

## Small Group Guide: "CHRISTMAS: The Coming Peace"

**Opening Question:** Share about a holiday tradition in your family that brings you peace or joy.

**Opening Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, we gather today with grateful hearts for this time to come together and learn more about the peace you offer us through Jesus. As we discuss today's message from Pastor Dan, we ask for open hearts and minds to understand your word fully. Help us to find and hold on to your peace in our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

### KEY SERMON POINTS

#### Main Idea

This week's message explored the theme of peace during Advent, focusing on two key concepts:

- Peace WITH God - through Jesus Christ's sacrifice
- Peace OF God - experiencing God's perfect peace in daily life

The Hebrew phrase "*shalom shalom*" (perfect peace) represents complete well-being both inwardly and outwardly, available to all whose thoughts are fixed on God.

#### Takeaways

1. Jesus is not just a promise of peace; He IS peace (Prince of Peace - Sar Shalom)
2. Peace with God comes through Christ's righteousness, not our own efforts
3. Perfect peace (*shalom shalom*) is available in the midst of problems, not just when problems are absent
4. Our thoughts create direction in our lives - what we fix our minds on determines our experience of peace
5. Peace comes from surrendering, not controlling
6. We overestimate our ability to control and underestimate the goodness of God

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

#### Understanding Peace WITH God

1. Why is the virgin birth essential to Christianity? How does understanding that Jesus had no sin nature change your perspective on His sacrifice?
2. **Read Romans 8:1-2.** What does it mean to you personally that there is "no condemnation" for those in Christ? How does this truth affect your daily relationship with God?
3. Pastor Dan mentioned that peace with God doesn't come from good deeds but from accepting Jesus. Why do you think people still try to earn their way to heaven? Have you struggled with this?

#### Experiencing the Peace OF God

4. The sermon stated: "Peace isn't found in the absence of problems. Peace is found in the presence of God." Share a time when you experienced peace in the midst of difficult circumstances. What made the difference?
5. **Read Philippians 4:7.** What does it mean that God's peace "transcends all understanding"? Have you witnessed this kind of peace in your life or someone else's?
6. The Hebrew word "*samak*" means to lean upon or fully rest oneself. In what areas of your life are you finding it hardest to "*lean*" completely on God rather than your own understanding?

## Practical Application

7. **Read Proverbs 3:5-6.** This text tells us to "trust in the Lord with ALL your heart and lean NOT on your own understanding."
  - What's the difference between trusting God with some of your heart versus all of your heart?
  - What area of your life are you currently leaning on your own understanding rather than God's?
8. **Read Isaiah 26:3 (NLT).** Pastor Dan said: "Where our mind goes, so goes our life."
  - What are your thoughts typically "fixed" on throughout the day?
  - How can you practically redirect your thoughts to be more fixed on God?
9. Fear and anxiety are warning signs that our thoughts aren't in the right place. When you experience worry or fear, what does that reveal about where you're placing your trust?

Silent Reflection: In closing, allow the Group a moment to silently reflect on each of these questions (they don't need to answer aloud)

- In what specific situation do you need God's perfect peace right now?
- What would it look like to fully "lean" on God in that situation this week?

## PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS (Choose 1 or 2 that apply to you.)

1. **Daily Prayer and Reflection:** Spend intentional time each day in prayer and reflection, asking God to reveal areas where you need His peace.
2. **Scripture Memorization:** Memorize Isaiah 26:3 to remind yourself of the promise of perfect peace when your mind is fixed on God.
3. **Gratitude Journaling:** Start a gratitude journal to focus on the goodness of God and cultivate a peaceful heart.
4. **Accountability Partner:** Find a spiritual friend or mentor to hold you accountable in areas where surrender is difficult. Invite them to ask you this question: "Are you trying to control something that's not yours to control?"
5. **Worship and Meditation:** Incorporate worship and meditation on God's Word into your weekly routine to refocus your mind on His promises.

## MEMORY VERSE for the Week:

*You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!*  
(Isaiah 26:3, NLT)

**Closing Prayer:** Lord Jesus, thank You for being our Prince of Peace. Help us to fix our thoughts on You, to lean completely on Your understanding, and to experience Your perfect peace that passes all understanding. In the midst of our busy season and life's challenges, may we find our rest in Your presence. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.