

the angels heralded His birth they proclaimed, “peace on earth”. As the resurrected Jesus appeared to his disciples, he began his conversation with “Peace be with you.” Peace accompanies the presence of Jesus.

John 6:67-69 NLT - 67 Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, "Are you also going to leave?" 68 Simon Peter replied, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. 69 We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God."

We have a choice to draw near and make Jesus the center of our lives or to search for peace elsewhere. Jesus asked His disciples if they were going to leave and Peter replied, “Where would we go?” Our eternal life begins the moment we make Jesus Lord. Wherever we go, the King is present and there is peace.

Take a moment to pray and reflect on your relationship with God, and your relationship with others. Is there an area of your life where you need to ask Jesus to enter and bring with Him the true peace of harmony and wholeness, the Shalom of God found only in Jesus?

WRAP-UP

In our key passage Jesus asks His disciples if they are going to leave. Being in Jesus’ presence is our choice. Peter responds to Jesus’ question by asking, “Where would we go?” We may try to find our peace elsewhere and seek other ways to sustain ourselves, but true peace comes from the Bread of Life, and can only be found when we let God’s Spirit rule and direct our lives.

MEMORY VERSE.

Simon Peter replied, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. - John 6:68 NLT

PRAYER (20 MIN) Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life.

Challenge – Holidays are notorious for filling our calendars and overwhelming us with events and activities. Set aside at least 30 minutes this week to sit quietly in God’s presence, and allow Jesus to restore your peace.

“The Presence of Jesus Brings Peace”

Advent-Peace - #2

INTRODUCTION

It may feel like we live in a uniquely turbulent time, but no matter where in history we look, we will find that peace has been elusive. Certainly, in our culture there is plenty of anxiety and conflict. And so, we find ourselves longing for peace. But how do we seek peace? Are we chasing the wrong things to bring us peace? Where can we find peace amidst circumstances that are difficult or painful? The answer is that we find our peace in the presence of Jesus.

Ice Breaker

Is there a special place you like to go to be at peace?

Key Passage

John 6:66-69 NLT - 66 At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him. 67 Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, "Are you also going to leave?" 68 Simon Peter replied, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. 69 We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God."

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Counterfeit Peace

We are all aware of our lack of peace. We feel it in times of discord and anxiety and fear. But when we look for a way to bring peace into our lives, we may be thinking that peace only as a byproduct of our circumstances.

If peace was a byproduct of our circumstances, what circumstances would you change to bring peace into your life? Financial security, health, compliant children?

Perhaps we have been misled to believe that our lack of peace is bound to our circumstances. When Jesus ministered on earth, he had a reputation for performing miracles. He healed diseases and fed the hungry. Crowds came to see and benefit from the miracles he performed.

John 6:26-27 NLT - 26 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, you want to be with me because I fed you, not because you understood the miraculous signs. 27 But don't be so concerned about perishable things like food. Spend your energy seeking the eternal life that the Son of Man can give you. For God the Father has given me the seal of his approval."

What did Jesus say was the problem with seeking to be miraculously fed? What was the meaning of Jesus' miraculous signs that Jesus wanted them to understand? What perishable things still drain our energy and our peace?

Changing our circumstances is ultimately a temporary fix. There will be other circumstances in life that threaten our peace. But we can have an eternal peace that only God can give through Jesus. Bread on the table or money in the bank may give us temporary peace, but that counterfeit peace evaporates when the next unfortunate circumstance threatens.

John 14:27 NLT - 27 "I am leaving you with a gift--peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid."

As Jesus prepared his disciples for His departure, He offered them the gift of peace. He specifically told them that they could not find this kind of peace in the world. The Greek word Jesus used for peace is *eirēnē*, and corresponds to the Hebrew word *šālam*. This type of peace not only means harmony with God, yourself and others, it also conveys the idea of completeness, or wholeness.

In what way does Jesus' peace bring us wholeness and harmony? Why is it impossible for the world's peace to bring us šālam?

2. The Bread of Life

John 6:51-52, 60, 66 NLT - 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever; and this bread, which I will offer so the world may live, is my flesh." 52 Then the people began arguing with each other about what he meant. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" they asked. ... 60 Many of his disciples said, "This is very hard to understand. How can anyone accept it?" ... 66 At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him.

As you would expect, when Jesus told His followers that they had to “eat his flesh” to live forever, there was a sudden exodus. But Jesus wasn’t offering them some-thing, He was offering some-one, the Bread of Life (v.51), and the Prince of Peace.

John 6:47-50 NLT - 47 "I tell you the truth, anyone who believes has eternal life. 48 Yes, I am the bread of life! 49 Your ancestors ate manna in the wilderness, but they all died. 50 Anyone who eats the bread from heaven, however, will never die. Matthew 6:11 NIV - 11 Give us today our daily bread.

Jesus compared the supernatural bread in the wilderness, manna, to the Bread of Life. What was the difference between those who ate manna and those who partake of the Bread of Life? What do you think it means to “eat the bread from heaven”?

When we share communion, Jesus said we are sharing in His body and blood until His return. Observing the sacrament is one very important way that we partake in the Bread of Life.

3. The Core of Peace is Jesus' Presence

Luke 2:14 NLT - 14 "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

Isaiah 9:6 NLT - 6 For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

John 20:21 NLT - 21 Again he said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you."

The presence of Jesus is at the core of peace. When Isaiah prophesied about the coming Messiah, he called Him the Prince of Peace. And when