

Sermon: “Peace With God, Peace Within, Peace On Earth”

Advent 2025 Series December 21, 2025 NSAC Dave Sattler

Text: Luke 1:67-80, Zechariah’s Song Sub-texts: Isaiah 9:2, 6-7, 26:3, Various in Luke 1 & 2, John 14:26-27, John 16:33, & Romans 5:1-2

Sources: Bible Gateway, NIV Life Application Bible. Commentaries: Leon Morris, N.T. Wright. Books: “*Practicing the Way*” by John Mark Comer (2023), “*Blessing Your Spirit*” by Sylvia Ginter (2005), “*Hidden Christmas*” by Tim Keller (2016), “*Awaken Wonder*” by Darrell Johnson (2025), Strong’s Concordance. Sermons: Mark Peters (NSAC, 12/24/2014), John Fortune (NSAC, 11/30 & 12/7/2025), Mark Sayers (RedChurch, 12/6/2025), Brendan Dick (NSAC, 12/14/2025). Song: “*I Speak Jesus*” (Charity Gayle, 2021). Online: #Shalom#Bible Project#Peace (2017), unsplash.com.

I. Introduction & Review:

- Welcome to church, everyone! Thanks for joining us ... [people online], first-timers, long-timers, new Canadians, those coming back to church, people visiting from out-of-town. We’re excited you’re here today!!
- I’m Dave Sattler, one of the pastors at NSAC; it’s time now to look into God’s Word. We believe that one of *the main ways God guides us, and, makes Himself known to us* is through His Word, the Bible.
- <**Slide**> ILL - One morning a few weeks ago, I happened upon a serious altercation between police and a homeless man, down by Cap Mall.
- After spending a cold night in front of the bank, the man was sitting on the ground and the officers were asking him to vacate.
- I saw that the situation was escalating badly—angry shouts, curse words, and threats were flying in every direction!
- Concerned, I felt led to offer my support.
- So, I walked over, *ready* to dive in. And, guess what happened next?
- You’ll have to wait till the end of the sermon to find out!
- <**Slide**> We are in our 2025 Advent Series ...
- And, so far, we’ve looked at hope, love, and joy.
- Hope. Week 1, Pastor John said: “*Hope* is when the promises of God become more likely than our painful experiences.” (John F, 11/30/2025)
- Love. Week 2, John said, “*God comes down to us* is the message of Christmas. The *love* you are longing for is not something you must *find*, it is *Someone you receive*—[Jesus].” (John F, 12/7/2025)
- Then, last week, Pastor Brendan went on: “Walking in darkness sucks the *joy* out of us. But, in relationship with Jesus Christ, our *joy* is made complete!” (B-Dick, 12/14/2025)
- In our final Sunday of Advent, today we look at *peace* ...

- <**Slide**> ILL - If you don't go to soccer matches, hit up the local karaoke bar, or attend church on a regular basis, you may not be familiar with the inspiration behind *breaking out in song*. [“The hills are alive ...”]
- On my 2006 visit to Upton Park in East London, it was unbelievable to witness 30,000 grown men belting out ‘hymns,’ all inspired by their beloved West Ham’s 1-nil victory over cross-town rivals, Arsenal.
- A few weeks back, Sattler voices were hoarse for several days after a rousing 2 hour session of family karaoke!
- And something powerful happens every time church gathers and the people of God sing praises together to the God of the Universe.
- This we call *worship*. And, ***worship is our best response to God's loving presence and God's work in our lives and in the world.***
- Today’s passage is a song sung by one of the more obscure characters in the Christmas Story: Zechariah. Let’s set it up ...
- <**Slide**> Priest Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth long shared the pain of childlessness. Elderly now, they’d given up asking God for children.
- One year, early in the 1st Century, Zechariah was summoned to the temple in Jerusalem, chosen to enter the Holy Place to offer annual incense to God on behalf of the people. This was a high calling.
- Once inside, to his surprise and terror, Zechariah found himself face-to-face with the angel Gabriel.
- Gabriel’s news sounded too good to be true: “Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son.” (Luke 1:13b)
- But, as is sometimes the case with *old pastors*, Zechariah does not respond well. He *doubts* God’s message.
- As a result, Gabriel informs him: “Now you will be silent and not able to speak ... because you *did not believe* my words.” (Luke 1:20)
- Along with Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Gideon, and Thomas, we can add Zechariah to the list of *notorious doubters* in the Bible.
- Often overlooked, do you know *this* is Act 1 of the Christmas Story?
- <**Slide**> Fast forward 9 months ... Elizabeth’s given birth to a baby boy.
- And 8 days later, when they come to circumcise him, Zechariah’s silence is finally broken. His first words? “His name is John.” (Luke 1:63b)
- (By the way, how many people named ‘John’ do we have here today?!)
- *This* John is baby John the Baptist—cousin of Jesus.

- Throughout the country, people were talking: “What is this child going to be? For the Lord’s hand [is] with him.” “Filled the Holy Spirit,” to explain, **Zechariah breaks out in prophetic song.** (Luke 1:65-67)

II. Scripture: Luke 1:67-80, Zechariah’s Song

<Slide> 67 Zechariah, [father of John the Baptist], was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

- 68 “Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,
because He has come to His people and redeemed them.
- 69 He has raised up a horn of salvation
for us in the house of His servant David
- 70 (as He said through His holy prophets of long ago),
71 salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us—
72 to show mercy to our ancestors and to remember His holy covenant,
73 the oath He swore to our father Abraham:
74 to rescue us from the hand of our enemies,
and to enable us to serve Him without fear
75 in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.”

<Slide> 76 [Zechariah sang]: “And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for Him,

- 77 to give His people the knowledge of salvation
through the forgiveness of their sins,
78 because of the tender mercy of our God,
by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven
79 to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the path of peace.

80 And the child, [John the Baptist] grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel.”

<Pray> “*Lord, thank You for Your Word. Please move me out of the way. Come speak to us by Your Spirit. We’re hungry to hear from you.*”

III. Bible Teaching: Luke 1:67-80

1. **<Slide> A song of thanksgiving (68-70)**

- As someone who loves to talk (pastors get to talk for a *living*), I can only imagine how it must have felt to be speechless for 9 months.

- (Could be valuable for me, or, at least good for those around me!)
- After months of forced silence, Zechariah's song begins with *thanksgiving* to God for stepping into history: "Praise the Lord ... because He has come and redeemed His people."
- Zechariah knew, via the "prophets long ago," that God had promised to rescue the world through the "house of [God's] servant David."
- ***Through Jesus, God Himself would come to earth to redeem creation.***
- In his new Advent devotional, "Awaken Wonder," Darrell Johnson writes: "The collapse in the moral order and the hole in the soul [of humanity] are the result of the breakdown in relationship ... with the Living God. Healing comes through restoration of relationship, and only *persons* can heal relationships. And so, *God sent Himself*. To sinful people, to empty people, to real people, in real time—God gives us *Himself!* This is Christmas." (Johnson, p67-8)
- To redeem humanity and all creation, Jesus, God Himself visits earth! What a gift! *Thanks* be to God!

2. ***<Slide> A song of deliverance (71-75)***

- While many eagerly waited for a *military* messiah who'd set Israel free from its *political* enemies, few anticipated a *peaceful* Messiah who would conquer sin and bring the people back into right relationship with God.
- As one commentator puts it: "Luke is preparing us to see that God is opening the door to a whole new world in which sin and death themselves will be dealt with." (NTW, p19)
- Zechariah sings of God's *deliverance*: "salvation" from "their enemies," "mercy to [their] fathers," God fulfilling His "covenant" promises and making it possible for His people to serve Him all their days "without fear" and in "holiness and righteousness"—just as God designed it.
- One can hear the long years of faith and trust in God in Zechariah's voice.

3. ***<Slide> A song of revelation (76-77)***

- Perhaps it's as he cradles his miracle newborn son—John, that old man Zechariah realizes the *revelation* of God's plan before his very eyes: "You, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord *to prepare the way for Him* to give the people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins."

- **Again, we see God's power and presence revealed in real time and space through frail humans.**
- John the Baptist would not save people; no man or prophet can.
- Still, chosen for a key role in the drama of the ages, this little baby boy was sent by the Lord as a forerunner, to prepare the way for God the Son Jesus to come to earth to deliver His people.

4. *<Slide> A song about peace. (78-79)*

- While pain and sorrow, darkness and death cast shadows over this next section of Zechariah's song, it's clear God is changing the atmosphere.
- Prophet John the Baptist will prepare the way for Messiah by pointing people to the One Who will "[shine] on those living in darkness"—the One Who will "guide our feet into the path of *peace*."
- And *peace* is an important Bible word.
- *Shalom* is the Hebrew word and it carries a grandiose meaning.
- When the Bible speaks about shalom or peace, it rarely refers to the absence of conflict, or, simply to a personal, interior, state of calm.
- ***The peace the Bible speaks of*** is far more robust—it means: wholeness, completeness, abundance, well-being, and safety.
- ***It refers to [is] God's ability and plan to set the world right again through Jesus the Messiah.***
- The Bible's concept of peace encompasses peace with God, self, others, and creation. Shalom is wholeness in every direction—relationally, economically, politically, and spiritually. (Mark Peters, 12/24/2014)

IV. Life Applications

- Well, time to land the plane now with some life-applications on the *peace* Jesus brings ...

A. *<Slide> The coming of Jesus makes peace with God possible.*

- When the harried busy-ness of the season presses in on us, the true reason for Christmas can be easily forgotten. Suckers for tradition or sentiment over Truth, we tend to get caught up celebrating all the stuff around the holidays and miss the real point of Christmas altogether.
- A great company of angels, praising God, announce to the shepherds (boys working the midnight shift): "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth **peace** to those on whom His favour rests." (Luke 2:14)

- Months later, Simeon, a man who'd been waiting for the "consolation of Israel" *breaks into song* holding baby Jesus in his arms: "Sovereign Lord, as You have promised, You may now dismiss Your servant in *peace*. For my eyes have seen your *salvation*, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations." (Luke 2:29-31)
- More than a simple 'Once-Upon-a-Time-fairytales' that inspires us to live better lives, the Christian Christmas Story's way grander than that: God breaks into the world to save humanity and all creation!!' 'Christ the Saviour is born!
- **<Slide>** Christmas marks the arrival of the Most Important Person to ever walk this planet—God Himself here to write a new story!
- You see, God created us all for loving relationship with Him.
- There's no true life apart from God—the One Who gives and sustains life.
- Painful for all of us (and painful for our Loving Creator too), our sin *separates* us from Him. And, none of us can ever *be good enough* or *do enough good* to bridge the gap between holy God and sinful us.
- This is why, driven by deep deep love for us, God the Son Jesus comes down to earth to live, die, and to rise again.
- ***Only God Himself can bridge the gap and make it possible for us to have restored relationship with Him.***
- Refreshing. Unlike other religions, the message of the Christian Story is not the nagging/anxiety-inducing mantra, 'you need *be better/do more*.'
- **<Slide>** APP - Perhaps lately *you've* been wondering: 'Is there more to life than this?' Tired of attempting to be self-sufficient - that's not working - you find yourself asking—even longing: 'How can I connect with God?' 'Where do I find the real peace I crave?' Well ...
- ***Real peace comes only through faith in Jesus.***
- Why Romans 5:1-2 states: "Therefore, since we have been justified through *faith*, we have ***peace*** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom we have gained access by *faith* into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God."
- Real peace only comes in relationship with Jesus.
- If today, you have never before surrendered, put your faith in Jesus as *your* Saviour, and you're feeling a tug in your heart, I encourage you to pray this simple prayer of faith:

- “Jesus, I confess my sin and put my faith in You. Thank You for dying on the cross to bridge the gap between us. I invite You into my life. Let’s start a new relationship together. Amen.”
- If this is *your* prayer, come talk to me or one of the pastors or prayer ministry people after the service.
- And, I encourage you to sign up for our 2026 Alpha Course “Exploring Christianity” starting Thursday, January 8th.

B. *<Slide> The coming of Jesus provides peace within.*

- ILL - I probably struggle with this one most. When I began my research for this sermon, I first wrote the word “peace” on the page, then right under it, I wrote my confession: “I’m battling to *feel peace* right now.”
- APP - What’s got *you* these days?
- Is there a work, family, or health situation that’s left you restless? Worried? Anxious? Fearful? Overwhelmed?
- Whatever it is, you’re probably not eating or sleeping or generally functioning all that well—and, your lack of inner peace is likely affecting your relationships.
- In deep unrest, many self-medicate by binging online or turning to nicotine, cannabis, or alcohol in search of some measure of peace.
- **<Slide> So, where do we find this often-elusive *peace within*?**
- Clue is found in that line from Charity Gayle’s worship song: “I know that there is peace within Your presence. I speak Jesus.” ***The peace Jesus provides surpasses any peace this world offers.***
- The peace Jesus brings does not disregard your struggle or ask you to sweep your pain under the carpet.
- No! Jesus meets you right in it! How do we know this? Jesus knows pain—He Himself suffered in every way as a human.
- In John 16:33, just before the cross, Jesus says: “I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”
- There’s peace in the truth that our Saviour Jesus fought through the struggle and pain of death and came through it—out the other side!!
- **<Slide> As Tim Keller puts it: “Some of our inward rest comes when the Spirit reminds us of this final salvation and ultimate rest. It is a certainty that, at the end of all things, all will be well. This gives us *peace***

and strength when dealing with the trials and tragedies of the present.” (Keller, p39)

- ***The peace of God flows from His presence; it calms our hearts and makes us strong to live for Him.***
- A spiritual practice I’m learning, and, coming to rely on, is *hearing God’s voice*—through His Word, through listening prayer, through receiving prayer from others.
- There’s an inner peace that comes when we learn to *tap in to the voice and presence of Jesus*. And, inviting God’s presence, listening to God’s voice, and relying on God’s work in our lives is most often accompanied by a sweet sense of peace—regardless of our circumstances.
- Isaiah 26:3 reminds: “[God] will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in Him.”
- ILL - This week, God ministered to me through my morning prayerbook which read: “I bless you with being peaceful because you know ahead of time that your Father God will partner with you to provide adequacy for each day, whether a day with pain or pleasure.” (Ginter, Day 21)
- And wow! God did provide His presence, His peace within—and I felt Him carry me this week.

C. *<Slide> The coming of Jesus brings peace on earth.*

- ILL - Left to our own devices, all humans can do is scratch and claw, on our own strength, to manufacture a measure of peace.
- If you’ve ever prepared to go away on a holiday, you understand it takes a ton of work to make all the arrangements for a peaceful vacation.
- Often, by the time you have everything prepared, you’re so exhausted it’s hard to enjoy it.
- ***When the world, and people in it, don’t see Jesus, can’t see Jesus, or refuse to see Jesus, death and darkness cast their shadows.***
- Jesus was born into a world clearly in need of peace.
- The night Jesus was born, there was very little “peace on earth.”
- Instead, there were the cries of a young mother in labour, the anxiety of a watching father, the noise of bleating sheep and mooing cattle.
- Turmoil and terror, Rome was building its empire oppressing everyone under its rule. King Herod ordered the murder of all the baby boys he saw as a threat to his precious power.

- <**Slide**> Why the words of Isaiah grip us so deeply.
- Looking ahead, hundreds of years before the coming of Christ, the prophet said: “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness, a light has dawned. 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.” (Isaiah 9:2, 6-7a)
- ***Jesus is our city's Prince of Peace.***
- <**Slide**> ILL - Back to that altercation between the police officers and the homeless man at Cap Mall. I approached the ramped-up situation, ready to dive in and fix it—or, so I thought!
- When, rather strangely, I felt the Lord prompting me otherwise—to keep my mouth shut, and, pray. My simple prayer? “Jesus, bring Your peace.”
- And, less than a minute after my quiet prayer, I witnessed an incredible peace come over the homeless man! In the midst of his pain, rage, and trauma, his voice calmed, and he said to the agitated officers: “Okay, okay. Please just give me 5 minutes to pack my stuff.”
- Peaceful, wise response. The officers calmed too, and backed off.
- And incredibly, a short time later, the man went on his way, peacefully.
- “Jesus, bring Your peace.”
- <**Slide**> Jesus says to His disciples: “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. 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.” (John 14:26-27)
- When we surrender our lives to Jesus, God the Holy Spirit, our Advocate, comes to live in us and we can lean on the **peace** only Jesus brings.
- The peace Jesus brings to our hearts transforms our relationships - our ‘enemy’ can be our friend. The peace of Christ can unite people from all backgrounds into worship, friendship, and mission.
- And, friends of NSAC, **as Christ-followers, we can** “bring Jesus” into the dark places, and, even **be a non-anxious, peaceful presence in our world** that often finds itself in **turmoil**. May God use us as *His instruments of peace on earth*. Amen. Thanks for listening.

- <**Prayer Slide**> I invite the worship team to come now.
- Prayer is available, now during worship, and, after the service. If something's on your heart, a life situation for which you need the **peace of Jesus**, please don't leave before going for prayer.
- 9am: Andrea & Dan; Steph & Josh //11am: Linda & Dugald; Renee & Joy
- Let's stand now to respond to God in worship ...