

**Wanted: Calm People**  
**From the series, "Holiday Season Want Ads"**  
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## Introduction



We're back to our Advent message series, "Holiday Season Want Ads". This year, with COVID-19, a lot of people aren't sure about what work will look like in the coming months. I hear that even Santa's reindeer are worried. With all the quarantines, they're not sure they'll be able to visit homes.

And they have important questions:

- Can they fly while wearing a mask?

Speaking of masks, will anyone see Rudolph's nose? I guess Santa will have to figure out some other way to guide his sleigh, assuming he can get it off the ground.

But, let's get back to our theme.

If you're looking for employment, navigating want ads can be tricky. Sometimes you have to read between the lines. Here's one example:

"Wanted: People who like to work in a fast-paced environment."

Do you know what that means? It means, "fast paced". That means, you have a lot to do. New work is thrown at you all the time, and very quickly. There are lots of interruptions. The interruptions come from every direction. If there's a phone, the phone never stops ringing. If there are customers, they never stop, and they want things quickly.

In other words: This means STRESS. This is a stressful job.

People manage stress in all kinds of ways. Some deal with stress by being stressful themselves. They get nervous. They get flustered. They get hysterical. They get angry.

In fact, I know people who create do all these things when there's no obvious reason.

On the other hand, some people have an amazing way of dealing with stress. They somehow manage to stay calm. Maybe there's a better way to word this want ad. And this is our message today.

### "Wanted: Calm People."

During the Advent season, we often celebrate four things that God offers to the world: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Today we're going to look at God's offer of Peace. We'll concentrate on two things.

- What is the peace that God gives?
- How can it help us to be calm?

Let's look at the first question.

#### **I. The Peace that God gives**

What is the peace that God gives? Let's find out by reading a classic part of the Christmas story.

8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." 13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." (Luke 2:8-13)

Look at that phrase: "And on earth peace..."

There's an old song from the 1980s: "Heaven is a place on earth." We're not going to sing it. You know why? Because that's not right. Heaven is a place, but it's not on earth. I don't know exactly where it is, but it's not on earth - At least not yet.

We'll talk more about the "Kingdom of Heaven" when we get back to our study of Matthew.

Heaven is not a place on earth. Peace though, appears to be another story. The angels told the shepherds that they were being offered peace on earth.

What is that peace? It has two parts: Vertical and horizontal. Let's talk about the vertical part.

## Peace: Vertical

Many years ago, a prophet named Isaiah lived in Israel. One day, he was given a vision of heaven. Here's how it appeared:

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying.

3 And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." 4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. 5 "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty." (Isaiah 6:1-5)

So, here's Isaiah. He's given a vision of heaven. Again, this is not a place anywhere on earth. Isaiah understand that he's seeing the Lord, the great King of heaven seated on his throne. He sees symbols of power and majesty and glory. He sees awesome angels worshipping the Lord.

These angels cry out, "Holy, Holy, Holy". "Holy" is a word that means, "totally free from any imperfection or evil". Isaiah sees the ultimate image of moral perfection. The word "holy" also means, "set apart". To be holy is to be set apart from evil.

At first, Isaiah is probably in awe of what he's seeing. But it doesn't take long for him to get a sense that something is wrong - Terribly wrong. He's looking at the ultimate image of Holiness; moral perfection. He looks at himself and sees something different. He sees something very imperfect. He sees something that's tarnished. He uses the word, "unclean". He says, "I am ruined!" "I am a man of unclean lips." "I live among a people of unclean lips". "And I'm standing here before the King, the Lord almighty."

Why does he feel that way? Understand, Isaiah is a great prophet. He's a good man - At least relatively so. God used him to write the longest book in the Bible. So, what would cause him to say such a thing? He talks about it more later in his book.

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way;  
(Isaiah 53:6)

Isaiah sees a big problem. He sees peoples turning away from God. He includes himself. He says, "We all, like sheep, have gone astray..."

How big is this problem? It's the whole world. Everyone. In fact, there are great powers doing more than turning away. They're in total rebellion. They're trying to kick the great King of Heaven off his throne.

1 Why do the nations conspire  
and the peoples plot in vain?  
2 The kings of the earth rise up  
and the rulers band together  
against the Lord and against his anointed...  
(Psalm 2:1-2)

So, the whole world, from the lowest to the highest of world leaders is part of a rebellion against God. We're told "The kings of the earth rise up" That's another way of saying "uprising".

God is the king of heaven. What should he do with a world in rebellion against him?

I can tell you what the United States did years ago in World War 2 to a country that attacked



them. They dropped some nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons are the most powerful weapons developed by humankind. Do you think the God who created the universe has something at least as powerful? If God wanted to, he could just wipe out our planet. He wouldn't have to call bombers. He wouldn't have to launch rockets. God created the Universe by speaking. He could destroy it the same way.

But that's not what he did. Instead, he made an offer to the human race. He made an offer of peace. And it was a very generous offer.

So, the first part of the peace God offers is vertical. It involves our relationship with him. We have rebelled. He offers peace. What do you need to do to experience peace with God?

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. (Romans 5:1-2)

The first thing you need is faith. You need to trust God. You must believe everything we've said so far. There is a great king in heaven who created the universe. He is holy and good.

You must believe that you have been part of the rebellion. You must now be willing to switch sides in the battle. You must declare allegiance with the king. There's another word in the Bible for that: Repent. Repent means to understand that sin and rebellion are terrible. A holy king could choose to wipe you out for rebelling against him. Then, you must believe that God wants to offer you peace. He does that through the gift of Jesus.

Why would he want to do that?

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

God's wants to offer you peace because he loves you. Faith means believing that God loves you so much he would send his one and only Son for you. If you believe this, you will have peace with God. And it's not just peace for now. It's for all eternity.

Now note: What does he mean when he says that people who believe will not perish? It means that some people will perish. You see, it's not that God will never judge the world as it deserves. The people of this world will be judged someday for their rebellion. God is just delaying that judgement. Why? He's delaying judgement so that you have time - Time to accept his offer of peace.

Will you do that? At this Christmas, the greatest gift you can receive came when Jesus was born as a small child in the little town of Bethlehem. Through him, God offers us peace. Let us tell you how. There's a great web site called "[PeaceWithGod.net](http://PeaceWithGod.net)". It's sponsored by the Billy Graham Association. Check it out. You can always visit our church: Trinity church of Teaneck, NJ. Our site is: [TrinityTeaneck.org](http://TrinityTeaneck.org). You can write to me at "[Pastor@TrinityTeaneck.org](mailto:Pastor@TrinityTeaneck.org)".

We just discussed the vertical aspect of peace. Now, let's talk about the horizontal part of peace. This is where we learn how God's peace helps us to be calm people.

## **II. How Peace can help us to be calm people.**

### **A. Understanding our place in eternity helps us to be calm.**

Let's look at John 3:16 again.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16, Emphasis mine)

We're told that we have eternal life. How long is eternity? A long time.

Imagine a beach - A sunny beach with beautiful white sand. Imagine you're running your fingers through that white sand. In your mind, pick up one grain of sand if you can. That one grain of sand represents your whole life. The rest of the grains of sand on the beach represent eternity. Your whole life is like one grain of sand on a beach. How long is eternity? A long time.



Why are we doing this? Because doing this puts your life in perspective. Sometimes in life, things go wrong. Sometimes we hurt. Sometimes when we hurt, it feels like the pain will be around forever. But as badly as we hurt, the pain will not be around forever. Even those who don't have God in their life know that pain often heals. Those who have God know that they have something better.

Even if the pain of the world never left us, we would still have hope. Those who believe in Jesus will leave this world behind one day. They will enter eternity - An eternity that is far better than this world, even when the world is at its best. That is a comforting and helpful thought.

Sometimes when we face pain, we become afraid. We become worried. We become angry. But, when we understand eternity, we can see our pain in perspective. Knowing about Eternity helps us to be calm in the face of pain and loss.

That's just one aspect of the peace that God gives to us. Let's look at another one.

## **B. Understanding our eternal place helps us to be calm.**

3 You will keep in perfect peace  
those whose minds are steadfast,  
because they trust in you.  
4 Trust in the Lord forever,  
for the Lord, the Lord himself, is the Rock eternal.  
(Isaiah 26:3-4)

The Lord is the Rock eternal. There's that word, "eternal", again.

As we said earlier, Heaven is not a place on earth. Although Peace is not a place per se, it involves a place. When most people think of peace, they think of a picture like the one at the right. Most people think of peace as:

- The absence of motion.
- The absence of conflict.
- The absence of things being stirred up.

So, when we think of peace, we think of things like a beautiful, quiet ocean - An ocean with no waves.



But maybe there is a better image? Maybe we need to think of a terrible ocean storm. One with wind and waves. You say, “but that’s not peace”. Well, look more closely. In the middle of the storm is a concrete platform built on a rocky outcropping. On that platform is a lighthouse made of steel and concrete. The winds could blow at hurricane force. The rain could fall in torrential sheets one after another. The waves could crash all around you. You could throw in lightning and thunder. But, if you could be in that lighthouse, you would be perfectly safe.



The Lord God is the rock. So, although peace is not a place, peace is associated with a place - Inside the rock.

### **III. Steps to a life of peace.**

Let’s make this practical. What are the steps to a life of peace? We can use the Isaiah passage we just looked at for a guide.

#### **A. Trust in God’s offer of peace**

##### **SLIDE**

Trust God when he says that the world is in rebellion. Trust him when he says that you’ve been involved. Trust him when he offers you peace through Jesus Christ.

After being born in Bethlehem, Jesus went on to live a perfect life - A life that you and I could not live. After living that life, he allowed himself to be nailed to a cross. There, he offered himself as a sacrifice for our sins. He paid the price of our rebellion so that we could have eternal life.

But you need to switch sides in the rebellion. You need to repent. Then ask God to forgive you through Jesus Christ. Let us tell you how – you saw the links earlier in this article.

## **B. Trust in the eternity of God.**

Next, trust in the eternity of God. Remember: Your life is like a grain of sand on a beach. The beach is eternity. If you can learn to remember that the biggest problems fall into place. You can learn to be calm when pain and loss enter your life.

## **C. Trust that God is the Rock Eternal.**

Finally, trust that God is the Rock Eternal. If you're in the Rock, the storms can blow, and you will be safe. You can learn to be calm in the midst of chaos.

## **Conclusion**

In the Advent season, we celebrate Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Today we've learned about Peace. Maybe we should change our want ad wording:

Wanted: People who accept God's offer of peace.

Heaven is not a place on earth. But when the angels came to some poor shepherds outside of Bethlehem, they announced Peace on earth. This is a peace that you can experience. You start by accepting the peace that God offers. After that, you ask God to help you as you learn to apply the principles that we've discussed today.

I always like to say that I don't want to mislead anyone. Learning to put these principles into place can take time. I'll be the first to admit that I'm not perfect at them. Sometimes I get frustrated or worried. But I'll tell you this: Understanding God's peace goes a long way towards helping you to face problems in life. God's peace helps you to stay calm when the storms blow.

This Advent season, I hope everyone who is listening will accept God's offer of peace. I hope you'll ask God to help you learn how to apply the principles of peace to your life. He'll be happy to teach you.