

Lessons for The First Sunday in Advent

November 30, 2022

Psalm 122 (*ant. v. 6*) ~ *David's prayer for peace in Jerusalem and among her people.*

Isaiah 2:1-5 ~ *In the last days God will settle disputes and His people will live in peace.*

Romans 13:(8-10) 11-14 ~ *We should always be ready to live in the daytime of God's Kingdom.*

Matthew 24:36-44 ~ *When we focus on business as usual, we miss the business of the Kingdom.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: God's Promise of Peace

The universal dream of peace proclaimed by Isaiah will be realized when all people will walk in the light of the Lord. Then the Messiah will teach all nations his ways and settle all disputes. When that day dawns the deeds of darkness will be put aside and all people will be clothed in the Lord Jesus Christ and his righteousness. The only way to get ready for that day is to be ready at all times for the Lord's return. We are ready when we live in the peace of sins forgiven through Christ our Savior.

A PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Lord, stir me up with your power so that I may truly be ready to welcome Christ my Savior with the peace he has placed in my heart through his forgiveness of my sins. Keep me ready at all times; help me live by the light of the dawn of Christ's righteousness. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: Possessions that we often use to exercise power and authority over others are better used in the service of Christ's coming kingdom by showing love and restoring peace so that God's righteous rule may be seen in our lives as we await Christ's return.

OFFERING PRAYER: Lord, take these gifts we bring today
And let them build Your peace.
Use our lives in loving ways
To make our warfare cease. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: God has promised to restore this world to the peace He created when He pronounced it all "Good," but we think peace comes when we force others to live by our expectations, so we wield swords and shields to settle disputes. When God settles our disputes according to His righteous judgment we will have no need of weapons of war. Peace will reign in God's kingdom. He has already begun this peace by settling the differences of our sin through the life and death of Jesus Christ.

Questions to Consider: What is the difference between the cause and the effect of peace?

- What does Isaiah say it will take to establish peace in the kingdom of God?
- How does St. Paul define "love" in Romans 13?
- What is the point of comparison between the days of Noah and the coming of the Son of Man?
- What is the difference between swords and plowshares for cultivating peace?

Bonus on next page: a poem that describes human efforts to establish peace

Lady Liberty

A nameless fear assails my soul, and strife
constricts my aching heart. I see my sons
and daughters go to war against the ones
who wield the blade of terror's deadly knife.
These are my flesh and blood, my very life!
My dress is colored blue from smoking guns
with red that splatters on the hills and runs
into the endless shadows of the night.
Beyond the dark horizon, clouds of white
explosions are emblazoned on my eye.
My children sacrifice their lives for me
despite my cries of agony. Well might
their will for life be lost and courage die.
I know, for I am Lady Liberty!

- Gilbert A Franke, 10/17/07