



Connection Group Questions
December 6, 2020
Series: *All I Want For Christmas*
Message: *"If You Had One Wish..."*

*"The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace."
~ Numbers 6:24-26*

Open

How has your celebration, and anticipation, of Advent gone? Anything exciting breakthroughs, our difficulties, you can share?

Discuss

If you were in a contest, and the world was listening, and they asked, "If you had one wish, what would you wish for?" What would you answer, and why?

Isaiah 9 foretold the birth of the savior with these words:

*6 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.*

*7 Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.*

And in Luke 2 we read the angels declared:

*14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."*

The bible gives an explanation for lack of peace in our world- that fall. (Read Genesis 3 to get the story of the fall). The longing we have for peace is, Biblically, the longing for "Shalom." Not just absence of war, but the restoration of creation- the end to all conflict, violence, disease, and death. We see this longing in the blessing from Numbers 6 (see above). We hear the promise of the "unbreaking" of our world in Isaiah. We hear the declaration of Shalom in the angles song. And we hear the fulfillment of peace in the words of Jesus in John 14:

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.
Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.*

Jesus promises peace with ourselves

What kind of words do you say about yourself?

What does God say about you, and how does this compare with your inner dialog?

George said, "Just because I still have room to improve doesn't mean that I'm not approved."

What does that even mean?

George also said the he spent too many years beating himself up rather than building himself up in Christ and who God says he is. *Where are you at- beating yourself up, or building yourself up?*

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Finally, George invited us to internalize the fruits of the spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control. Then, when don't act with, for example, self control, we can respond by saying that is "out of character" for me.

What fruits can you focus on internalizing this Christmas?

Jesus promises peace with others

Matthew 5: "Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called the children of God."

Peacemaking is difficult work. Is there anyone in your family, church or the community with whom you need to make peace? What would that peace look and feel like?

It's easy to beat people up, but harder, and more vulnerable to build them up. How can you make peace and live at peace with other people?

Jesus promises peace with God

Billy Graham made a life long ministry by inviting people to have peace with God. Discuss:

1. Admit your need (I am a sinner).
2. Be willing to turn from your sins (repent).
3. Believe that Jesus Christ died for you on the Cross and rose from the grave.
4. Through prayer, invite Jesus Christ to come in and control your life through the Holy Spirit. (Receive Him as Lord and Savior.)

Apply

First, accept the gift of peace with God.

Second, make peace, or reconcile, with anyone with whom you are "at war."

Third, know the personal peace that transcends understanding, and affirm who God says you are in Jesus Christ!