and God by atoning for our sins and restoring our broken relationship. He offers us the peace that passes understanding when we come to Him with prayer, petition and thanksgiving. And He calls on us to sow peace in a world that desperately needs to hear the Good News we have to share – God is with us, and He is our peace.

### **Memory Verse**

*And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. -Philippians 4:7*

### **PRAYER (20 MIN)**

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: \_\_\_\_\_

Pray for your group members' needs: \_\_\_\_\_

*Challenge- Bring your anxiety to God in prayer, petition and thanksgiving this week and receive the gift of peace God has for you.*

## **“The Good News of Peace”**

### **Advent – Week #2**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the second week of Advent, we light the candle of peace. Jesus' birth ushered in the gospel of peace. He was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy that the Messiah would be born the Prince of Peace. But his arrival was quite different from the crowning of any other ruler. His kingdom wasn't ushered in by force or violence that the world was used to. Instead, He offered us the shalom or peace that brought wholeness and restoration to all mankind. And that is Good News.

### **Key Passage**

*Mark 1:1-8 NLT - 1 This is the Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God. It began 2 just as the prophet Isaiah had written: "Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, and he will prepare your way. 3 He is a voice shouting in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the LORD's coming! Clear the road for him!'" 4 This messenger was John the Baptist. He was in the wilderness and preached that people should be baptized to show that they had repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven. 5 All of Judea, including all the people of Jerusalem, went out to see and hear John. And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River. 6 His clothes were woven from coarse camel hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. For food he ate locusts and wild honey. 7 John announced: "Someone is coming soon who is greater than I am--so much greater that I'm not even worthy to stoop down like a slave and untie the straps of his sandals. 8 I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit!"*

## STUDY QUESTIONS

### 1. Good News

Mark begins his gospel by declaring that there is Good News; Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God has come. And everything Mark shares with his readers is good news, because through Jesus' life, death and resurrection we have atonement for our sins and peace with God. But he refers to a prophesy about a messenger preparing the way.

*Why was it important to the Israelites for Mark to make the connection between John the Baptist and Isaiah's prophecy? Based on what Isaiah was saying in the passage below, why was this Good News for Israel and for us?*

*Isaiah 40:1-3, 9-11 NLT - 1 "Comfort, comfort my people," says your God. 2 "Speak tenderly to Jerusalem. Tell her that her sad days are gone and her sins are pardoned. Yes, the LORD has punished her twice over for all her sins." 3 Listen! It's the voice of someone shouting, "Clear the way through the wilderness for the LORD! Make a straight highway through the wasteland for our God! ... 9 O Zion, messenger of good news, shout from the mountaintops! Shout it louder, O Jerusalem. Shout, and do not be afraid. Tell the towns of Judah, "Your God is coming!" 10 Yes, the Sovereign LORD is coming in power. He will rule with a powerful arm. See, he brings his reward with him as he comes. 11 He will feed his flock like a shepherd. He will carry the lambs in his arms, holding them close to his heart. He will gently lead the mother sheep with their young.*

*What was it that John told the people to do to prepare for the Lord? John announced Jesus' arrival, but we are awaiting His return. What if we apply the same preparations for Jesus' second coming? What should we be doing in anticipation of Jesus' return to "make a straight path through the wilderness" for Him? What things could you clear away in your own life that would give God better access to your heart?*

### 2. God's Peace Passes Understanding

*Philippians 4:6-9 NIV - 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me--put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.*

In his letter to the Philippians Paul tells us how we can receive God's peace. He begins verse 6 saying not to be anxious. But he doesn't stop there. Paul continues by telling us what we should be doing to obtain peace. We are to pray, petition and give thanks to God in all situations.

- *Pray- what is the thing you most want to bring to God?*
- *Petition - Are you ready to leave it in His care and ask Him to take care of it for you?*
- *Thanksgiving - What are you thankful for today?*

In verses 8 and 9 Paul encourages us to shift our focus off of those things that are going wrong, or that cause us pain. Instead, we bring into focus all the things that are good and right.

*What would you include on this list that deserves your attention?*

When we give God the things that cause us anxiety and focus instead on what is good and right, we will be rewarded with God's peace and His presence.

### 3. SOW IN PEACE

*James 3:17-18 NIV - 17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. 18 Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.*

*Matthew 5:9 NIV - 9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*