

Why is Powerful Peace so powerful? : An Advent Reflection

-by Eric Spady

We hear and talk a lot about 'Powerful Peace' in the school. We may even know theologically what it is to some degree, but a good question to ask is 'why is peace so powerful?'

I keep hearing the sound of the song "It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, everywhere you go". I love this season. As we get closer to the holidays and for me in America, Thanksgiving Day, I thought I would write a little reflection on the Powerful peace of God and Advent. Advent means "coming" and in the Advent wreath, Peace is fourth and final candle before Christmas (and for some there is a fifth white candle on Christmas day). I am highlighting the fourth peace candle because it is what was proclaimed to the shepherds as they kept watch on the sheep by night when Jesus was born.

I have often reflected on the verse from Romans 16:20 "²⁰ *The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet...*" (NIV). Interestingly it is not the God of power, or the God of might or the God who is everywhere that crushes Satan. Those are the attributes that I would think of if I was going to 'crush Satan'. But instead it is the God of Peace. Why is peace so powerful? It is because He does not only bring peace or give peace, He is peace. That is who He is. Now as we begin Advent we remember and welcome again the 'Prince of Peace'.

Another thing that makes this peace so powerful is because of what it contains. The word for peace in Hebrew as many of us know is Shalom. It means, or contains the elements of peace; completeness; welfare; health. As we think of Jesus and his coming as we celebrate Advent, imagine lighting that candle and thinking of Him as the Prince of Peace and one is and brings, welfare, wholeness, health and peace in the midst of the storm. Peace is not an absent of conflict, but peace in the midst of the storm. It is a rest and clam when circumstances cannot change. The wholeness and peace we need in our souls when the storm rages and we cannot do anything about that.

In the end of Mark chapter 4 when Jesus calms the storm on the Sea of Galilee, He SPEAKS to the storm and says "Peace be still". The wind and waves instantly

obey him and a seas that once were chaotic are now as still as glass. Imagine the surprise on the face of experienced fishermen when they experience this. This is why the chapter ends with them wondering and marveling at this man that “even the wind and the waves obey Him”.

When He brings His peace, things change. They cannot help but change. It is His power at work in us and thought us. It is His joy (another candle in the Advent wreath) to do this for us. He wants to be the wholeness in our chaos, to be the completeness where we are lacking. He delights and takes joy to be that place of peace when we need it the most.

As you celebrate the Christmas season, remember He is peace and He wants to bring His peace to the midst of our chaos and be the welfare, wholeness and strength of our lives. As the candles are lit in this holiday season, may you be blessed by and experience again the God who is our peace and will crush Satan underneath our feet.

Grace and Peace (Shalom) of the Lord Jesus be with you in this Christmas season.

