

**TEXT:** **Isaiah 9:6-7** 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 increase of his government and peace there will be no end.

**TITLE:** **The Prince of Peace**

**INTRO:**

1. In my daily bible reading I use a chronological bible which inserts the prophets into the books of Chronicles and Kings so that there is fluidity, and we know what time frame the prophets' ministered.
2. I read this passage in Isaiah several weeks ago. It had a dual purpose.
3. First of all, it was a word of encouragement because of the godless age in which they were living.
4. Secondly, we know that Isaiah was foretelling the birth of Jesus and the events and the eventual outcome of his birth.
5. I absolutely love the wording and the phraseology of this small passage of scripture.
6. Isaiah says that the government will be on His shoulders. That was very comforting to the people of Israel because up until the birth of Jesus the government had been on their shoulders. They had been second class citizens if you will.
7. Then Isaiah says he will be called the wonderful counselor. Someone we can talk to and get wonderful advice from.
8. Mighty God. A god and a savior who is strong and passes on that strength to us.
9. The everlasting Father. Not a fly by night God, not a short-term invasion of wisdom and power but an everlasting dose of wisdom and power.
10. And then my favorite part of this verse says that he will be called the prince of peace. In other words, Jesus job description, part of his responsibility, part of what he is about is bringing peace.
11. In fact, Isaiah says in verse seven that of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end.
12. Beautiful encouraging words. I love those words and I know they are in the bible and I know God spoke them and that they are the truth, but I can't help but wonder how those words apply to what the holidays and Christmas has become for many Americans.
13. I wonder why it is that stress and anxiety seem to go along with the holidays.

14. In many ways the Holidays can be anything but peaceful.
15. Last week we talked about the fact that the actual birth of Jesus probably wasn't a very peaceful time for Mary and Joseph.
16. Mary was a 16 or 17 year old girl, a virgin who was engaged to be married, and one day an angel appears to Mary and informs her that God has taken notice of her, and that God is with her and that she is pregnant, she is going to have a baby, that God has chosen her to be the earthly mother of Jesus.
17. I can't help but wonder what she must have been feeling like emotionally at learning this unexpected news.
18. I can imagine in my mind the angel, standing there talking to Mary. But then I imagine in my mind the moment after the angel left.
19. Mary has just received this stunning news and she is left standing there with her mind racing 90 to nothing. I wonder how she felt?
20. While the angel was with her maybe she felt a little bit of comfort at his presence. Maybe she felt like God was with her because the angel was with her, but how did she feel after he was gone. Did Mary feel peace?
21. We could probably mention any emotion and I am sure Mary felt it. Happy, sad, confused, worried, challenged, determined, thankful, lonely.
22. But who could she tell? Who could she turn to?
23. I wonder what Mary expected to happen to her relationships – with her parents, with Joseph, with her friends?
24. The truth is she could have lost any if not all of these relationships. Her reputation would be damaged by an out of wedlock pregnancy. She would be exposed to shame if not punishment. Joseph might refuse to marry her, her parents might disown her, and her friends might reject her. You talk about an environment and a situation with the potential to rob and steal all hopes of peace.
25. Where would she go from here? What would she do?
26. Many if not all of us in this room have been in that place before. That place where the unexpected has suddenly upset our life and we wonder what next, what now?
27. As I began praying about this message I was reminded of a friend of ours who was working hard one day at the transmission shop where he was employed. He was just about to finish up a job when he noticed a police car pull up in the parking lot. His interest was perked but he didn't think too much about it until his boss and the two police officers approached the bay where he was working.

28. They called his name and asked him if they could talk to him. Nothing could have prepared him to hear the news that his wife and two small children had been killed in a head on collision just a short time before. Understandably he was at a loss. He didn't know what to do.
29. I know that sometimes in life we face traumatic situations like I have just described, but I also know we can be left feeling lost when nothing traumatic or sudden has happened.
30. I know that sometimes we are making our way through life, we work, we fight to make a living, we struggle to raise our kids and keep our marriage healthy. All the while stuff starts piling up on top of us like a ton of bricks.
31. The weight gets heavier and heavier until one day we wake up and we say what has happened to my life. How did I wind up here, and where do I go from here? There is no script, no easy answer, just a lot of questions.
32. And the truth of the matter is, Christmas time and the holidays don't make it any better. Christmas and the holidays seem to bring the very opposite of what was promised at Jesus birth. A lack of peace.
33. While it might seem strange for us adults to take a lesson from a teenager I think we could learn a lot from a 16 or 17 year-old girl as we see how she responded to the situation she faced.
34. The bible says that Mary responded in one of the most amazing ways.
35. In the midst of all the questions, in the midst of all the turmoil and the emotional imbalance the bible says that Mary worshiped and praised the Lord.
36. The ability to worship in this situation was in fact evidence of peace.
37. Her response to this unexpected situation in her life was to sing a song.
38. Turn with me in your bibles if you will and listen as I read **Luke 1:46-55**  
And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord **47** and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, **48** for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, **49** for the Mighty One has done great things for me-- holy is his name. **50** His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. **51** He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. **52** He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.
39. After understanding Mary's situation and reading her response I had to ask myself the question. What caused Mary to respond in such a way? What was it about her that made her lift up her voice and praise God? Was it something special in her, maybe, but really I believe in this time of difficulty she found something special in God?

40. My biggest question was why would she praise God when all that stared her in the face was uncertainty? She gives us the answer in the song that she sang.
41. First Mary praised God because...

### **God had been mindful.**

1. Let me read verse Luke 1:46-48 again: And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord 47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, 48 for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant.
2. The first thing that caused Mary to worship God and that brought her peace was that she was blown away by the fact that God had been thinking about her. That God knew who she was.
3. She says my soul glorifies the Lord because he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant.
4. Mary saw God as this awesome, holy, important, big God who had the responsibility of making the world go round. And that was a very true characterization of who God was and is. God is awesome and holy and important and big.
5. In contrast Mary saw herself as being lowly and humble (in other words not too important) little and insignificant. Maybe it was in fact true that Mary was not that well known to those around her. Maybe she was a quiet person who didn't say too much, kind of unassuming, but Mary was blown away by the fact that God had been mindful of her.
6. God was thinking about her.
7. How many can remember back when you were dating? For some that was yesterday, for others that was 50 or 60 years ago. And there was that special someone who you had your eye on. Do you ever remember getting a little note? Or now days an email or a text message that said I'm thinking about you.
8. Do you remember how it made you feel to know that they were thinking about you? I remember how it felt when my wife said that to me. (elaborate)
9. Mary was amazed that God was mindful of her. **Knowing that God was mindful of her calmed her fears,** it made her feel secure, it balanced out her emotions, it made things not seem so hard or difficult.
10. May I tell you that God is mindful of you? There may be nearly 7 billion people in the world, you may feel like your life is insignificant and that nobody cares, you may be up to your neck in garbage, you may not have a clue where to turn or what to do but God is mindful of you.

11. It doesn't matter if you have been in church all your life or if this is your first time in a church God is mindful of you. It doesn't matter if you have had a relationship with Jesus for decades or if you have never heard of having a relationship with Jesus God is mindful of you. He knows where you are. He knows what you are going through, he knows what you are facing and that you don't seem to have any answers.
12. He is mindful of you. He is thinking of you.
13. The second thing that caused Mary to praise God was that she realized that

### **God has done great things.**

1. The last part of Luke 1:48-49 says: From now on all generations will call me blessed, 49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me-- holy is his name.
2. I read that and I thought the mighty one or God has done great things for me, well surely Mary has lost all sense of reality. How could she say that God had done great things for her?
3. She is a pregnant, unwed teenager. She is facing the rejection of her parents, her fiancée, and her friends.
4. She doesn't know where to turn or what to do. By this time no one has written a self help book to explain how to navigate this situation. There is not a DVD series she can watch to give her direction. How could she say God has done great things for me?
5. The truth is in spite of all that lay ahead of her God had done great things for her.
6. God was with her. God loved her so much that he was where she was. God was mindful of her as we just said. God took notice of her.
7. But one of the greatest things that God did for Mary was that he chose her. Of all the young ladies in the world God chose Mary to be the earthly mother of Jesus. God trusted her. He knew this was a big responsibility but believed that Mary could handle it. God had faith in Mary. She was chosen.
8. This whole idea of being chosen made me think of my days in elementary school. Did anybody else besides me ever get chosen last or picked last for something?
9. I remember once we were playing dodge ball and we all lined up against the wall to pick teams. One by one everybody was chosen until finally I was the last one standing there. The last captain to pick said while rolling his eyes I guess we'll take Jeff.

10. I made up my mind I was going to play my heart out. I made up my mind I never wanted to be chosen last again. I dodged, I darted, I caught the ball once. I tried to be the best dodge ball player ever. And you know what next time I didn't get chosen last. I had earned the right to be chosen first.
11. **Did you know that just like Mary you have been chosen?** But unlike my experience playing dodge ball you didn't have to do anything to deserve the right to be chosen. You have been chosen just because God loves you.
12. **1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.**
13. What have you been chosen for? You have been chosen to come out of the darkness that is your life. You have been chosen to come out of the fuzziness to come out of the haze of life and into the light.
14. You have been chosen to receive direction and help and hope for the unknown situation you find yourself in. You have been chosen to experience the peace that only God can give.
15. **God has chosen you. You are special to him.** He has chosen you to have a relationship with. He has chosen you to be close to. He has chosen you to be victorious over the stuff and situations that threaten your very existence.
16. You have been chosen.
17. The third reason Mary worshiped and praised God was because she knew that...

### **God evens things out.**

1. In other words, Mary trusted in God that he was able to straighten things out and make it ok and that brought her peace.
2. **Luke 1:51-52 He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. 52 He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.**
3. I am sure that one of Mary's biggest fears was what everyone would think of her. How damaged her reputation would be? How would she survive if her parents disowned her, if her fiancée abandoned her, and her friends shunned her?
4. Mary knew that she had done nothing wrong. She knew she was not guilty of what everyone would think she had done. She knew she had no way of proving her innocence, but she trusted that God could make it all ok.



5. She says in her song that God has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. Maybe she was thinking of a certain someone she knew who had been proud or haughty or arrogant, but she remembered that God had taken care of them.
6. She says he has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. Maybe she remembered stories of when God had removed evil people who had held high positions. God had cut them down to size.
7. I'm not sure exactly what she was thinking but she trusted that God could take care of it all, and she praised him because of his ability.
8. You know sometimes the things that attack our peace are things that are outside of our control.
9. Now I'm not suggesting that we deny or cover up the mistakes we have made or the sins we have committed that rob our peace, because the bible says in **Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.** The truth is we are all sinners who have made mistakes, but I am increasingly finding in our world that some folks just didn't have much of a chance from the very beginning of their lives.
10. We live in a world where innocent people, often times children are exploited and abused, hurt physically, verbally, or emotionally.
11. I find that often times I come in contact with people in this world who appear to be normal functioning adults but yet they carry with them, way down deep on the inside, the hurts and scars and pains of experiences and traumas that happened a long time ago through no fault of their own.
12. They find that what they are dealing with and facing today started a long time ago.
13. Whatever our situation, whatever the source of difficulty that has stolen our peace and joy, whether we are where we are because of what we have done, because of what someone else has done, or because of a combination of the two God is able to make things all right.
14. He is able to straighten things out. Mary was sure of that. That's why she worshiped God.
15. **Romans 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him,<sup>[10]</sup> who<sup>[11]</sup> have been called according to his purpose.**
16. That means God can work our circumstances out for good, he can work our failures out for good, he can work our inabilities out for good, he is able to work all things out for our good.
17. What a tremendous source of peace that is.

## Conclusion:

1. Now maybe I am way off base this morning.
2. Maybe everybody here is just as peaceful and as joyful as you can be. But on the off chance that someone here needs a little visit from the prince of peace I want to be an encouragement to you.
3. Jesus is still the prince of peace. He is who he says he is. Sometimes we just have to be reminded of that.
4. **He is mindful of you.** He knows where you are. He knows what is going on in your life.
5. **God has done something great for you.** He has chosen you to be free; he has chosen you to be victorious. He has chosen you to be his child.
6. **He can and will even things out.** He will turn things in your favor if you will give him a chance.
7. Prayer.
8. One morning this past week I was up early, and I was unsettled about something. Just couldn't stop thinking about it.
9. So, I prayed and asked the Lord to give me peace about that situation. I even thanked God for his peace.
10. But later I realized that I still didn't feel very peaceful on the inside. All at once it dawned on me. I was trying to figure a way out to fix the so-called problem I was thinking about.
11. But the Holy spirit reminded me. Getting peace is not so much about what I do, but rather what the Lord does.
12. Yes we have to cooperate with the Lord; but at the end of the day peace only comes when we realize and submit to the truth that God and God alone is the only true source of peace.
13. Will you accept what the Lord Jesus did for you when he died on the cross for your sins? Salvation call.
14. Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. **7** And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
15. The acts of praying and giving thanks are simply expressions of faith.
16. Would you join me now in giving God thanks? Thank him for whatever comes to mind.
17. Now present your request. Lord. I feel a lack of peace in this area, or for that reason.
18. Confess. I believe you are the only source of peace.
19. Silent Night.