

**Advent Series: “Calm and Bright”
“Sleep In Peace”**

Message by DD Adams
1st SUNDAY OF ADVENT
Kemptown Providence U.M. Church
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The text for today is from Isaiah, chapter 9, verse 2, and verses 6 - 7. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light shines . . . For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting [Parent], Prince of Peace.

His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. This is God’s word for God’s people.

Let’s pray together. God we pray the blessing on the hearing, reading, understanding and doing of your words. Open minds and hearts in this place God as we . slow . down. . . . and experience your wonderful presence in the calm and in the peace of these few moments. Amen.

The world is in need of peace as never before. World rulers aren’t looking for peace, instead, their appetites for control and domination of others continues. Economic power and capability, greed, military readiness and prowess is a focus—

especially for the U.S. And uh-oh, soon the West may no longer have a monopoly on a world-leading defense, because China is quickly catching up.

Isaiah, an 8th-century BC Jewish prophet had a vision of peace. His vision referred to a human king who would come out of Judah. In Matthew (4:16) the Jewish people were looking for someone to deliver them from Roman domination.

In Luke (1:79), the people longed for someone to guide their feet into a way of peace. Caesar had created a “kind of peace,” but to control and dominate the rights of people isn’t peace. The Jewish people longed for freedom, just as many do in the world today, but what is needed is the acknowledgment of God.

In Isaiah 2, world rulers of mighty nations are streaming to the Lord to settle disputes and govern the world. Scripture states they “beat their swords into iron plows and their spears into pruning tools.” They no longer make war and say “Come . . . let’s walk by the Lord’s light.”

Sounds to me like the world rulers figured it out. *Their way* didn’t work because if you’re not walking in the light of the Lord—you’re walking in darkness and peace cannot exist. But the Lord’s light dispels deep darkness, and God’s light shows us how to live with one another as we pursue peace and freedom.

As the nations move closer to God, just as we do, the light of God’s peace and love radiates from us. And we’ll reflect it to whomever we come in contact with. For without God’s light, how will this world ever live peacefully? It’s the

light of God that teaches us and shines on our path. Without the light we fall down, but with it, the light provides a way that guides us safely along God's path.

Isaiah prophesied that “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light shines . . . For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting [Parent], Prince of Peace.”

Rulers may reject the light and freedom that God gives, but eventually, Scripture states that rulers will yield and give way to the Lord's counsel. They will see a great light, and the light will shine on them. Only God can deliver the world from fighting and bring people out of darkness and into his glorious light.

The presence of God is light that shines and guides one to peace. God's light illuminates our mind, and it disperses darkness. The presence of darkness creates fear—a universal human experience. In the dark we can't see where to step. We can't see the way. But when we walk in the light of God's presence the beautiful thing is this; we acknowledge God, recognize his presence, and follow his light.

When nations live in a “land of deep darkness,” we're blind to God's presence. We forget that God has delivered in the past and that He's here in the present. We might seek ways that lessen the pain from fighting—and that's darkness—but when God breaks through our darkness, the light of God shines.

Someone's positive response to God is more than seeing. We don't just see a light. We recognize who it is that's acting on our behalf. It's that "aw-ha" moment. We get it. We know God is with us, and with us in the here and the now.

Now you're asking, what's the "so what" of this message. As Christ followers, how can we bring calm and peace to our community? Isaiah 2 makes reference to beating swords into iron plows and spears into pruning tools. So . . . the weapons used to fight others with are turned into tools to plant seeds. We nurture the seed and watch over and promote its growth. First in ourselves and then in others.

Our aim in the church is to build up and not tear down. To nurture each other in love patiently. We use our energies for becoming stronger in love as we become more connected to each other and to God. We know that when there's fightings and wars—whether it's in the church or in the world—both sides lose.

There are no winners in war, but only great losses. So our goal is to aim to reach across divides and find our common humanity when we disagree. This is the alternative to fightings and war. Each person being transformed through the power of God's love. It's true, that when God births us into new creations some assembly is required. We're called to be transformed. To be changed. We're called to listen to each other, to build each other up, and to love one another.

So let's challenge one another. Not to fight and take flight. Not to take sides, but to listen and work for the unity that Christ himself prayed for us to have (John 17:11). Please pray with me. Holy God, Wonderful Counselor, who is Mighty and an Everlasting [Parent] and Prince of Peace . . . Peace is a silent and calm night when we close our eyes and feel and know God's presence Emmanuel is with us.

To sleep in heavenly peace acknowledging God's light that fills our hearts and minds and transforms us to *pray and work together* having a firm belief that peace—not war—is God's will. Let it be so God in us. Make us passers of peace as You call us to Come, let's walk by the light of the Lord. Amen.