



**CALVARY**  
TUSCALOOSA

**TEACHING PLAN**  
DECEMBER 9, 2018



# GOD PROVIDES PEACE

LUKE 2:25-35

DECEMBER 9, 2018

TEACHING PLAN

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## PREPARATION

- > Spend the week reading through and studying Luke 2:25-35. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools (such as a concordance or Bible dictionary) to enhance your preparation.
- > Determine which discussion points and questions will work best with your group.
- > Pray for your pastors, the upcoming group meeting, your teaching, your group members, and their receptivity to the study.

## HIGHLIGHTS

**TAKEAWAY:** God provided peace both now and forever through Jesus Christ.

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**WHY IT'S IMPORTANT:** In seeking to understand the biblical and spiritual distinctions between peace and conflict, we must recognize that the source of conflict is sin and the possibility of peace is only found in Christ.

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**GOSPEL CONNECTION:** Christians have peace with God as an objective reality through Jesus Christ. As we submit to God the things that threaten our experience of this peace, He is faithful to guard us and remind us of this reality (Philippians 4:4-7).

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## INTRODUCTION

*As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.*

- 1 All religions envision a future that is characterized by peace, not conflict. Why do you think people of all faiths and all cultures long for peace?
- 2 According to the Bible, how is peace possible?

Every religion looks forward to a peaceful kingdom. The Greeks pictured the Elysian fields where heroes hung their weapons in trees and existed in harmony with one another. The Qur'an speaks of a sanctuary in the desert where all who enter will be at rest and live in blissful paradise.

There is no doubt that there exists an underlying longing for peace in mankind. Peace, of course, is multi-faceted. We may speak of geopolitical peace, interpersonal peace, inner peace, and peace with God. Let's look more closely at the biblical concept of peace and how it relates to the incarnate Son of God.

## UNDERSTANDING

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

Luke told the story of Jesus' presentation in the temple by His parents. This account emphasized the faithfulness and piety of Jesus' family. Further, their offering of two birds indicates that they were a poor family.

Upon seeing the child and taking Him in his arms, Simeon made a startling announcement. He stated

### ALTERNATE INTRODUCTION

**How would you define peace?**

**What is the opposite of peace?**

If peace to you is mainly a feeling then external circumstances will play a large factor in the level of peacefulness you have in your life at any given moment. However, there is another conception of peace that is untethered from daily context. In this view, peace isn't a feeling, but a fact or reality. Feelings follow, but they don't provide the foundation.

There is no doubt that there exists and underlying longing for peace in mankind. Peace, of course, is multi-faceted. We may speak of geopolitical peace, interpersonal peace, inner-peace, and peace with God. Let's look more closely at the biblical concept of peace and how it relates to the incarnate Son of God.

that he was now ready to “depart in peace” because his eyes had now seen the salvation of the Lord.

Today, we will key in on Simeon’s statement and dig a bit deeper into the term “peace.” Peace may be described in two ways. We often think of peace as a subjective feeling in the heart. But, it may also describe an objective reality between two parties that were formerly in conflict. These two perspectives, as they relate to Christian peace, are closely connected. Let’s look at how, but first we need to establish the reason that peace eludes us.

Notes:

>Have a volunteer read Genesis 3:1-13.

*1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”*

*2 The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”*

*4 “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. 5 “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”*

*6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.*

*8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?”*

10 He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

11 And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

NOTES:

12 The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

When God spoke the world into existence, He brought order to a formless and void reality (Genesis 1:1-3). All of His creation was very good. The general term "good" included peaceful. God, man, and His creation were in perfect peace. Everything was whole and in order. A quiet goodness pervaded all of creation.

- What shattered the peace that reigned in the garden?

Peace was replaced by conflict, restlessness, and fear when sin infected the hearts of Adam and Eve. Just think about what they did. First, they hid their nakedness, and then they hid themselves from God. It was an anguished attempt to put something between themselves and death. The situation became even more acute when God Himself confronted them with their rebellion. Knowing that the clothing wouldn't cut it, and that he couldn't hide from God, Adam made a final and fearful attempt at escaping death. He put his wife, Eve, between himself and God (Genesis 3:12). Eve in turn used the same strategy. "The serpent deceived me, and I ate" (Genesis 3:13). In Genesis 3:21, an animal is killed on their behalf to cover their shame.

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- How did sin destroy the peace that mankind enjoyed before the events of Genesis 3?

Notes:

Man's rebellion destroyed peace because sin separates mankind from the source of peace. In our sin, we were made enemies of God. Romans 5:10 says, "when we were God's enemies," pointing to the fact that those who are stained with sin are in a hostile posture toward God. Because of sin, we have a scenario where two parties (God and man) are in conflict with one another. There can be no objective peace until reconciliation is achieved.

- The Old Testament makes reference to God's people having peace with Him. How were those living before the time of Christ able to have peace with God?

Though Christ had not yet come in flesh, those who believed God's promises and walked faithfully were able to enjoy peace with God. Isaiah 26:3 says, "You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you." This was a promise from God that was given before the incarnation.

One visible representation was the peace offering described in Leviticus 3. The offering enacted and practiced right relationship between God and the people of God. This was illustrated by the practice of burning up the animal fat on the altar of the Lord, but the meat being eaten by the worshipers.

However, the Prince of Peace had not come and no one knew the lengths to which God the Father would go in order to prepare salvation in the presence of the people, as Simeon spoke about.

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> Have a volunteer read Luke 2:25-35.

25 *Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, 28 Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:*

NOTES:

29 *"Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace.*

30 *For my eyes have seen your salvation,*

31 *which you have prepared in the sight of all people,*

32 *a light for revelation to the Gentiles*

*and for glory to your people Israel."*

33 *The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. 34 Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, 35 so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."*

Simeon pointed to the infant Christ as the world's hope for peace. Jesus was the salvation that God had been preparing.

- How would Jesus restore true peace between God and man?

Jesus' shed blood on the cross ushered in peace between the one true and living God and mankind. As Paul said, "He himself is our peace." Jesus, through His flesh, broke down the "dividing wall of hostility" so that He could "in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross" (Ephesians 2:14-16).

Notes:

- Was Paul referring to a subjective feeling of peace in our hearts, or an objective state of peace between two former enemies?

Paul referred to an objective peace that was made possible by Christ's bearing the burden of our sin. God established an objective peace through the sacrifice of Jesus. This removed the hostility between Him and us. Our guilt is covered. His wrath is satisfied.

Before there can be a genuine subjective feeling of peace in our hearts, we must enter into the peace won by Jesus' death. It is because of that objective peace that we can now be filled up with deep, abiding peace.

- In Acts 10:36 Peter said, "telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ." Why is it important to recognize Jesus as the only means of true peace with God?

No other way exists to real reconciliation with God, peace with our neighbor, and unity between races and nations, except through Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself in John 14:6 says that no one can come to the Father except through Him.

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Because Jesus is God, He is holy and righteous in every way. Ezekiel 18:4 tells us that God, because of His sinless nature, demands that sin be punished. Jesus' holy and righteous life qualified Him to shoulder the punishment of sinners. Because Jesus pleased God the Father in every way, His substitutionary sacrifice could be accepted by God and satisfy God's justice in regard to the sins of people.

Notes:

> Have a volunteer read Luke 2:8-14.

*8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."*

*13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,*

*14 "Glory to God in the highest,*

*and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."*

When the angels announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds who were keeping watch over their flocks, they made the statement, "On earth peace to men on whom his favor rests" (Luke 2:14). Jesus made objective peace between mankind and God possible through His atoning sacrifice. The fact that we are no longer enemies of God and are loved and accepted into His family is reason enough to give a shout of joy—but there's more.

- How does the subjective feeling of peace relate to the objective peace of God through Christ?

The subjective feeling of peace in our hearts is rooted in the objective peace with God through Christ. Because of what Christ has done, we are free to not fear. We are free to not be tormented by anxiety: “If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31). The objective peace clears the way for the daily living in subjective peace in our hearts. It is important to remember, however, that the objective peace that we have with God because of Christ’s merit is a settled fact. The subjective peace, on the other hand, is a matter of sanctification and a daily dying to self. Peace in our hearts is available, but it won’t be automatic.

Notes:

- Look at Isaiah 26:3 and Philippians 4:6-7. What do these passages teach us about walking in subjective peace?

Isaiah’s statement gives us these two clues: 1) our minds should be stayed on God, and 2) we should trust in God. Actually, Isaiah indicated that these two activities are two sides of the same coin. But, how does this work practically? Paul gave us help in Philippians 4. He identified the enemy of peace and explained how to combat the enemy. When anxieties are removed, peace happens. Peace is the state of your heart when conflict, worry, and fear are not unsettling you. How do we remove these anxieties? Pray. God’s people experience peace as they submit their anxieties before Him, remembering the eternal peace that He has established through Christ.

## APPLICATION

Notes:

*Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.*

- 1 Do you currently have peace? If not, why do you think peace eludes you?
- 2 How can you further seek to understand the objective peace that Christ has won for you?
- 3 How does the peace described in these passages differ from the peace of the world? How might this kind of peace provide opportunity to share the gospel with others?

## PRAY

Pray and thank God for the peace He has established through Jesus Christ. Pray that this peace would become a subjective reality for you as you meditate on the objective reality of the cross. Pray that you would be someone who directs others to peace, found only in the gospel.

## FOLLOW UP

*Midway through this week, send a follow-up email to your group with some or all of the following information:*

Notes:

- > Questions to consider as they continue to reflect on what they learned this week:
  - Where have you recognized an absence of peace in your life?
  - How will you submit these areas before the Father in prayer and meditate on the objective reality of peace in Christ?
  
- > A note of encouragement, following up on any specific prayer requests mentioned during your group gathering.
  
- > The challenge to memorize Luke 2:29-32.

## GENESIS 3:1-13

3:3 The woman's claim that God said, You must not... touch the tree, or you will die, goes beyond anything recorded in God's instructions to Adam. Therefore it seems that Adam had given his wife an additional command beyond what God said, or else Eve herself exaggerated the command as Satan tempted her to view God as selfish and overly restrictive. If Adam added to God's command, he almost certainly had a good motive—after all, if Eve never touched the tree, she certainly wouldn't eat its fruit. However, the sad truth is that when people add to the word of God, they create confusion and trouble. *Notes:*

3:4-5 The serpent, recognizing the woman's confusion, found a point of attack. Knowing that the woman would not die by merely touching the fruit, he boldly contradicted what she had reported to be God's command. He then skillfully lied (Jn 8:44) by distorting God's word (Mt 4:6), implying that God had prohibited people from eating the fruit only to keep them from becoming as knowledgeable as He. The woman was now fully deceived (1Tim 2:14).

3:6 Since the woman did not die when she touched the fruit—in contradiction to what she had thought God said (v. 3.)—she ate it. Though Adam was with her at the time, he did nothing to stop her. Perhaps he wanted to eat of it as much as the woman did, but fearing the consequences, used his wife as a “guinea pig” to make sure it would not cause instant death.

3:7 As the serpent had indicated, the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew, but instead of producing godlike power, the knowledge brought only a sense of human inadequacy, fear, and shame.

3:9 God took the initiative in reaching out to sinful humanity. This pattern—humanity sinning, then God seeking out sinners—becomes the primary theme of the rest of the Bible. Its ultimate expression is found in Jesus Christ, who came to seek and to

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save people alienated from God because of their sin (Lk 19:10); in Him God once again walked on the earth in search of sinners. The all-knowing God asked Adam, Where are you? for Adam's benefit, to encourage Adam to face his sin.

Notes:

3:10 When Adam heard God, he was afraid. Rather than walking with God as righteous men of later generations would do (Enoch, 5:22; Noah, 6:9), Adam hid from Him.

3:11 Through the use of two direct questions God brought Adam to accountability for his sin. God does not overlook sin, but He can be gently firm in confronting it.

3:12 Adam answered neither of God's questions. Instead he sought to shift the blame for his sin first to the woman, and then to God.

3:13 The woman passed the blame to the serpent and admitted that prior to eating, she was deceived (1Tim 2:14).

## LUKE 2:8-35

2:8 The sheep used for temple sacrifices in Jerusalem were kept in fields outside Bethlehem. The work of shepherds was more important at night because of the threats from thieves and predators.

2:9-10 Though not named in the present passage, the angel of the Lord was Gabriel (1:11-20). The glory of the Lord was a bright light (in the midst of the darkness of night), indicating God's glorious presence. It is only natural to be terrified at the sight of an angel, not to mention a sudden, overwhelming light from the sky. The angel spoke to calm the shepherds and refocus their attention on the proclamation of the gospel (good news). All the people could refer to Israel, but given Luke's emphasis on the gospel spreading to the Gentiles, it probably means "all nations."

2:11-12 Savior (Gk soter) means “deliverer, redeemer.” Messiah (Gk christos, equivalent to the Hb meshiach) means “anointed one,” especially focusing on being anointed as king. Lord (Gk kurios) was used of secular rulers, but it is also the standard translation of the primary name of God in Hebrew, Yahweh. The shepherds would have been shocked to hear that a divine messianic ruler had been born, but to be told He was lying in a feeding trough and born to a man and woman of humble means would have seemed preposterous.

Notes:

2:13-14 The hymn sung by the choir of angels (heavenly host) is well-known today as the “Gloria in Excelsis Deo,” from the first words of verse 14 in the Latin Vulgate (glory to God in the highest). To give “glory to God” does not give Him something He otherwise lacks. Rather, it is a confession of the wondrous glory He forever possesses. The peace to be found on earth was not the Pax Romana (the “universal peace” of the Roman Empire), but peace with God through faith in Jesus Christ (Rm 5:1). The people whom God favors are those who have found God’s undeserved favor, or grace, through Christ.

2:15 What has happened refers to the birth of the Savior, who is Christ and Lord.

2:18 All who heard it included anyone in or around Bethlehem with whom the shepherds had the opportunity to share their story (vv. 8-14).

2:19 It is possible that Luke gained much of his knowledge about what happened in chapters 1 and 2 from talking to Mary, who recalled the things she had “treasured” (Gk suntereo; “to treasure, keep in mind”) in her heart.

2:20 The shepherds returned to the fields outside Bethlehem to tend their flocks. They were glorifying and praising God because everything they found in Bethlehem was just as the angel said it would be (vv. 10-12).

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2:22-24 The days of their purification lasted another 33 days after the child's circumcision (Lv 12:2-8). To present Him to the Lord was what was done with every firstborn male in Israel (Ex 13:2,12). On the sacrifice of turtledoves or pigeons, see Lv 12:8 and note there.

2:25-26 Like Zechariah and Elizabeth, Simeon was a righteous person. Israel's consolation spoke of the comfort and hope the people had in regard to God's plan for His people, but, more specifically, it referred to Messiah's role in that plan. In the OT, the Holy Spirit came on a few selected people (Num 24:2; 1Sam 10:10; 16:13). After the day of Pentecost, the Spirit has indwelt all believers (Jn 14:16-17; 1Co 3:16). The Holy Spirit filled Zechariah so he could prophesy about John (Lk 1:67-79). In this case, the Spirit assured Simeon that he would live long enough to see the Messiah, so that he would be in a position to do the same in regard to Jesus (2:29-32).

2:27 The Holy Spirit guided Simeon to the right place (the temple) at the right time (when the child Jesus was brought to perform... what was customary under the law).

2:29-32 Simeon's words here are traditionally called the "Nunc Dimittis," from wording in the Latin Vulgate translation. Simeon's Divine Master had kept His promise that he would live to see Christ (i.e., Your salvation), so he could now die (dismiss Your slave). God's salvation in Christ (v. 30) is for all peoples (the Gentiles and Israel). The worldwide scope of the gospel is Luke's ongoing theme in both of his writings (his Gospel and the book of Acts).

2:33-35 Legally, Joseph was Jesus' father even though it was the Holy Spirit who caused Mary to conceive. Jesus was a spiritual divider of society (a sign... opposed). In considering the gospel about Christ, many in Israel "fell" eternally due to unbelief and others rose by faith to eternal life. Mary would suffer great pain in watching Jesus be rejected and executed. How people respond to Jesus is the difference between pardon and condemnation, eternity in heaven or hell.