

Peace

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[0:00] So anyway, Advent, hope. We now move on to the second one, and that is actually about peace. There's a famous passage in Scripture that we always use this time of year.

Isaiah chapter 9, verse 2 is when they said there's a people who are walking in deep darkness. We've heard that before, right? Isaiah 9, 2. And then the prophecy for Christmas comes in verse 5 to 7.

If you've got your phones or what I prefer even more is a paper Bible, I'd love for you to open up now and follow me as I go through. Because I think it is really interesting as we go through this passage, I'm going to unpack a word that we always hear.

We always hear the word peace, but what does it actually mean? And as I look at Isaiah chapter 9, where there's a prophecy of this child that is going to be coming.

For to us, a child is born, a son is given. And then it's really Isaiah chapter 9, verse 2. If there's a Christmas passage, this is probably it.

[1:04] So the context of it is, The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Those who dwell in a land of deep darkness, on them light has shone. And then verse 6 is where we're going to kind of jump into a little bit.

For to us, a child is born, to us, a son is given. And the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.

And then it carries on, Of the increase of his government and of peace, there will be no end. There will be no end to peace. And then the passage that Wes came and read for us in Luke chapter 2 is when the shepherds were watching their flock by night.

And then they're told about the coming of this baby lying in a manger. And this baby is then going to bring peace. Because suddenly the angels appear in the sky and they're singing.

They're singing glory to God in the highest. And there will be peace on earth. The question I want to unpack for us today is what's a baby got to do with peace?

[2:14] Why does the coming of a baby bring about peace? If, in fact, I personally don't use the word peace to describe babies. Have we met EJ?

EJ, bless her, we love her. Where is she? She's in there now, of course. That's why it's a little bit more peaceful. It is not, peace is not the word. In fact, I've, and of course, Christina and I, we're expecting our baby that's coming in March.

And you know what? If you've been a parent, put your hand up if you've been a parent. Put your hand up if you've looked after a teeny little baby. Kara, peace is not the word. Right?

What I don't understand is when people say, oh, how did you sleep last night, Felix? And then Felix goes, oh, I slept like a baby. What? So you woke up every two hours and then you woke yourself up because you pooped your pants?

Yes. Baby and peace. It doesn't really connect. It doesn't really link. So therefore, what is it about the baby that brings us peace on earth?

[3:14] Peace that will know no end. Because the truth is we don't really live in a world that has peace right now. You look at Israel and Gaza. You look at what's happening in Ukraine.

You look anywhere. Anywhere. You look within your own families. There probably isn't peace. But maybe there's something else we have to do first. And this is where we're going to need a little bit of interaction. I did promise Nathan that I was going to pick on him and ask him some questions.

So this is me being really kind and giving you some warning. What does peace mean to you? Have a think now. When Jesus, or when we say peace be with you, what does it actually mean?

What does peace mean to you? Turn to the person next to you. If you don't know them, this is a great chance to introduce and say, hi, my name is D. And peace to me means D. Okay. One minute. What does peace mean to you? Go.

Go. Go. Thank you.

[4:30] Thank you.

I picked on you two enough.

All right, all right. Here we go, here we go. What's peace then? What's peace to you? Let's start with Nathan. Nathan, what's peace to you? Peace is knowing that God is in control even though you're walking through different things in life.

Peace is knowing that God is in control even though you're walking through different things in life.

Like it. I really like that. Peace. What else is it about peace? Connie? I knew it. Oh, wow.

You preempted and already paved the way. Man. What is it? I'll just. Being insecure in Christ and.

[6:00] Oh, finding stillness in body, mind, heart, spirit. Do I need to use. Oh, these are longer. Oh, thank you. Thank you, Rocky. Seriously, that earring is so cool. Peace.

What else is peace? Shum, what's peace to you? Being present and undistracted. Being present and undistracted. That is good. That is really good. One last one.

One last one. I'm going to go for you, Lawrence. At the back. What's peace to you, Lawrence?

Wow, Rebecca. You guys are getting good at this. You're like passing it on.

Okay. Rebecca. A choice to live in harmony with people around you, even though you may be disagreeing.

Oh, wow. That's a big one. That's huge. And that is completely correct. Well done, Lawrence. You married up. Well done. Okay. You know, when I Googled peace, it was, people would say it's the absence of conflict.

[7:04] Right? I've actually got a colleague of Young Life, from Young Life, who's actually in Palestine right now. And we're asking him, how can we help you? What do you need? And he's just saying, we're just praying for peace.

We're just praying for peace. Where there is harmony. Where, in some ways, there is absence of conflict. But the truth is, that's just one aspect of peace.

A worldly kind of peace, which is, oh, as long as you're not fighting, there is peace. Going back to being parents of young children. Mothers just wanting a moment of peace.

Can I just have a moment where you're not fighting? Where you're not arguing? Where you don't need me for something? I just need to sit and relax for one moment. I need a moment of peace. But peace, of course, isn't just the absence of conflict.

It's not just the absence of fighting. Aidan's lying down in a way that looks very peaceful right now. Because it's a state of mind.

[8:05] It's not just the absence of conflict. There's a presence of something else that allows you to remain still in the heart, soul, and mind. Even when you're still walking through all these different circumstances.

With people who are disagreeing with you on very different things. Put your hand up if you would say that in this current moment in your life right now, you have peace. That's good.

Because the hard thing is, how do we get this kind of peace? Jesus talks about peace as well. In John chapter 14, he says, Peace I give to you. Peace, my peace I leave with you.

This peace that the world cannot give. So do not let your hearts be troubled. Do not be afraid. And it's not even about circumstance. Because John 14, what's happening in John 14?

John 13 is the Last Supper. Judas then heads off to start in motion, essentially the betrayal of Jesus that leads to the death of Jesus. And so John 13 is that.

[9:10] And John 14, Judas is gone. Judas is gone to start the thing. And then Jesus tells the disciples, Peace I leave with you. This guy's about to die. This guy's about to be nailed to a cross.

And yet he says, My peace I leave with you. My peace I give you. It has nothing to do with circumstance. Ironically, in that season, it was a season called Pax Romana.

Pax Romana, as historians would describe, is the peace of Rome. What that meant is, actually in that short span of time, maybe a hundred years or so, there was peace. The Roman Empire had taken over so much that there was peace.

But it wasn't a real peace. It was a coerced, forced kind of peace. It was like, Abide by our rules, and you won't have any trouble. It was that kind of peace. And yet the Jews, they knew that there

wasn't true peace.

The Jews knew that they were still being oppressed. The Jews knew that they still weren't in the place that they should have been. And yet Jesus here is saying, My peace I leave with you. My peace I give you. The world cannot give it.

[10:14] Do not let your hearts be troubled. Or afraid. What does a baby have to do with peace? And the answer is, not really much at all.

It's what that baby ends up becoming that gives us peace. Because the baby in a manger, lying swaddled for that moment, so they could take a photo for the nativity postcard that we'll use in 2,000 years' time, that moment of peace will be gone.

As soon as the cows make an extra loud noise, wake the baby up, and then there will be no peace. But it's what that baby then becomes. It's who that baby is, and what that baby ends up doing, and it's the life that baby ends up living, and the death of that baby ends up dying, that gives us the peace.

And I want to unpack that a little bit for us today. Because when you have peace, when this baby comes, this arrival of a baby, does a couple things. The first thing it does is this. It gives us the peace of God.

I'm going to put us all on the spot again. When you think about the word peace in the Bible, do any Bible verses come to mind? Anyone? Does anyone remember a Bible verse that has something to do with peace?

[11:34] Alex? Peace that transcends all understanding. Well done. Round of applause, Alex. Solid. Solid. Rejoice in the Lord.

Again, I will say rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, which surpasses understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The peace of God will guard your hearts and minds. You don't have to be anxious at all. I love that passage. It's everywhere. Philippians chapter four, verse four to seven. But the key to that isn't actually, do not be anxious about anything, for me.

The key to that passage isn't even, put in everything with prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving. It isn't that bit. The key there is the Lord is at hand. The Lord is near.

So don't be anxious about anything. What does the arrival of baby Jesus do for us when peace? It tells us that God wants to be with us. That God would choose to leave heaven and come and be with us.

[12:49] Emmanuel, God with us. Don't you have that person that if you were to walk into something that was scary for you, if you have that person with you, suddenly it will just be calm. We had this in the first few weeks when my children went to a new school and it was like, daddy, can you walk with me all the way to the door?

As far as you possibly can before you get taken away by security. And if I could, as a parent, I would love to even sit in the dining hall with my kids, sit in the classroom with my kids.

Or when Ruben's going to try and play basketball in the playground, I would love to be there with him. Don't you have that person that, oh, if that person was here, it would just calm me right down. Right? Do we have those kinds of people?

There's a scene in Avengers Endgame where there's the big battle. Thanos is coming with his whole just army. And then it's like, oh man, this doesn't look good.

But of course it's Marvel, so it will end up good. Apart from more recent Marvel entries. And so we're like, oh my goodness, something's going to happen. Something's going to happen.

[13:55] But then Captain Marvel comes. Captain Marvel, one of the most powerful superheroes. And the moment she comes in, he's kind of like, oh, Captain Marvel's here. We're going to be just fine.

The arrival of baby Jesus tells us that God wants to actually be with us. I don't know what you're nervous about. I don't know whether it's going into work because work is just going to be brutal this week as we head up to Christmas.

I don't know if it's because of the gossip that you have with the colleagues that you have around you and you're just like, oh, this is going to be hard. Or maybe it's the Christmas family meal that you have to go to where you have to field those same questions from the uncles and aunties that you

get all the time, which gets you all anxious and worked up.

What if I told you the arrival of baby Jesus reminds us that God wants to be with you. And because he is near, because he is at hand, you have the peace of God that transcends understanding.

What does that mean? It means it doesn't make sense. It means you don't really understand why you have this peace, but you do. This happened for us during the fifth wave when everyone was leaving Hong Kong and it was just a mess and people were just like, what is happening?

[15:06] We're going to be shut down. There's going to be three tests that we all have to do and all the people that we knew were heading out. And I was like, you know what? God, what do you want us to do here in this season? And he's like, just have a peace that surpasses understanding.

Any meeting that you have, any lunch that you have, any coffee that you have, any time that you have with people, let them see the peace of God in you, which is what? Man, things aren't going well. Things are pretty busy and hectic.

Yet James seems to have this peace that doesn't make sense. This peace of God that surpasses understanding. The arrival of baby Jesus gives us that peace.

I like to think that Joseph, his dad, had the same peace. Can you just put yourself in Joseph's shoes for a second? I think he couldn't have survived what he was about to go through were it not for the fact that he had the peace of God with him.

So he's engaged to Mary. And then Mary comes to him one day and says, Hey Joseph, I know we're about to get married, but I need to tell you something.

[16:04] And then she tells, well, so actually I'm pregnant. And then Joseph is like, how did that happen?

There was no biology, sex education at that time, but it was like, you're pregnant? How did that happen? Oh my goodness. Can you imagine what that would mean for people in that society? That the girl that you're actually about to be getting married to is now pregnant.

And then the girl says, Oh, don't worry. Don't worry. Nothing bad has happened. The baby comes from the Holy Spirit. And then Joseph must be like, Huh. Huh.

It would almost have been easier if it was something else. But now I'm going to have to explain to all our village that my fiancé is pregnant because of an invisible force got her pregnant.

This is going to be fun. The peace of God, the Tristram's understanding that allows us to have this peace even when things don't make sense, even when circumstances don't make sense. The arrival of baby Jesus reminds us that God wants to be with us.

[17:11] And if he's with us, then it's all going to be okay. It's even, he's even more powerful than Captain Marvel. Of course, there's an even more beautiful biblical gospel truth in that scene at the end because it's not the power that wins the battle.

It's the sacrifice. It's the sacrifice of Robert Downey Jr. May he rest in peace. Though I hear he's actually coming back. Anyway, that's a different thing. The peace of God that surpasses understanding.

The question I have for you here in this first point is this. Do you display that peace? Do you display that peace that surpasses understanding to the people that you have in your life, to your sphere of influence? When people talk to you, when people spend time with you, do they like, man, there is a peace about JP that I just can't simply understand.

He just makes me feel like everything's going to be okay. We're supposed to be the type of people when other people spend time with us, they will feel as though, ah, you know what?

Everything's going to be okay. Because the arrival of baby Jesus gives us that peace from within. Because it's saying, God wants to be with us. The second is this.

[18:26] The arrival of baby Jesus tells us something about peace that's really necessary. And it's what Rebecca talked about here is when we truly understand what the arrival of baby Jesus means, it means that we have peace with other people as well.

That there is a peace with others. There's another passage in the scripture that talks a lot about peace. That says, Jesus, he himself is our peace and it's Ephesians 2. Can you turn with me to Ephesians 2? I want to show you a few things there.

Ephesians 2, let me tell you a little bit of the context.

I just said that we live in a world where everyone's fighting each other. Everyone's just arguing with each other. The context here for Ephesians 2 is that the church was started was that there were two groups of people within the same church were arguing.

Have you ever heard of that? How ridiculous and ludicrous does that sound? That people within a church would argue with each other and yet here we are. They're arguing. The Jews against the Gentiles.

[19:28] They're looking at each other going, oh, you guys shouldn't be here. You guys, oh, you don't do faith in the right way. Dr. Alex and I were having a lunch a couple days ago with a good friend of Alex's and he was asking me, hey, if Christianity is true, why are there so many denominations?

Why are there so many people arguing about so many different things? Why does it seem like you don't, you guys don't even seem to have the answer? You're just fighting. You see, if we truly understood the arrival of baby Jesus and the message that that comes with, we would have peace with others.

And Paul's actually writing about that that I want to unpack, but I want to tell you first of all that it has something to do with humility. In order to have peace with others, that baby Jesus that comes lying in a manger, swaddled up, what's that trying to show us?

Is trying to show us that this battle is won not through force, but through humility. That Isaiah 9 one, he's a wonderful counselor.

He's mighty God, which actually in another version is basically mighty warrior. Psalm 46 says, the nations rage, the kingdoms totter. He utters his voice and the earth melts.

[20:39] That's how strong and powerful this God is. And that's why he says, be still and know that I am God. If I open my voice, you are going to melt. So stop fighting is what he's saying. He could come and force peace onto us, yet he comes in the form of a baby in humility.

The arrival of baby Jesus gives us peace with others because we're reminded that in order to get peace, it starts with humility. It starts with knowing what he's done for us.

It's not just the absence of conflict. It is actually the presence of humility. Ephesians 2. Ephesians 2 verse 13 says this, but now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

For he himself is our peace who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility. He's saying, Paul's saying, hey look, there's two groups here.

You've got the Jews over this side, you've got the Gentiles over this side, you've got the people who used to be KFCI this side, and you've got the people who used to be the gathering this side. You have two sides and it does not make sense.

[21:56] Jesus came and preached peace to those who were far off and to those who were near and they break down that dividing wall of hostility. By the way, those two sides we should never need to label again. We are one church.

In fact, there's plenty of people here who were neither. Paul's saying, we are one. Why? Because Christ himself is our peace and he came and broke down that dividing wall of hostility.

The arrival of baby Jesus breaks down any walls because through humility those walls are broken down. The question that we have then is, are we proponents of that peace?

do we truly recognize that? If it carries on in Ephesians 2, it says this, verse 16, verse 15, 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 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near for through him we both have access in one spirit to the father. There is no special access because you're a Jew. There is no special access because now you're a Gentile.

[23:09] We all go to the father the same way. It's through Jesus. You are one. You are one. The question is, are we proponents of that peace or are we actually sitting on the sidelines with our arms crossed looking across at the other side of the fence going, those people.

The arrival of baby Jesus should remind us of the humility where it's like, man, we are all one.

Jesus in his sermon on the mount says, blessed are those who are the peacemakers for they shall be what?

Anyone know? Known as the children of God. Ellie, yes. Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children or the sons of God. If you truly understood who you are in God as a child of God, as a son and as a daughter of God, you would be a peacemaker.

You might then ask, okay, so what does that look like? I'll tell you what it looks like. All of us who are in a workplace or in some kind of field or actually any of us who are surrounded by human beings, by family, by friends, tell you what you are about to see during this Christmas as you spend time with these people.

There is conflict. There's people talking bad stuff about other people. There's people who don't like other people. There's people who are annoyed at other people. You know what you're supposed to be as a child of God?

[24 : 25] You're supposed to be the peacemaker. I think those of us who are working in offices will especially know this right now. Ken's just smiling because he knows it's a battlefield out there.

We're supposed to be peacemakers. What does that mean? What does that look like? It means when you're at the coffee machine and someone's talking bad about someone else and telling it to you, you're supposed to say, yeah, but maybe there's another side.

We're supposed to help them understand another perspective because your goal is peace. It isn't, oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Wait till you hear what they said to me.

That's not the right answer. We're supposed to be proponents of peace where we, as children of God, because of the arrival of baby Jesus, have the humility to kind of take ourselves out of the equation and bond people together.

Can you have, do you have people in your life right now who are fighting who you think, maybe there is something I could do. Maybe I could help in some way. Maybe it's just to help one side dissipate their frustration so they can understand the other side a little bit more.

[25 : 37] Do you have that person in your life? Do you have those people in your life? Because the arrival of baby Jesus brings with it peace. Brings with it a peace that comes from humility. And I'll tell you one thing, it's not easy.

Being that proponent of peace is not easy and it's going to be hard. But it gives me to my final point. The arrival of baby Jesus not only gives you the peace of God that surpasses understanding, it not only grants you peace with others, ultimately, ultimately that peace comes from one place.

The peace with God. Ourselves. That's the key. if we understand that actually the arrival of baby Jesus tells us that God wants to be with us because at the core of it, the core problem that we have, the core problem that each of us have is that we have been separated from God.

That we have been separated. Why is there so much conflict within our families? Why is there so much conflict within our churches? Why is there so much conflict in our city? It's because we have all been distanced and separated from God.

The arrival of baby Jesus first and foremost is addressing that situation. That Ephesians 2 passage of the verse 12 says this, remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

[26 : 58] You say, hey, before you talk about unity together, let me remind you one thing. You were separated. You were lost. You were blind. You had no hope and without me. But Jesus came and preached peace to you.

I was watching a TED talk with Christina the other night and it was the title, which they're always really kind of catchy titles. It was like the single parenting skill that every parent should have. And of course, as parents who are failing on a daily basis, we were attracted in to watch it. And you know what the one trait that they said, the recommendation they had for parents is? To be good at repairing.

The speaker was saying, actually, that's the main thing, to be good at repairing because you're going to make mistakes. You're going to sever your relationship with your child in some way. You're going to be disconnected some way. When you end up shouting, the example she had was if you're shouting at your child across the kitchen because they're being sport and entitled and then you end up shouting and then they leave and then they slam the door behind them, all of that, be good at repairing was the answer.

[28 : 07] And how she said that you should do it is to go back to that point of disconnection. So if you were fighting with someone, let's say Danny and Grace are fighting about something and of course Danny's wrong.

So Danny's got to figure out how to repair the connection. The thing to do is to go back to that moment.

let's say Danny then apologizes to Hey Grace, that moment there in the scene where I left the toothbrush on the left side instead of the right side, my bad.

That's like, I know how that made you feel. Even though I think it might be the other way around. Danny's like, this is such a stupid example because it's the opposite. The whole point of the TED Talk was saying you've got to be good at repairing.

You've got to go back to that scene. Hey, do you know what I said to you there in the living room the other day? Actually, that was out of order. And actually, I said it because I was frustrated. I said it because of this.

[29:11] You go back to that scene and you repair it. In some ways, she also said, actually, that's essentially why counseling is so good, why therapy is so good because you get a space where you sit back into a spot where you go back to that, you process that moment of disconnection with someone else in a safe space and that's when the repair begins.

Why does baby Jesus, prince of heaven, prince of peace, come to this world? Because he's trying to go back to that moment of disconnection and he's trying to repair that disconnect that you and I all have the moment we choose ourselves over God.

Romans 5, 1 says, we get peace with God through Jesus. Until you remember and you recognize that actually you're distanced from God all the way from your OG ancestor, Adam and Eve, when they chose to go their own way, when they chose the flesh over the spirit that leads to death as opposed to life and peace, until you recognize that you were separated from God, then you won't get the peace of God and you won't get the peace with others.

It starts with that. Jesus coming to this world is trying to go back to that point of disconnection. The Garden of Eden is where the point of disconnection comes, where Adam would even go, God, can you really be trusted?

Did you really say what you said? Should we really follow you? Jesus, baby Jesus, comes back to the earth and goes back to another garden, the Garden of Gethsemane and he repairs and he surrenders his will and he says, God, not my will, but yours.

[30:54] Why? Because he had our separation in mind because he was going back to that scene of disconnection to bring about reconciliation. That is why we have a baby Jesus.

That's why Christianity remains to be the only one that addresses the issue that we have which is disconnection because we have a God who comes to us in the form of a baby and says, I want connection with you.

No other religion does that. All the other ones say, hey, we've got to figure out a way to become perfect so we can get to that place. The truth is we can never get to that place. The truth is the only way we can get to that place is if that place comes to us.

That's what the arrival of baby Jesus does. Let me finish with asking you this. Would you welcome the arrival of baby Jesus in your life?

Would you welcome the peace of God that surpasses understanding? The peace that doesn't make sense? Can you commit with me as you leave this place to go back into the world that you're in and have a peace that doesn't make sense?

[32:00] So the next time someone's complaining in your company about the future or is worried about something, you can display to them a peace of God. Why? Because the arrival of baby Jesus tells you and reminds you that God wants to be with us.

In fact, God is with you right now. He is near, he is at hand, so you don't have to be anxious about anything. Can you display that kind of peace of God that surpasses understanding?

And secondly, when I asked you, hey, are there people in your lives that you're not at peace with? This is the season to do it. Because there is a baby that comes to show you what humility looks like. That baby, God himself, who if he uttered his voice, everything, everyone would melt, and yet he chose to come in the form of a baby. That means there's someone in your life that you can display the same level of humility to.

And you're like, oh, but what if I humble myself and then they trample all over me? Then they trample all over you. The Lord, the King, the one who ends up bringing redemption and reconciliation to the whole world was nailed to a cross.

[33:14] for you. You can be a doormat because your savior went onto the cross to die for you. Now, if you get to a point where you are getting so taken advantage of that you end up on a cross, then come and talk to me.

We'll try and figure out a solution. But until then, I think there's still humility that we can show. I think there's still peace. And if you are a child of God, then you're not supposed to just let people walk all over you.

Not to say that's what you're going to go out and do. Hey, everyone, walk all over me. But you have a peace of God that's like, you know what, whatever happens. I'm just going to be as faithful as I can, as kind as I can, knowing that my savior lives and is standing right next to me.

so there's nothing that you can do to me that is going to affect my situation. It's not going to hinder my promotion because if God wants my promotion, he will promote me. And if God wants me to be popular and be able to succeed in a certain arena of my life, he will do it for me.

So I don't need to scrounge and I don't need to strive and strain and stress for it because God is with me. Can we be that? Can we be the peacemakers because we are children of God? And finally, would you humble yourself at the throne of Jesus?

[34 : 33] Would you humble yourself by the baby in a manger, recognizing that he came to save you and me, that we were separated, we were disconnected, we chose our own way, we turned our backs on God, yet now we have peace with him.

That word peace, the Old Testament word is shalom. We heard of that? Shalom. What does that mean? Shalom means wholeness.

It's complete. It's not, okay, so when I think about peace sometimes, I think about a lake, calmness, no human beings around, not even my children, well definitely not my children, nor my wife, just complete utter silence, just me, that's peace.

But that isn't real peace that the Bible talks about. The word shalom means that things are complex, things are complicated, yet there is a wholeness to it because everything fits together in the right place.

Who's old enough to remember what you used to do in Microsoft Windows where you have defragmentation? Who remembers that? Oh, Albert, I know you got me.

[35 : 47] Albert and Paul, the guys with the same hairstyle as me, we got this. I used to love doing defrag. I mean, I didn't really know what I did, but you just got this picture, this logo that the puzzle was like getting fixed.

We all, yeah, I mean, my wife always gives me grief about my wardrobe because like, I'm, anyway, so. And after a while of using wardrobe or your bookcase or your bookshelf, everything just goes into, like, it starts getting messy, right?

Whenever you do anything in life, it starts to get messy. I know Ellen likes to organize her phone apps in the right color, and it's all, her phone screen is just immaculate. Mine starts off that way too, but then suddenly you start to download apps, and then you go to Shenzhen and you have to download all these new apps, and then suddenly my whole screen looks completely different, and then I need a defrag.

I need someone to come in to help tidy everything up. That process of defragmentation, what's that haming for? Shalom. Wholeness.

Complex. Yet complete. I believe that's the kingdom of God that we're heading to. I believe that's the shalom that baby Jesus is bringing. And it starts with us.

[36 : 59] Would you let this baby, and what he does, and his life, and his death, and his resurrection, defrag your life, organize it back into a way where you have shalom.

When you have shalom, you will have the peace of God, you will have peace with others, and you will have peace with God. That is what we're aiming for. Peace has come, and our king is with us. Jesus, we thank you. That you would leave heaven's throne as the prince of peace, and you would come into the dark world that we live in, and that you would bring light, that you would bring peace. peace. And so we pray for shalom over every single person in this room. We live complex lives, in a complex city, in a complex world, that so often feels incomplete, and it truly isn't complete.

Until you come. would you bring shalom. shalom? Would you bring those who feel distant to you back into your arms?

[38 : 27] Would you meet us at our point of disconnection, and repair, and reconcile us to God the Father? Jesus, this Advent season, we await your arrival.

Arrival filled with humility and peace. Thank you, Lord. And it's in your name, the name that all governments, the whole world, will rest on.

Where there will be peace that has no end. It's in your name, that name, that we pray. Amen.