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## A Simple Story

Luke 2:14 (NIV) "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

1. **What Does the Word "Peace" Mean?** - Hebrew word "Shalom" // Greek word "Eirene"
  - a. [Shalom: The Bible Project 0:00 - 3:26]
2. **Where Did the Conflict Start?** Mankind began a conflict with God by rebelling (Genesis 3)
  - a. Conflict in relationships started here (Genesis 3:8-12)
  - b. Conflict in the natural world started here (Genesis 3:17)
  - c. Conflict in my soul started here (Genesis 3:6-10)
    - i. The brokenness is not just out there... it is in here.

Romans 7:15 (NIV) "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do."

3. **How do I get peace like a river?**
  - a. God's favor rests on the humble.

James 4:6 (ESV) "[...] 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.'"

- b. In order to accept the gospel I have to **humble myself by realizing my own need for help from God** - because I am a helpless sinner - and being willing to accept salvation.... like a gift.

Isaiah 53:5 (NIV) "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

- c. And the peace with God that your soul craves and only comes through faith.

Romans 5:1 (ESV) "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

- d. This peace is an **objective reality** whether we feel like it is true or not.

## 4. How do I experience this peace daily?

- a. (ESV footnote about peace): "Not untroubled circumstances but the profound well-being that comes from resting in God's sovereignty and mercy"
  - i. **Key word:** Resting... are you resting in two things: That God is sovereign and that he loves you.

"Jesus did not promise to change the circumstances around us. He promised great peace and pure joy to those who would learn to believe that God actually controls all things." - **Corrie Ten-Boom**

- ii. In order to rest like this you have to humble yourself and trust God.

## 5. Let's see how this humility played itself out in the Christmas story...

- a. **Mary:** [Read] Luke 1:26-37
  - i. Humility: Mary said: **"Let it be to me according to your word"** (Luke 1:38)
  - ii. The humility of Mary showing itself here:
    1. That doesn't all make sense
    2. That changes all of my plans
    3. This will add complexity and difficulty to my life
  - iii. And yet she says let it happen. **Are you willing to do the same?**
- b. **Joseph:** [Read] Matthew 1:18-25
  - i. Humility: When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him
    1. Take Mary as your wife
    2. Believe that this is a miracle from the Holy Spirit
    3. Name the baby Jesus
  - ii. And yet Joseph obeys what he knows. **Are you willing to do the same?**

## 6. Conclusion:

- a. If you do not have peace with God, then today a gift is being offered you.
- b. If you are a believer, and you are not experiencing the peace of God, then may I encourage you to make a practice of resting in God's sovereignty and love.

*Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV)* "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

- c. Lastly, if you are a believer, not only does God give us His peace but we are called to make peace in this world. Where can you do your part to make peace this Christmas?

"If you look at the world, you'll be distressed. If you look within, you'll be depressed. If you look at God you'll be at rest." - **Corrie Ten Boom**

## For Small Group Discussion:

**Main Scripture:** Luke 1:26-38; Matthew 1:18-25

**Opening Question:** What stood out to you from the message this weekend?

1. How would you now explain peace (shalom) to someone who asked you?
  - o (Feel free to rewatch [YouTube: Shalom The Bible Project 0:00 - 3:26] for help.)
2. How did Jesus bring peace on earth between God and man?
3. Challenging question: Do you have peace in your soul?
4. Now what: What is your part in finding peace in God this week?
5. What is something that Mary or Joseph modeled that you would like to apply in your life?
6. In this Christmas season, how are you going to help make peace?

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