

# CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS!

PEACE  
JOY  
LOVE  
HOPE





# **The Sign of Peace**

**(Luke 2:8-20)**

**Week #4 Advent: Peace**

# The Fruit of the Spirit

- <sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is
- love, joy, **PEACE**,
- patience, kindness, goodness,
- faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control;
- against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)

<sup>8</sup> And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

<sup>9</sup> And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear.

<sup>10</sup> And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

<sup>11</sup> **For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.**

<sup>12</sup> **And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."**

<sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth **peace** among those with whom he is pleased!"

15 When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us."

16 And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.

17 And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child.

18 And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.

19 But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.

20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

# Variations on the “Sign of Peace”

- A dove and olive branches





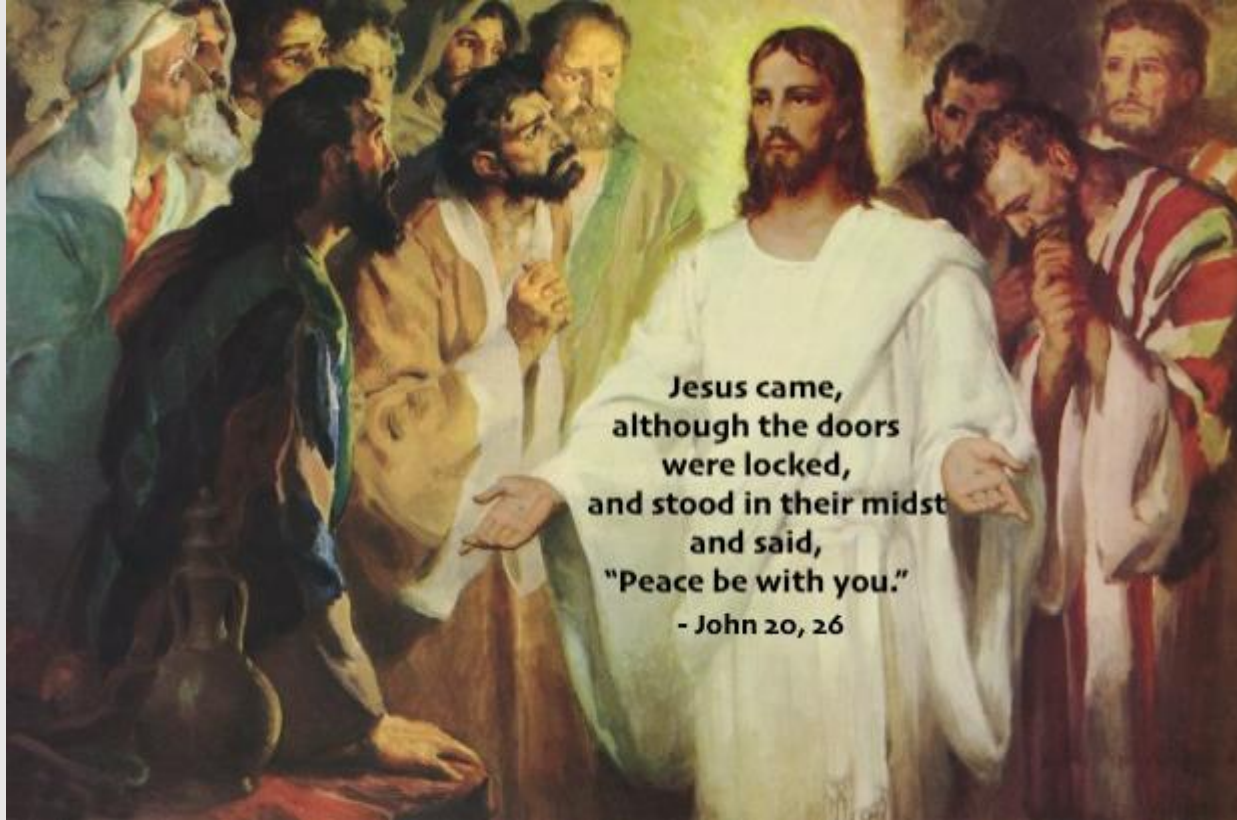
# The 1960s “hippie culture”



# Catholic meet-and-greet: “Let us offer each other the Sign of Peace”







Jesus came,  
although the doors  
were locked,  
and stood in their midst  
and said,  
"Peace be with you."  
- John 20, 26

## The Sign of Peace points to the Prince of Peace:

<sup>19</sup> On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "**Peace be with you.**" <sup>20</sup> When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

(John 20:19-20)

# I. Signs and Wonders (Luke 2:8-14) [God's Revelations to Humanity]

- Signs of Warning
- Signs of Encouragement
- Signs Big and Bold
- Signs Small and Subtle

## A. Signs of Warning: King Jeroboam (1 Kings 13:3-5)

- <sup>3</sup> And he gave a sign the same day, saying, “This is the sign that the LORD has spoken: ‘Behold, the altar shall be torn down, and the ashes that are on it shall be poured out.’” <sup>4</sup> And when the king heard the saying of the man of God, which he cried against the altar at Bethel, **Jeroboam stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, “Seize him.” And his hand, which he stretched out against him, dried up, so that he could not draw it back to himself.** <sup>5</sup> The altar also was torn down, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign that the man of God had given by the word of the LORD.

## B. Signs of Encouragement: Gideon (Judges 6:36-38)

- **The Sign of the Fleece**
- <sup>36</sup> Then Gideon said to God, “If you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said, <sup>37</sup> behold, I am laying a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. **If there is dew on the fleece alone, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said.**” <sup>38</sup> And it was so. When he rose early next morning and squeezed the fleece, he wrung enough dew from the fleece to fill a bowl with water.

## C. Signs Big and Bold: Elijah (1 Kings 18:36-39)

- <sup>36</sup> And at the time of the offering of the oblation, Elijah the prophet came near and said, “O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. <sup>37</sup> Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back.” <sup>38</sup> **Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.** <sup>39</sup> And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, “The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God.”



## D. Signs Small and Subtle: Elisha (2 Kings 6:4-7)

- <sup>4</sup> So he went with them. And when they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees. <sup>5</sup> But as one was felling a log, his axe head fell into the water, and he cried out, “Alas, my master! It was borrowed.” <sup>6</sup> Then the man of God said, “Where did it fall?” When he showed him the place, **he cut off a stick and threw it in there and made the iron float.** <sup>7</sup> And he said, “Take it up.” So he reached out his hand and took it.

# The Manger as a Small and Subtle “Sign of Peace”



<sup>8</sup> And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

<sup>9</sup> And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear.

<sup>10</sup> And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

<sup>11</sup> **For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.**

<sup>12</sup> **And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."**

<sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth **peace** among those with whom he is pleased!"

# The Manger: The WHY in the WHERE

- “For one moment, the center of God’s activity resides in an animal trough. **The dignity of this event comes from the person lying at the center.** Sometimes God’s work goes on quietly in hidden locales”

--Darrell L. Bock

## II. Seeking the Lord (Luke 2:15-17a)

- A. Micah's Prophecy of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2,4-5a)
- B. The Shepherds Make a Commitment (Luke 2:15)
- C. The Shepherds Recognize Jesus as Savior (Luke 2:16-17)
  - "Credo ut intelligam" (Anselm)



## II. Seeking the Lord

### A. Micah's Prophecy of Bethlehem

- <sup>2</sup> But you, **O Bethlehem Ephrathah**,  
who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,  
**from you shall come forth for me**  
**one who is to be ruler in Israel**,  
whose coming forth is from of old,  
from ancient days. . . .
- <sup>4</sup> And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD,  
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.  
And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great  
to the ends of the earth.
- <sup>5</sup> **And he shall be their peace.** (Micah 5:2,4-5a)

## II. Seeking the Lord

### B. The Shepherds Make a Commitment


- <sup>15</sup> When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “**Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing** that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” (Luke 2:15)

## II. Seeking the Lord

### C. The Shepherds Recognize Jesus as Savior

- <sup>16</sup> And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.
- <sup>17</sup> And when they saw it, they **made known** the saying that had been told them concerning this child.
  
- Latin: “Credo ut intelligam” (Anselm of Canterbury)
- English: “I believe so that I might understand”

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# III. Sharing the Good News (Luke 2:17b-18, 20)

- A. The Shepherds Make Another Commitment (Luke 2:17)
- B. A “Wonder-ful” Message (Luke 2:18)
- C. The Shepherds’ “Quest” Concludes (Luke 2:20)



## III. Sharing the Good News

### A. The Shepherds Make Another Commitment

- 17 And when they saw it, **they made known the saying that had been told them** concerning this child. (Luke 2:17)

# III. Sharing the Good News

## B. A “Wonder-ful” Message

- <sup>18</sup> And **all who heard it wondered** at what the shepherds told them. (Luke 2:18)

# III. Sharing the Good News

## C. The Shepherds' "Quest" Concludes

20 And **the shepherds returned**, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. (Luke 2:20)

# **III. Sharing the Good News**

## **An Application for Us**

- **“So also we should follow where God leads and with grace testify to his direction in our lives” (Darrell L. Bock p. 89)**

## **IV. Application**

- A. The Need for a Savior (Luke 2:11)
- B. Jesus, the Prince of Peace, Awaits (Ephesians 2:13-18)
- C. What Will You Decide? (Luke 2:19)



# IV. Application

## A. The Need for a Savior

- **11** For unto you is born this day in the city of David **a Savior**, who is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:11)

## IV. Application

### B. Jesus, the Prince of Peace, Awaits

- <sup>13</sup> But now in **Christ Jesus** you who once were far off have been **brought near by the blood of Christ.** <sup>14</sup> For he himself is our **peace**, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility <sup>15</sup> by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, <sup>16</sup> and might **reconcile us both to God** in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. <sup>17</sup> And **he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.** <sup>18</sup> For through him **we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.** (Ephesians 2:13-18)

# IV. Application

## C. What Will You Decide?

- <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things, **pondering** them in her heart. (Luke 2:19)

# Let Us Pray

