

# Kings Norton Baptist Church

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December 2023 10 am

Jesus is the prince of Peace

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Welcome to all.

Opening Scripture and prayer

Hymn MP 491 O come all ye faithful

Scripture Isaiah 9:1-7 (page 693)

Prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

Light 4th Advent candle

Children's talk - Herod

Chorus choice

Notices 11:40 Bible study, Thursday 6pm Bible study,  
Next Sunday NY Eve Christian fellowship and prayer. 7pm?

Prayer and share time.

Reading Jonah 1 (page 927)

Luke 8:22-25 (page 1038)

Hymn MP 345 It came upon the midnight clear

Sermon: Jesus the prince of Peace – through the storms

Hymn mp 757 When peace like a river

Closing Prayer - the Grace

Tim's birthday

[Sermon Index Database](#)

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## Prayer and Exordium

Jesus is the **Prince of Peace**. So we heard read in Isaiah 9. x2

- Where is this peace we ask? Russia's war in Ukraine continues, fighting has persisted in Myanmar and countless African nations not least the Sudan. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is constantly before us, there's concerns about China and Taiwan. We have natural disasters, soaring global temperatures, soaring energy prices, strikes, and public services at breaking point. The News is as depressing as watching 'crime watch'. Everything changes. Everything stays the same. The 1<sup>st</sup> Century world into which Jesus was born was unbelievably tense, too. He grew up in an atmosphere of political conflict, upheaval, and social discontent.

**So how can the world's most influential person be called the Prince of Peace?**

This is one of His many titles. When we think of peace how easy it is to think of our own situation, how much peace, or otherwise, am I experiencing at any given time. But this title is about Him, not about you.

For Jesus tells us honestly that **in this world you will have trouble**. Joh 16:33 - and don't we know it. Trouble in the world, trouble in the country, trouble in the home, trouble in the mind, trouble in the heart. The wind of trouble howls...

- Ana' car died a week ago and it's still there to be fixed, on Tuesday a pothole burst my car tyre, on Friday the garage roof blew off. Last night I had to run out to buy and install a shower unit. There's been some distressing conversations, and some of your troubles weigh heavy on me... and then there's the battle ground of my own heart.

⇒ **To live in this world - this is normal. How has your week been?**

As 2023 draws to a close I dare say you have been through a storm of one kind or another. Some of you are in the midst of one right now.

A 'storm' challenges peace - they're opposites, a storm pulls away from peace. Yet Jesus can be in the storm *and* be at peace, x2. Remember he was asleep on a cushion while the tempest raged all around him.

This morning I want all who are in Jesus to realise that we too - can share – should share - in His Peace. Whatever you are going through!

In our Bible study in Luke 8 we read about one of a number of storms mentioned in the Bible, that storm on Lake Galilee. The highly inclined banks on the east side of the lake lent themselves to squalls which would suddenly blow down across the lake and catch one out the unprepared.

⇒ **So to in life.**

The fishermen having listened to Jesus' teaching were learning a final practical lesson in 'trust' as they headed into battle. This was their first mission to the non Jewish eastern side of the lake.

**It's in these practical lessons from the Lord that have such a lasting impact!**

Ask "what can I learn Lord, what are you teaching me?" Nothing that happens is wasted with Him. What he has brought me to – he will see me through! And the lessons learned may be soon needed.

The moment they land they are met by a madman, one demon possessed who is uncontrollable, and harming both himself and everyone around.

Jesus calms the storm in this turbulent man's life. Suddenly he is at peace, at rest, dressed and in his right mind. Christ's peace had come to him.

**He's changed just as suddenly and profoundly as the storm in the lake is stilled.**

**He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed** reads Psalm 107  
There the Lord had stirred up a tempest against wayward merchants who **at their wits' end reeled and staggered like drunken men. Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress.** ps107:27-29

Yes everything in the Lord Jesus' life has been foreshadowed in the OT.

See the storm in Jonah chapter 1 (page 927). As the storm raged what was Jonah doing? **He had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep.** 1:5

Sounds familiar? **5 All the sailors were afraid** it says, those hardy sea-fearers even more robust than the seasoned fishermen who **went to Jesus and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we're going to drown!"**

Maybe what you have been going through, or are going through has thrown you – it has made you feel like those scared fishermen, and you want to cry out **Help we are going to drown, don't you care if I drown?** – Yes he does care.

That is the right thing to do in our troubles; to call on the Lord in faith, in faith.

The simple message the fishermen learned was to trust Jesus – in everything. Yes sounds easy to say, but do you trust Him? or do you want to take matters into you own hands and try to resolve things yourself. Do that and firstly you don't learn the lessons, secondly it doesn't work.

Those frightened sailors in the boat with Jonah teach us three things which we should not do!

2a

1<sup>st</sup>

**5 All the sailors were afraid** – so what did they do? - **each cried out to his own god.** and v6 They cried out to their own gods. This is what people do. But that god is no God. so needless to say, nothing happened, it made no difference.

It reminds you of the test on Mount Carmel between Elijah and the prophets of Baal. **Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. "O Baal, answer us!" they shouted. But there was no response; no-one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made. At noon Elijah began to taunt them. "Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god!** 1Ki 18:26-27 But no answer.

Many call out in times of need. All sort of people do. Trouble does wonders for prayer, but who are you praying to? Who do you call out to? Is that Jesus you are looking to - the real Jesus? or just an image that resides in your mind. If he is not the true Jesus of the Scriptures, then he is not real, he is not there, and you can expect no answer. Even Christians in the church of Corinth were quickly led astray by those teaching **another Jesus.** Jesus said: **"if you do not believe that I am [the one I claim to be], you will indeed die in your sins."** Joh 8:24

Yes many invoke the name of Jesus, In Acts 19 some Jews were invoking the Name of Jesus and **the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?"** Ac 19:15

The spirits know who the true Jesus is, and they know who his genuine followers are, even if the person next to you is not sure about you, they know. x2

If you only know about Jesus and do not know Him, then he will not listen. Why? because you have not come in faith - **And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.** Heb 11:6

2<sup>nd</sup>

Secondly they try something else.

**.. they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship.**

This is the pragmatic answer. The reasoned answer, the rational answer. If we just lighten the boat by so much - then we will make it.

⇒ **We've had the spiritual answer, here's the natural answer.**

In John 12 when a voice was heard from heaven: **"The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him."** Joh 12:29 – there's natural answer - and the spiritual answer. Which do you give??

2b

In the West it is usually the natural answer, and this is generally how the world works, this is how the world is. Climate change - let's be rational and see what we can all do to avert a catastrophe. No mention of God here. Is that you?

The Lord brought the storm - so throwing the cargo overboard will not work.

3rd

Well the third thing they do is out of desperation.

13 **Instead, the men did their best to row back to land.**

Nothing reasonable or rational here. it's a gut reaction, - and a hopeless idea.

⇒ **but don't "desperate circumstances call for desperate measures."**!

**But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before.** Of course they could not. How futile, how futile our efforts are to remove life's problems.

*Then their attention turns to Jonah.*

By using lots the Lord led them to Jonah. And Jonah is like Jesus. (I know they both begin with 'J'!) Points from sermon: 18\_11\_28.DOC

Jonah is a forerunner of Jesus, and in more ways than that they were both prophet from Galilee. Jesus draws our attention to Jonah: "**A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.**" Matt 12:39-41

Jesus did not run away like Jonah – Jonah sinned - and sin produces storms, I know that, you know that, in my life and yours. No-one can avoid sins dire effects! v4 **Then the LORD sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up.**

*The ship, their security, begins to break up, God always exposes our frailty.*

11 **The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, "What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?"** There is only one solution - Jonah tells them throw him overboard 12 **"Pick me up and throw me into the sea," he replied, "and it will become calm. "**

⇒ **In other words - If I perish - you will live. x2**

14 **Then they cried to the LORD,** - the true Lord this time - **"O LORD, please do not let us die for taking this man's life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, O LORD, have done as you pleased."** 15 **Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm.**

3a

⇒ **He did perish, the storm stilled, peace came – and they lived.**

Jonah knew it was his fault. - But Jesus died because it is my fault! - Jesus, as Jonah, was sacrificed to save others.

⇒ **As Jonah was thrown into the storm to bring them peace - so Jesus was thrown into the storm to bring you peace.**

The sailors said they had killed "an innocent man", indeed so Pilate's wife declared him innocent, as did the criminals either side. The Centurion who watched Jesus die was right when he said **"surely this man was the Son of God"**.

As Jonah is thrown into the depths of the sea so Jesus carries away my sin. The prophet Micah said to the Lord: **"You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea."** Mic 7:19

Yes, what compassion, that the Lord who sees sin in all its offense and ugliness – was still willing to take the punishment for it, for me. And at his sacrifice the raging sea of discontent and fear and confusion and turmoil of my heart and life is thrown down too. Now my heart has become calm, stilled, and at peace – In Him x2.

*The Prince of Peace has brought His peace to me, can you say "I have His peace"?*

Oh that everyone in this room could say that. To know it, to have experienced it, and for it to change you forever. **"At this the men greatly feared the LORD, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows to him."** Jon 1:16

⇒ **Now in Jesus the - once for all - true sacrifice has been made.**

What will you do with that? Will you today make a vow to never sin again? Will you put all selfishness and pride away?

Luke recalls Jesus' death, his passion, his suffering, his travail, and as with the other three Gospel writers it naturally comes at the end of the books.

Luke has another storm at the end of his second book known as Acts, chapt 27.

There are many parallels between Luke's two books, (I haven't time to go into this) such as starting with prayer and moving on through to trials before the religious and governing authorities before Jesus is lead out to the battle against sin and evil powers and death which he overcomes on the cross.

So we see Paul after going through similar trials and in the long ch. 27 through the storm before final safety on the island of Malta. In high drama Christ's passion is re-enacted. All who are with Paul in the boat are saved.

3b

So too Jesus saves all who are 'in Him' – for salvation is in Christ, as was Noah who rode high in the Ark above the turbulent waters of the flood.

The Ark is a picture of Jesus for all who are in Him are saved. Are you in Him? Are you in Him and safe? Noah was saved through the storm. Will you be? x2

I hope you realise that there is one ahead for you, yes each one here – when you leave this world. There's another storm – a storm yet to come – at the end of your life.

You will die once – and then there's the judgment. Your judgment. No escape, for each one, for every-one. It will come.

Don't believe – as so many would have you believe - that when you die all is at peace. All those tombstones "*now at peace, now at rest*" For many, not at all.

- There was once a madman at Athens who stood and challenged all the ships that came into the harbour claiming that they were his own, so carnal men claim at interest in heavenly things which are not of theirs.
- Puritan Thomas Manton said: Deceived hearts believe they are running to heaven when they are heading to hell. Like those rowers in a boat, they look in one direction, but are going in the other opposite direction.
- At the BCM hostel we used to have a man who believed himself to be Michael Angelo. He wasn't.
- Then there was king Canute who thought he had the power to stop the waves - he couldn't - because he didn't.

⇒ **Manton says: In the next world the sinner's pride and madness will be over, he will be sobered by his despair. What an awaking, from the dreams of bliss to the realities of hell!**

- Manton pleads with us as Christ does; "O my soul, see to it that all your hopes are well grounded! Call not Christ thine, and heaven thine, if they are not so. Do not play the fool with eternal things, but get a sure title to everlasting blessedness.

The atheist author David Baddiel said: 'I wish there was a God. I'm desperate for that comfort'.

His admission echo's the early church father Augustine who said: "You have made us for yourself O Lord and our heart is restless until it rests in you"

But it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of God, a God angry at sin, - no wonder many wish him - not there. But he is there. And how terrible to be brought before such a Holy God as a guilty man or woman – yes, surely it would have been better if you had never been born!

- I talked to a man in the supermarket, he is bothered by these things. He is fearful. He knows he is a sinner, and he doesn't want to die still guilty.

To do so will bring only one result. No matter how you scream and try to hide yourself from the One who sits on the throne and His Christ - you will be brought to the bar and that just, dreadful, eternal judgment will be pronounced.

### **As we conclude - Peroration**

Storm are used in the Bible as a sign and warning of God's judgment. Such as with the plagues in Egypt **hail fell and lightning flashed back and forth. It was the worst storm in all the land of Egypt since it had become a nation.** Ex 9:24

Asaph says to the Lord **so pursue them with your tempest and terrify them with your storm.** Ps 83:15

When Jonah had come through the storm he went to the city of Ninevah who Jesus said: **repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here.**" Mt 12:41. Let there be no one here who does not heed Christ's call to repentance. As the writer to the Hebrews says when all this has been done **how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?** Heb 2:3

### Believers

And if you know the Lord this morning remember whatever you are going through He is with you, be it sickness, failing health, those dark clouds of fear, or hurt, or that fall out with a brother or sister in the Lord, or the turbulence from a relationship clash and breakdown? And for many there's the troubles of persecution.

Remember that Jesus came to see us through the storm - to see us to that safe haven. We too can rest in him, the One who calls us to share that cushion while the storm rages all around **When the storm has swept by, the wicked are gone, but the righteous stand firm for ever.** Proverbs 10:25

**Jesus is the Prince of Peace. The great news is that we can share in that peace.** x2

That is why he says "**Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.**" Joh 14:1

**"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."** Joh 16:33

What a wonderful gift... **"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."** Joh 14:27 He the Prince of Peace - is our peace. Amen. END