

Where to Find Real Peace

Pastor Ivan Leung



Time flies, and this year is drawing to a close. Upon reflection, I realize that many disturbing events have shaken the world: the soaring prices of oil, the earthquakes in Sichuan and Pakistan, the Myanma cyclone, the global financial meltdown... Or, at a personal level, some brothers and sisters may have experienced illnesses, loss of loved ones, difficulties at work, economic stress or strained interpersonal relationships. Facing a time of instability, we may long for a lasting kind of inner peace. In days of pain and suffering, to be able to possess real peace in our hearts is a true blessing from the Lord.

But, where can we find real peace amidst calamity? Some may think that if they possess lots of money,

they will find peace no matter where they go. Let me tell you: that is phony peace. We may realize now that our entire investment may dissipate overnight, rendering us penniless, bankrupt and worry-sick about a negative asset. Some, feeling vulnerable, may even contemplate suicide. Others rely on sedatives to fight insomnia. Every heart is hunting everywhere, not knowing where to find real peace.

The Bible tells us that true peace comes not from the world, nor from materials; true peace comes from the peace-granting God. Numbers 6:24-26 says it well, "The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace." The true foundation of peace is built on the presence of God.

Isaiah 9:6 says, "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 Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." The prophet Isaiah is prophesying about the coming Messiah, He is the peace-bestowing King. Our Lord Jesus is the Messiah of Isaiah's prophesy. Two thousand years ago, a baby was born for us, and He is our Saviour Jesus Christ. The most Regal King was born in Bethlehem in a manger for us. He is the One that gives real peace and everlasting hope! Luke 2:8-14 clearly narrates the events that occurred:

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

This portion of the Bible tells us a very precious message: Lord Jesus is born to give us real peace. His name is Immanuel, which means "God with us". Therefore, real peace resides not in a life without trials and tribulations, but rather in a life with the presence of God during those valley times.

Today, we may be facing various stresses and challenges over studies, health, careers, child-rearing, personal relationships or financial crisis, which may burden our hearts and jeopardize our inner peace. Brothers and sisters, please remember that Christmas brings good news of great joy. Jesus' birth brings us genuine peace; when God is with us, we have peace.

Furthermore, our Lord Jesus comforts us that, "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 14:27) The peace that Jesus gives is a peace that is beyond understanding. "My Peace" is a unique peace that only Jesus can give. It is something this world can not give, nor can take it away. It is a peace which is different from any worldly peace.

Right before Jesus' death, He told His disciples that He will be going to His Father's place, but He will send the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "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." (John 16:33) In this world, there will be tribulation; only in Christ can we experience

real peace, because He has already overcome Satan and death. A peace experienced during difficult times is real peace.

Therefore, when we are going through stormy seasons in our lives, do not be afraid, because God is with us. That is real peace. Not being influenced by external circumstances, this internal peace comes from the assurance that God is with us. This peace that is from God is not from our own understanding or reasoning, but through a true experience of life's many sufferings. Maybe you have heard similar testimonies like this, "When diagnosed with cancer, I was petrified with fear, but this disease did not falter my faith, because I

trust in the Lord. He guided me through each treatment phase and led me through the valley of the shadow of death. I was unharmed, because God was with me. The peace that God gives is a peace that transcends all understanding which no one can take away."

Dear brothers and sisters, regardless of any challenges you have faced this year, may you experience God's peace in this Christmas season. In times of calamity and rapid changes, may you rest your faith in our unchanging God. May your love of God deepen and your blessings abound in the year to come.

**Blessings,
Pastor Ivan Leung**

Upcoming Christmas Celebrations

English Christmas Celebration

"Jesus, Light of the World"

A Christmas program for the whole family. Come to an evening of carols, music, reflections, and celebration. Special music by the Children's Choir and the Christmas Choir. A time of community, fellowship & desserts after the program.

Friday December 19

7:30 pm @ Knight Street

Cantonese Christmas Celebration

"Merry? Christmas!"

What is the true meaning of happiness during Christmas? Come and find out during an evening of drama and music. An outreach-oriented event. Invite your Cantonese-speaking friends and family. Refreshments afterwards.

Sunday December 21

7:30 pm @ Fraser Lands Sanctuary

Mandarin Christmas Celebration

"The Good News of Great Joy"

An evening for people of all ages to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas and to share the joy of celebrating the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. An opportunity to invite your Mandarin-speaking friends and family.

Sunday December 21

7:00 pm @ Fraser Lands Chapel

Christmas Eve Celebrations

An Evening in December

8:00 pm Wednesday December 24
@ Fraser Lands

Join us this Christmas Eve for a relaxed and joy-filled evening of carol singing, friendship, and celebration. Invite your friends, family, and neighbours to this community outreach event. Refreshments and desserts following the program.

Language: English

A Night to Remember

8:30 pm Wednesday December 24
@ Knight Street

A time to bring together family and friends of VCAC for a night of caroling, scripture reading, and fellowship in reflection of God's greatest gift to us. Refreshments and desserts after the program.

Language: Trilingual (Cantonese, Mandarin, and English)