

The King of Peace

John 12:1-16

Peace is a big word, especially in the Bible. Most of us do not know the reality of war, thankfully. Some in our church family have suffered the costly effects of war. Those who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, those who fought in **Korea and Vietnam**, understand war and peace to a deeper level than the rest of us. The cost of war and the gift of peace means more to them.

There are still a handful of veterans left from **World War 2**. They are rightly called the Greatest Generation because their courage and sacrifice literally saved the world as we know it from tyranny and death. These were simple men, from every trade, who set aside their lives and their loves to spend two, three, four years overseas, in trenches, enduring enemy fire, charging enemy lines, seeing brothers fall beside them, taking bullets and shrapnel - and many giving their lives.

To them, the word PEACE means more. The cost of peace has names beside it - friends wounded, friends tortured, friends killed. Anything you have paid for is more valuable to you.

Think of the peace you have with God. If you belong to Jesus by faith then **you HAVE peace with God** right now through Him. You were at war with God - you were an enemy of God, deserving His wrath forever. But Jesus paid the price for your peace. He gave His life on the cross to RECONCILE you - rebellious sinner though you are - with the holy God of heaven. You have peace with God.

Think about the COST of that PEACE. We did not pay for it. Jesus did. But we should still value it. We should prize our peace with God - for an infinite price was paid to secure it.

Think of those **soldiers coming home** from Europe after VE Day. Think of those soldiers coming home from Japan after VJ Day. Picture the reunion with loved ones - the tears of joy for all who safely came home, and the tears of sadness for those who did not come home. Peace. The war was over. Victory had been won. England was saved. Europe was free. The Nazi onslaught had been stopped. Japan's reign of terror ended. The holocaust was revealed - death camps emptied; prisoners set free.

Peace.

We don't give thanks enough, do we, for **the peace we enjoy here in the United States of America**. But it is a wonderful and precious gift - that was costly to win and is still costly to protect.

How much more is this true of the peace we enjoy with the holy God of heaven?

Today in John 12 we see Jesus entering Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. He is riding on a donkey - which at first seems like a throwaway detail. But then you think about it and realize **how Kings usually entered cities** - not on a donkey. They came riding a war horse, leading an army bristling with swords and spears. They came with a message demanding submission and threatening war. But Jesus came with a message offering peace - peace for EVERYONE.

Today we will see **why only Jesus can give us peace** - four reasons; four revelations of His identity that are tied to four scenes in this chapter. Act 1 takes place in the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus as they host Jesus and the disciples for a special meal together.

Why Only Jesus can Give you Peace:

1. He is the Sufficient Sacrifice

“Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment... and anointed the feet of Jesus... Jesus said, ‘...Keep it for the day of my burial...’ John 12:3,7

Judas objected to this lavish gesture, but Jesus responded in v. 7, “Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial.” It was common ***to preserve the bodies*** of important people with special ointments AFTER they died. This act was symbolic of that coming death. Jesus’ body was being prepared for burial.

We’ll see in a moment that this anointing was also **a sign of Jesus’ KINGSHIP** - for kings of Israel were always anointed with expensive oil as a sign of the start of their reign or the public part of their reign. But the main point in this opening scene is that ***Jesus’ body is being prepared for death and burial.***

It is a symbol of **the precious value of His sacrifice.** The smell of the ***perfume filled the room.*** They did not have aromatherapy in those days. They did not have Degree Antiperspirant or Cool Water Cologne (I know that’s still what the cool kids wear) or Axe Body Spray. They did not have Febreze or those wax things you plug in and they melt and smell good. My point is that the fragrance in most homes in those days came more from the animals right outside than it did from the perfumes inside. This was an unusually powerful and pleasant aroma.

And it was a sign of the beauty of Jesus’ sacrifice - ***a fragrance that would come to fill the world.*** To some the death of Jesus smells like his defeat and humiliation, but to those who believe in Him, it is the fragrance of LIFE.

This is why only Jesus can give you true and lasting peace - for only HE is the All sufficient Sacrifice.

Why Only Jesus can Give you Peace:

1. He is the Sufficient Sacrifice - so you can trust Him with your Sin

“Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me.” John 12:8

Jesus is unique in history because He is unique in the universe. He is the only Savior for sinners. There is no other name by which people can be saved. He is the only begotten Son of God. He is the fully human Son of Man. As a human His sacrifice applies to us perfectly. As the Son of God His sacrifice has infinite value.

So you can trust Him with your SIN. Jesus paid it all. There is nothing left for you to pay. “The wages of sin is death.” Jesus paid that price for you and for me. When He hung on the cross He did

not say, "It's mostly done." He said, "It is finished." The price has been paid. The sacrifice of Jesus was sufficient. That's the first reason we only Jesus can give us peace. Here is the second one:

Why Only Jesus can Give you Peace:

2. He is the Defeater of Death

"The large crowd... came also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead." John 12:9

Word had spread about Jesus - the miracle worker. And his greatest spectacle was Lazarus. He had raised a couple of other people from the dead, but Lazarus had a large crowd around him who knew he had been dead for four days - not just an hour or two. And Lazarus was raised very publicly - so the Jewish leaders could not dispute the veracity of the miracle.

As a result, many people were coming to hear from Jesus and were following him as his disciples. The Jewish leaders therefore started making **plans to kill Lazarus**, because if the man was dead (again) they hoped the story would begin to subside.

But the account of Lazarus being raised, which happened in the chapter right before this one and in this very setting by their home, **was a preview of Jesus' own resurrection**. If Jesus could raise others from the dead, perhaps - the disciples were beginning to wonder - He could raise Himself from the dead. Come back next week to study John 20 and the wonderful truth of Jesus' own resurrection.

But today we hear the testimony of John the Apostle, Lazarus, Mary and Martha - that Jesus is the One who defeated death. This is why He alone can give you peace. **No one else has ever conquered death.**

- Mohammed - still dead.
- Buddha - dead.
- Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormon Church - still dead.
- Charles Taze Russell, founder of the Jehova Witnesses - still dead.

There is only ONE leader of any religion ever in history who rose from the dead. Only One. His name is Jesus. Since He alone is the defeater of Death:

Why Only Jesus can Give you Peace:

2. He is the Defeater of Death - So you can trust Him with your Death

"The large crowd... came also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead." John 12:9

Close your eyes and picture in your mind **the day of your funeral**. Imagine your loved ones closing the casket on your lifeless form, hands folded on your chest that is no longer moving up and down. Unless Jesus comes back in our lifetime, this will be the outcome for every one of us - whether at the end of a long life or cut short by an accident or illness.

What plans have you put in place for your death? Have you written a will? Have you updated it recently? Have you made your wishes clear for what to do with your body? Who will be in charge of your end of life decisions? Who will arrange the funeral and burial?

You are choosing someone you will trust with your earthly death.

Who are you trusting with your spiritual death? Who are you trusting with your eternal soul? **Everyone spends eternity somewhere.** The invisible part of you - your spirit or soul - is indestructible. It will go on living long after your physical body breaks down.

I assume you've made arrangements for your retirement. **Have you made arrangements for your death?** Have you placed your trust in Jesus alone to carry you into eternity? Because He is the only One who can. That takes us into the third reason we can trust Jesus. We can trust Him with our sin, with our death and also with our ETERNITY.

Why Only Jesus can Give you Peace:

3. He is the King who Saves - so you can trust Him with your Eternity

"Crying out, 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!'"
John 12:13

This is a strange moment in history. This is Sunday and the crowd is cheering for Jesus - welcoming Him into the city of Jerusalem as their long awaited King - their Messiah, their hero. But just a few days later this same crowd would turn on him and shout out repeatedly, ***"Crucify him!"***

They wanted a King - but on their terms, not his. They wanted a military king who would overthrow Rome and reestablish Israel. They didn't want a donkey-riding king, they wanted an army-leading king. They certainly didn't want a king who had come to die. They wanted a king who had come to kill.

Aren't we so blessed that Jesus did not come to kill? That He did not come to conquer and judge? Had that been the case we would all be doomed. The only reason we know our sins have been forgiven, that death has been defeated and that our eternity is secure is that Jesus came to die for us. Look at verse 47:

Why Only Jesus can Give you Peace:

3. He is the King who Saves - so you can trust Him with your Eternity

"I did not come to judge the world but to save the world." John 12:47

Jesus will come again to judge the world, but when He came the first time it was not to bring judgment but to bring salvation. He came in peace - riding on a donkey. When Jesus comes again he will be riding a white horse and leading the armies of heaven. When He comes again He will strike the earth with the sword of His mouth. That means He will speak a word of final, total victory - and all of His enemies will instantly be cast down. "Every knee will bow," on that day, "and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord."

Jesus is the King who Saves. He is the King who came to bring PEACE on earth - to reconcile sinful, rebellious people with our holy, righteous God. He is the All-powerful King who came to lay down His own life to save you and me. He gave Himself into sin and death to protect us from sin and death. And when He walked out of that tomb the power of sin over us was broken forever. And sin is the weapon

that Death wields. Without the sharp sickle of sin to attack you, Death holds no fear for you. For the believer in Jesus, your sin has been paid for, once and for all.

Jesus has SAVED YOU! You can trust Him with your life, with your death, with your eternity. And hear this - there is no one else you can trust with these things. Certainly not YOURSELF. Not any other leader or religion. Only Jesus. Only Jesus is the King who came to save! Listen to v. 36:

Why Only Jesus can Give you Peace:

3. He is the King who Saves - so you can trust Him with your Eternity

“While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.” John 12:36

Jesus is the light of the world. He is the full and final revelation of the nature of God - the holy, righteous, loving, gracious nature of God. He says to all of us - walk in the light of His truth. He invites us to step into the light of all that He is - all that He taught. That is where light is - where truth is - where freedom and life reside.

Outside of Jesus there is darkness and confusion, danger and death. In Christ there is light and hope, freedom and victory. “While you have the light, believe in the light.” Brother, sister, friend - you are here listening to the Word of God. The Lord has graciously placed you in a country where the Word of God can be openly taught. You find yourself in a church that clearly and systematically teaches Scripture, with a focus on Jesus who is the center of all that God has revealed. You have a Bible and can read and study for yourself.

You are surrounded by the light of truth in Jesus. BELIEVE in the light. Believe in Jesus. Fix your confidence and hope in Him and Him alone. When our hearts stray from Jesus, looking to other people and other things for our hope, salvation, life and happiness, we are straying into the darkness and away from the light. Only Jesus is the light. Trust Him. And look at the promise: ***“That you may become sons and daughters of light.”***

Only Jesus can make this promise. The Son of God became sin for you so you could become a righteous son or daughter of God yourself. In Christ this is who we are - we are children of LIGHT. Jesus washed away your sin, filled you with His Spirit, and is making you more and more like Him.

Do you trust Him? He is the King of Peace.

Jim Elliot and four other men went to Ecuador in the early '50s to reach a violent unreached tribe called the Huaoroni people, known as the Auca, which means "savage." Jim and his friends spent four years getting to know the region, customs and language of the Huaroni people and trying to make contact. They knew it was dangerous, but Jim famously said, ***"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."***

They felt at peace with the risk God was calling them to. When they felt the time was right, Nate Saint flew them to a river delta where they had their first face to face contact with the Huaoroni. It seemed to go ok, but the first member of the tribe they met spread fear and confusion among his people and then came back with an armed group of warriors who killed all five of the missionaries with spears.

Jim, Nate, Roger, Ed and Pete made the ultimate sacrifice to bring the message of peace to a violent tribe who knew nothing of peace, and knew only the endless cycle of war and revenge. But in the coming of the five missionaries, the first ray of light had come to the Huaoroni. Of course, they extinguished it in their violence, but that was not the end of the story.



Elisabeth Elliot w/ Valerie



Rachel Saint w/ Dayuma

Jim's young wife, **Elisabeth, and Nate's sister, Rachel** - went back to the tribe that had killed a husband and a brother. The men were bold to start the work, but ***the women were even more courageous to finish the work.*** They went back to the tribe a couple of years later to demonstrate the love of Christ they would also proclaim. Rachel was given the name **Nemo which means STAR.** They saw Rachel and Elisabeth as source of light - which, of course, they were.

Many in the tribe eventually became Christians - and, with help from Rachel and Elisabeth, they made peace with other tribes around them with whom they had previously been at war, even intermarrying with them. Jesus is the King of Peace. He purchased our peace by sacrificing His life. Jim Elliot and the other four men followed the example of Jesus, as did Elisabeth and Rachel. And so they brought the peace of King Jesus to a tribe that had been caught up in endless war.

Elisabeth Elliot said:

“Peace does not dwell in outward things, but in the heart prepared to wait trustfully and quietly on Him who has all things safely in His hands. There is nothing worth living for, unless it is worth dying for.” Elisabeth Elliot

Only Jesus can give you peace. He is the King of peace. He is the all sufficient sacrifice, the defeater of death, and the King who saves. Even when she lost her husband and the father to her 10 month old daughter, Elisabeth held on to this truth - that Jesus was still King. He was still in control. She devoted the rest of her long life to sharing with others the peace she had found in Christ.

And this story also illustrates our final point - that Jesus is the King of All people.

Why Only Jesus can Give you Peace:

4. He is the King of All

“Some Greeks... came to Philip... and asked him, ‘Sir, we wish to see Jesus.’” John 12:20-21

Jesus came to gather in the lost sheep of Israel. He was born as a Jew and came as the Messiah for the Jewish people. But the mystery revealed in the New Testament is that the gospel is not only about salvation for the Jews - it is salvation offered to ALL PEOPLE. Here is a group of Greeks - non-Jews - asking for an audience with Jesus.

Why Only Jesus can Give you Peace:

4. He is the King of All - so you can trust Him with your Loved ones

“And Jesus answered them, ‘The hour has come for the son of man to be glorified... when I am lifted up... I will draw all people to myself.’” John 12:23,32

All people. Jesus offers peace not just to religious people, church people, Jewish people - He offers His peace to ALL PEOPLE. Anyone who will come to Him in humble faith will be saved. It is as simple as calling on His name.

Jesus is the King of All people. This is what God is doing in the world right now - lifting up the name of Jesus in order to gather in believers from every tongue and tribe and nation. There are still 2 billion people in the world who have never heard the name of Jesus. We need millions more like Jim and Elisabeth Elliot, like Rachel Saint, who will risk their lives - many who will sacrifice their lives - to lift up the name of Jesus where it has not yet been heard.

Hear this - ***there is no other hope for people.*** There is no one else who can save them from their sin, who can protect them from the power of death, who can secure them for eternity. Jesus alone is the King of Peace. The only true and lasting peace is found in Him and Him alone. Only when His name is lifted up among the nations do they have any hope of salvation, any hope of peace in this life and peace through eternity!

Fix that in your heart and mind. **There is no other hope.** Only Jesus. Business cannot save the nations. Capitalism can't. Democracy can't. The US can't. Other religions can't. Sincerity can't. Only Jesus. This is why our mission to bring the gospel to the nations is so desperately urgent. Carl F. H. Henry rightly said in the 1950s, ***“The Good News is only good if it gets there in time.”*** We are a missionary church and our mission field is the entire world. Keep praying for the nations. Keep giving to reach the nations! Consider going on a short term trip soon!

Now, think of your son or daughter, your grandson or daughter, your brother or sister, mother or father - think of your loved one who is not walking with Jesus, who is not trusting in Jesus. ***There is no other hope for them but Jesus.*** Only Jesus can give them peace. And this is the very thing He came to provide.

So never stop praying. Never stop believing. Never redirect your hope to think, “Well, at least they have a good job and a good wife and a happy family.” There is no real and lasting hope in any of that. Jesus is the only hope.

George Mueller, the great prayer warrior who started 117 schools and cared for over 10,000 orphans while pastoring a church for 63 years, spent his entire life ***praying for five friends*** who were far from Jesus. Every decade of his long life one of those friends finally bent the knee and came to Jesus in faith. On his death bed the fifth of these five friends finally relented and called on Jesus for salvation. Someone came to George to share the good news with him.

And he was not at all surprised. He said, "God led me to pray for this friend for 50 years - why would he do that if the man was not going to repent?" ***Keep praying. Keep trusting.*** Keep calling on Jesus. And keep lifting Him up to your loved one as the King of Peace. You can trust Him with your loved ones. Indeed, there is no one else you can trust.

Let's join together now in praying for our loved ones and for the nations to come to Jesus, the King of Peace.

Let's pray.