



Silent night, holy night!

All is calm, all is bright.

Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child.

Holy infant so tender and mild,

Sleep in heavenly peace,

Sleep in heavenly peace

(Franz Gruber 1818)

Peace, heavenly *peace*. Those words are the essence of Christmas. As I speak these words, I feel my shoulders relax from tension, my brow ceases its furrow, and my body sinks deeper into my chair. Such a calming word—*peace*, so full of assurance, security, serenity.

This particular word of the season can be found throughout the Christmas story.

Peace prophesied, peace promised, peace provided. The angels who made their appearing, first to Zechariah, then to Mary, and finally to the shepherds, extended peace each time they proclaimed, “Fear not! I bring you good tidings of great joy!”

Fear not! Calm down! Don't worry, stress or strive. Peace. Yes peace, will diminish your fears and calm your heart. Breathe in peace and breathe out the worries and anxieties that permeate your mind, body, and soul.

I can only imagine the stress that the characters of Christmas carried. Zechariah, an old man, told by the Angel Gabriel that his barren wife, too aged to conceive, would give birth to a son. Silenced by the angel, yet calm and confident until the boy came to be, peace would be Zechariah's friend, his confidant, his silent companion those nine months.



And Mary! Talk about anxiety! Pregnant out of wedlock? This was a horrifying scandal in those days, yet peace presided over Mary as the Angel handed her the news that she was carrying the Christ-child conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Her response, though simple, flowed from a life of celestial peace.

Mary's words ... "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word."

But this peace, the peace of God, was prophesied years before the baby Jesus' advent. Long, long before the promised prince would make His way to a stable, the prophets foretold of Him. And then one-day, peace would not just be prophesied or promised, peace would be provided through the King, born baby, yet crucified, wearing a crown and hanging on a cross.

Yes, *peace*. *Peace* came to us through the provision of the babe sleeping in a manger who would one day hang high for you and for me.

That kind of peace provides abundant power for daily living. That kind of peace offers calm in crisis. That kind of peace yokes a weary and burdened soul to the Prince of Peace.

Let's take a few moments and look at God's Word, so we can unpack the full meaning of this small, yet impactful expression. Allow these Scriptures to nourish your soul and fill you with the all-surpassing peace of your Savior.

*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**.* – Isaiah 9:6

The promised crown prince would shoulder the world and bring peace!

*You keep him in **perfect peace** whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.* – Isaiah 26:3

The peace of God is perfect, but it comes with a price—we must trust!



*O LORD, **you will ordain peace** for us, for you have indeed done for us all our works. – Isaiah 26:12*

The Lord commands and establishes peace; we can't manufacture it on our own.

*For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and **my covenant of peace** shall not be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you. – Isaiah 54:10*

God made an unbreakable covenant. His peace is forever!

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. – Matthew 11:28

Peace gives your soul the rest and restoration it needs, but you must surrender to it.

*I have said these things to you, that **in me you may have peace**. In the world you will have trouble. But take heart; I have overcome the world. – John 16:33*

Peace is found in Jesus!

*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. **And the peace of God**, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and **the God of peace will be with you**. – Philipians 4:6-8*

God's peace rules, if we give Him free reign!

Peace is not the absence of chaos, my friend, peace is the moment-by-moment presence of Christ in our lives.

Will you reside in the presence of Jesus this season, so that His peace can live in you?



Unwrap the gift of calm, quiet, harmony, freedom, and order this holiday season. Open your heart to the Prince of Peace!

Who do you know who needs peace in their lives this holiday? Will you use your *Words of Christmas* to shape and share a gift with someone who needs peace this season? That will be the best gift you can ever give!

Prince of Peace, comforter, Gift of Heaven, will You rain down Your peace on us today. Fill us afresh with calm. Give us restful spirits. Rid us of anxious thoughts flowing from worried and weary hearts. Help us embrace trust and turn from fear. Remind us of Your faithfulness today. In Jesus' name, amen.