

## *Gifts Of Christmas Sermon Series | Session 2: The Gift Of Peace*

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This series download also includes discussion questions that can be used to facilitate small groups after your large group teaching or even create handouts for students to work through the message as you go. These questions are designed to foster conversations, help students think critically about the teaching, and wrestle with how these Biblical truths impact their complicated and ever-changing lives.

Make sure to leverage the series logo, title slide, background slides, and social media artwork this YM360 Sermon Series provides for promotion and message support. We've even included the native design files to allow you the freedom to use the logo in any way that meets your needs.

This YM360 Sermon Series was created to be suitable for all types of churches and ministry environments. It was intentionally designed to provide you with everything you need while also allowing you the freedom to make it fit your particular ministry context. Nobody knows your ministry like you do. Therefore, we encourage you to make any adjustments to this series you feel are necessary to best fit the needs of your students, church, or ministry context.

**A Prayer Before You Prepare |** Heavenly Father, all glory, honor, and praise belongs to You alone! You are worthy of all of my adoration. You alone formed the world and called what you created "good." Thank you for being who you are. Thank you for creating me in Your likeness. Thank you for your abundant mercy and grace. Every good gift, including your Word, is a gift to me. Today, I want to worship you! Let my life be for you and your glory. Lord, please give me your wisdom and insight now as I approach your Word. Help me to discern the truth of this text. Help me not to rely on my own understanding. Remove my ego, wants, and selfish desires. Guide and direct me as I prepare to teach the truth of your holy scriptures to the students whom you love and have placed within my care for such a time as this. May the words I speak be those you want to be spoken, may the words they hear be those you want to be heard, and may Your name be glorified through it all. Amen!

**Series Snapshot** | *Gifts Of Christmas* is a four-session series that will help your students understand the gifts God gives us through the incarnation of Christ that we celebrate at Christmas: hope, peace, joy, and love.

**Series Overview** | We live in a world that is filled with hopelessness. A place where peace is often fleeting, war is common, and conflict is constantly lurking around the corner. We live in a world where joy is lost in the hustle and bustle of life. Our world is one where love can feel empty. This is the world in which God sent His Son Jesus to come and save us from sin—to give mankind hope, peace, joy, and love. *Gifts Of Christmas* will remind us that because of the greatest Gift of all, we can have life and know how to share His hope, peace, joy, and love with the world. Each of these four sessions of this series will represent one of the traditional advent themes found in the story of Christ’s birth, life, death, and resurrection.

- **Session 1 – The Gift of Hope** (Genesis 3:8-15, Isaiah 9:6-7, Luke 2:25-32, Luke 2:36-38, Romans 5:1-5, Titus 2:11-14, 1 Corinthians 15:19-20, Matthew 28: 19-20, 1 Peter 3:14-15) | In the beginning, when Adam and Eve first sinned, all seemed hopeless because of the consequences of sin. But God foretold of a hope that was coming to save the world. This hope was born thousands of years later in Christ’s birth. Because of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection, we too can have hope when all things seem lost.
- **Session 2 – The Gift of Peace** (Genesis 3:1-6, Luke 2:8-14, Isaiah 9:6-7, Isaiah 59:2, Romans 1:18, Romans 5:1, 8-10, Ephesians 2:14, Romans 12:18) | One of the consequences of sin is that it separates us from God. Our flesh is at war with God, and there is no peace. Throughout history, humankind has strived for true peace. But this peace is not a political peace but a peace that God gives us in the reconciliation that Jesus makes possible through His death and resurrection.
- **Session 3 – The Gift of Joy** (Luke 2:8-20, John 9:1-24) After Jesus’ birth, Angels appeared to shepherds and told them of the birth of Christ. After the shepherds found Jesus, they hurried to tell the town about the Messiah who had come. Their joy could not be contained, for the Savior had come.
- **Session 4 – The Gift of Love** (1 John 4:7-12) | This is love: that God sent Jesus to live, love, die, and rise from the dead to save us. And we show this by loving one another. God’s love has been poured out to all through Jesus. As we look to Him, that love transfers to how we are to love others.

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**Large Group Teaching Summary** | One of the consequences of sin is that it separates us from God. Our flesh is at war with God, and there is no peace. Throughout history, humankind has strived for true peace. This peace is not a political peace but a peace that God gives us because of the reconciliation that Jesus makes possible through his death and resurrection.

**Key Takeaway** | Where there is no peace, God became peace for us so that we can have peace with Him and with others.

**Scripture Focus** | Genesis 3:1-6, Luke 2:8-14, Isaiah 9:6-7, Isaiah 59:2, Romans 1:18, Romans 5:1, 8-10, Ephesians 2:14, Romans 12:18

**What You May Need** | *Optional Illustration:* Captain America

## ***Gifts Of Christmas Sermon Series Outline | Session 2: The Gift Of Peace***

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### I. Introduction

- A. Welcome to session two of our series, *Gifts Of Christmas*! Last time, we kicked off this series with the first of four great gifts that are a part of the Christmas story. We talked about how every year, Christians across the world celebrate the Advent of Christ.
  1. Advent is a word that comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which means “coming” or “arrival.”
  2. In the Christian church, Advent refers to a four-week season of remembering and preparation leading up to Christmas, where we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ on Earth and His expected return.
  3. Advent begins on the Sunday closest to November 30<sup>th</sup> and ends on December 24<sup>th</sup>.
  4. Each week of Advent focuses on a different theme— hope, peace, joy, and love.
  
- B. The first gift we unwrapped together was the GIFT OF HOPE.
  1. We acknowledge that we live in a world where hope is in short supply. It can seem like everywhere we turn, there is a reason to be defeated or feel hopeless. The truth of the Gospel is that there is always hope.
  2. As we explored some passages of Scripture to learn how hope sparked, how hope arrived in Jesus, how we can have hope, how hope grows in us, and how we are to respond to hope right now.
  3. We closed the first session, realizing that JESUS GIVES US THE GIFT OF ULTIMATE HOPE. He is the hope of the world and the greatest gift of all. Due to Jesus’ birth, death, resurrection, and His offer to restore our broken relationship with God, we should never be people without hope. And because we are people who have experienced His gift of ultimate hope during this holiday season (and every season), we should strive to share the hope of Jesus with as many hopeless people as we can.
  
- C. In this second session, we are continuing unwrapping the *Gifts of Christmas* as we talk about the gift of peace.
  
- D. ***Optional Illustration: Captain America***
  1. But before we dive in, I want to know how many of you have ever seen any of the Marvel superhero movies. Have you seen *Captain America Civil War*? I know it’s not a Christmas movie, but let’s talk about it.
  2. *Captain America Civil War*.
    - a) How many of you like Captain America?
    - b) If you are a Captain America fan, then you know that he is known for his virtue of character and standing up for truth (and obviously the shield). But there was an interesting story that happens not in the first *Captain America* movie but in the third movie, *Captain America Civil War*.
    - c) (Spoiler Alert) The story has Captain America, Steve Rogers, who leads the newly formed team of Avengers in their continued efforts to safeguard humanity. But after another incident involving the Avengers results in collateral damage, political pressure mounts to install a system of accountability headed by a governing body to oversee and

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direct the team. The new status quo fractures the Avengers, resulting in two camps—one led by Steve Rogers and his desire for the Avengers to remain free to defend humanity without government interference, and the other following Tony Stark’s surprising decision to support government oversight and accountability. The conflict between the two sides comes to an intense end.

### **II. Tension**

- A. Whether it’s in the movies, comic books, or real life, war and conflict have been a constant thread woven throughout the history of time. But seeing that Christmas isn’t a season where we focus much on war and conflict (except maybe around the table when Uncle John arrives), let’s turn our attention to its counterpart. What is the opposite of war? Peace.
- B. There’s a famous Christmas song that is widely played on the radio and other popular listening platforms. The song is called, *Let There Be Peace on Earth*. Here are the lyrics.

***NOTE: Display the lyrics to the song on the screen for students to see. We can not provide these lyrics due to copyright laws.***

- 1. You see, one of the reasons why the song resonates so much with people is that we are weary as a human race, as people. We are tired of war. Tired of there being conflict and strife. We feel the brokenness of the world that we live in, and we yearn and long for peace.
- 2. Unfortunately, this same brokenness is what is driving the wedge between us and keeping us from peace. So, peace (true peace) feels like more of a dream than it does a reality.
- 3. Over the next few moments, let me paint a picture of where our spiritual conflict started, why we are desperate for peace, and (another spoiler alert) how it all ends.

### **III. Scripture**

- A. THE ORIGIN: THE FALL OF MAN
  - 1. Where did all this chaos of war, conflict, and strife start? To find the answer to where it all started, we need to go back, once again, to the beginning. Turn your attention to Genesis 3.
  - 2. In case you weren’t with us last time, let me catch you up with a brief overview of the Book of Genesis.
    - a) While there’s no specific author named within the text, Moses is the accepted author for Genesis, with some editing and additions done after his death (such as the account of his death!).
    - b) It’s difficult to establish with any certainty a date for the completion of the Pentateuch (a name for the first five books of the Bible—including Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—of which Genesis is a part). Most of the material originated from Moses himself, and

depending on the date of the Exodus (which is also not known for sure), that would make the date for the writing of Genesis sometime in the 1400s or the 1200s BC

- c) Genesis details the earliest history of our world, including creation and Adam and Eve's fall. It also focuses on the emergence of Israel, not only as God's people but as the group God would work through to bring redemption to the world.
3. In Genesis Chapter 1, we learn that God created the heavens and the earth. At the end of seven days, God looks back at what He created and said that it was very good!
4. In Chapter 2, we find ourselves learning about Adam and Eve, the first man and woman. After God created man, He gave him specific instructions, He told Adam that he could eat all the fruit of the Garden of Eden but told him not to eat of the tree of Good and Evil.
  - a) God was trying to protect, not punish or control Adam and Eve. God knew that eating of that tree would cause them (and us) great harm. But, God did not create man and woman as robots. He gives us free will and the ability to make our own choices. God wants us to freely choose to obey and follow Him out of our love for Him, but He doesn't make us do so. Therefore, He allowed the first man and woman (just like He allows you and me) the ability to follow Him or break relationship with Him.
5. In the beginning of Chapter 3, Eve is tempted by Satan to eat of the fruit. She takes of the fruit and eats it. Adam eats it as well.
6. READ GENESIS 3:1-6

*Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.*

  - a) The Bible tells us that when they did that, through their disobedience and rebellion, sin entered the world. What was once a perfect and peace-filled world came into ruin due to sin. What were once two creations who knew nothing other than total peace, now (for the first time since being created) Adam and Eve were now faced with death, pain, war, conflict, and strife.
  - b) This is referred to as "the fall of man" and it changed everything for Adam and Eve (and for you and me).
  - c) Because of Adam and Eve's choice to disobey God humankind has inherited a sinful problem that causes destruction, death, war, conflict, and most importantly separates us from God.

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### B. SOCIAL UNREST

1. Let's fast-forward through time and pause at a place where there was turmoil within the great Roman Empire. Rome had conquered almost all the known world at the time. However, in Jerusalem, the Jewish people didn't like the way the Roman Empire was ruling through domination and telling the Jews what they could and couldn't do.
2. The Roman Empire was filled with moral debauchery, which was opposite from the Jews and their teachings. So, at the time of Christ's birth, we see this tension of unrest beginning to build between the two entities.
3. This is the beginning of this time of war. In Isaiah 9:6-7, there was a prophecy that said this strife was going to be mended. A prince of peace was going to come and restore things to the way they were before.
  - a) READ ISAIAH 9:6-7  
*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, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.*

### C. BASIS FOR WAR: SIN

1. What do Adam and Eve have in common with the Roman Empire and the Jews?
2. Both of these examples have an underlying theme of sin. In Genesis, Adam and Eve sinned by disobeying God and eating the fruit. Similarly, the Roman Empire was sinning against Jewish laws and trying to get the Jews to follow their example.
3. READ ISAIAH 59:2.  
*but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.*
4. READ Romans 1:18.  
*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.*
5. God does not like sin. In fact, we can go so far as to say God HATES sin. His wrath is revealed against the unrighteousness of humankind. But He also loves us so much that He sent a solution for our sins in Jesus.
6. We have seen how the war began. That God hates sin, and that sin separates us from God. But the next thing we will discover is that Peace came down to men, so the war between us and God could end.

### D. PEACE CAME DOWN

1. READ LUKE 2:8-14  
*And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 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. 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. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”*

- a) We pick up at the birth of Jesus as the angels are announcing Jesus’ birth to the shepherds.
- b) That’s quite the birth announcement! Cards weren’t sent out in the mail with a cute baby picture and all the personal details (weight, gender, height, etc.), but instead, there was a glorious, heavenly proclamation of Jesus’ birth.
- c) Peace had finally come! And the interesting part is that peace (Jesus) came in the form of a baby. Not a conquering king, negotiator, or ambassador, but an unassuming baby. He was the catalyst through which ultimate peace would come. Not a temporary or earthly peace, but an everlasting peace. One that goes beyond our earthly existence. A peace that starts in our hearts and is worked out through our actions and attitude toward others.
- d) You may find yourself asking, how can a baby *bring* peace? How did baby Jesus *become* our peace?

E. JESUS BECAME OUR PEACE.

1. READ ROMANS 5:8-10.

*but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.*

- a) You will notice the word “*reconciled*” is used which may leave you wondering what does that even mean? Reconciled means “to bring into agreement, or harmony.”
- b) Bringing two parties that are against each other (at war with each other) into an agreement of peace.
- c) So, “*while we were yet enemies*” or in the midst of our conflict, Jesus brought permanent peace. How did He do that? Unlike you and me, Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life. This means that He could pay the price for our sins (something that our sin disqualifies us from being able to do).
- d) He died on the Cross, taking all of our sins upon Him. The sinless one became sin for us. He was buried, and three days later, He rose again. Defeating the power of sin and death, rescuing us from a life of eternal separation from God because of our sin, all so we can be saved and have everlasting peace.

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### IV. Application

#### A. PEACE WITH GOD THROUGH FAITH

1. Jesus made peace for us, a peace that we can't buy or do within our own power. We can experience peace with God through Jesus.
2. As we read this scripture, keep in mind that it is referring to Jesus when it says the word "he." This verse clearly describes all that happened when Jesus died on the Cross for our sins and rose again. Giving us the opportunity to be at peace with God rather than at war with Him.
3. READ EPHESIANS 2:14.  
*For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility.*
4. Jesus brings the ultimate peace. Not just peace in our hearts but peace at the end of the age. He will bring everlasting peace to all.

### V. Gospel

#### A. OUR RESPONSE TO PEACE

##### 1. READ ROMANS 12:18.

*If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.*

- a) It is here that God clearly defines what our response should be toward Him and others and that it is twofold.
- b) First, you have the decision to make of whether or not you will accept the peace that God offered when He sent His son Jesus to pay the price for our sins. If you have never asked Jesus to be your Savior, I invite you to do that tonight. It is as simple as A, B, C.
  1. A - Admit that you are a sinner and ask Jesus to forgive you of your sins.
  2. B - Believe that Jesus is the son of God who died on the Cross, was buried, and rose again from the dead.
  3. C - Confess with your mouth that Jesus as Lord.

B. The Bible says that anyone who prays to God and admits their sins, asking for forgiveness, believes in Jesus, and confesses Him as Lord will be saved. When you make that decision to accept the peace that God offers through Jesus, God washed us free from all of our sins, and gives us peace in our hearts and lives as we walk with Him. If you've never done that before, I invite you to do it tonight.

C. Maybe you are here tonight, and you are saying, I've already asked Jesus to be my Savior. So, what does all this mean for me?

1. Perhaps there is something that you need to confess to the Lord that is hindering the peace in your relationship with God. Or, for you, it is embracing the understanding that we were once at war, but Jesus became our peace. Therefore, we have an even deeper appreciation for Him. And because we



have received such peace through Jesus, our natural response should be to live out that same peace in our relationships with others.

2. So if there is strife, or even something small, between you and someone else, your response as a Christian, a Christ-follower, should be to do whatever you can on your end to bring peace within that relationship. Understanding that you may not be able to change someone else, but you can change YOU and the way you respond or act within a relationship. I encourage you to take care of that relationship tonight and make peace between each other.
3. If you are sincerely seeking forgiveness, peace, and restoration within that relationship and the person doesn't want to forgive you, that is ok. But you do what you can do in your heart and life first. Make it right between you and God and others.

### VI. Conclusion

- A. It's true that throughout history (from the very beginning), humankind has strived for the restoration of true peace that was lost in the Garden of Eden. This peace is not a political peace but a peace that God gives us because of the reconciliation that Jesus makes possible through his death and resurrection. Without the restoration and a restored relationship that comes through salvation in Jesus, our flesh is still at war with God, and there is no peace. Our sin still separates us from God.
- B. So, as we wrap up tonight, honestly answer these two questions about yourself.
  1. Am I at peace with God?
    - a) Have I accepted Him as my Savior and have a personal relationship with Him?
    - b) Is there anything that is between me and God, and you need to confess sin?
  2. Am I living at peace with others?
    - a) Are you living out the peace of God with others?
    - b) Are you a catalyst of peace in your relationship with other people?
- C. Remember: WHERE THERE IS NO PEACE, GOD BECAME PEACE FOR US SO THAT WE CAN HAVE PEACE WITH HIM AND WITH OTHERS.
- D. Let's pray.