



## Advent 2: The Candle of Peace

In looking at the four candles representing Advent, we want to ensure our focus is on the spiritual lessons to be learned.

**PEACE: is the absence of fear and the presence of trust.** It is in short supply in the lives of many people and nations. I sometimes wonder, when we ‘share the peace’ during services, whether people realise the importance of what they are doing. In John 14:27 Jesus says:

***“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”***

The peace we share, is the peace of God manifested in his son, Jesus.

### Read Matthew 1

**Matthew 1:23** *“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).* The presence of God is peace.

**Isaiah 9:6-7** *“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.*

You may think it easier to skip the first 16 verses of Matthew, after all genealogies don’t make for exciting reading. This is important however, because it demonstrates the continuity between the Old Testament and Jesus and shows the royal lineage of Jesus through David and even further back, to Abraham. Remember that line in ‘While shepherds watched their flocks by night’: ***“To you in David’s Town this day is born of David’s line, the Saviour who is Christ the Lord ...”***

- It is essential for us to believe the truth of the virgin birth. Do you have problems accepting this? The Apostles Creed contains the line: ***“born of the Virgin Mary”*** making it a basic tenet of belief for the Church of England, and for most Christian churches.
- Many people deny that Jesus is the Son of God, preferring to say he was a good man. Well if he were a good man, he wouldn’t lie about being the Son of God!

One can't have it both ways, either he is who he says he is or he's another false prophet.

- Stop and think about the Creed you say on Sundays. We are making a powerful statement and should only say what we mean.

**Isaiah 53:5** *"But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed."*

- How do we obtain peace from the punishment meted out to Jesus?

**Romans 5:1** Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...

- Justification means the action of declaring or making righteous in the sight of God. Knowing we have been forgiven brings peace in our souls.

Let's look back again at Isaiah 9:6-7. Jesus, the promised Messiah, is described as the Prince of Peace, ... *of the greatness of his government and **peace** there will be no end.*" Such a wonderful promise!

**Ephesians 2:14** *"For he himself is our peace".* How many people when questioned, especially at Christmas time, say they want peace, for themselves and the world. According to this verse, only in Jesus do we find perfect peace.

The well-known hymn, *"It is well with my soul"* was written by Horatio G. Spafford when he lost all his children.

When peace like a river, attendeth my way  
When sorrows like sea billows roll –  
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to know  
It is well, it is well with my soul.

That is the kind of peace that Jesus can bring to our lives.

**Philippians 4:7** *"And the **peace** of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

### **Read Luke 2:8-20**

This peace is what the angels sang about on the night Jesus was born in Luke 2. No wonder the shepherds were so excited.

v.20 *"The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told."*

- If you are feeling anxious, and so many people are, think about this peace that Jesus came to bring. Remember what was said at the beginning of this study, peace is the absence of fear and the presence of trust. Not a vague trust but one grounded in the promises of God. Bring your fears and worries to God and ask for that peace to fill your hearts and mind. What a Christmas gift!
- When opportunities arise, share with your friends and family about this wonderful peace we can receive from the Prince of Peace, Jesus himself.



**Prayer:**

**Father, we thank you for sending Jesus, your one and only son to this earth. May we truly know peace not only at Christmas, but every day of our lives.**

