

Advent '18.

Week #3: Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace

December 16, 2018

This fall we have spent considerable time reviewing and understanding the 10 Commandments - God's Covenant with His Jewish people, as they left Egypt with Moses and prepared to receive their promise of a new land. This Mosaic Covenant underpinned the Jewish nation for centuries ... and still does today. But as they struggled - and failed - to keep their part of the Covenant, God promised something new and wonderful. Something that would forever change His world, and finally draw all people to Himself.

Our journey into Advent this year will recount this journey and the lessons it provides us. About God. About ourselves. About our world. About Jesus and our need for a Savior.

Study Questions: *Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace*

1. Calling God "Father" is easy for some people, but painful for others ... which reminds us of the importance of the role our earthly parents play in our trusting and following God.
 - Read John 17. Describe the relationship Jesus had with His Heavenly Father?
 - How does Jesus' relationship compare to your relationship with your earthly dad? With God, your heavenly dad?
 - What is your heavenly Father saying to you today? What words of encouragement, caution, correction and love is He speaking to you through His Word, His Spirit and His Church?
2. Isaiah proclaims that the Messiah will be our Father in perpetuity - He is everlasting.
 - Reflect for a moment on human history, and the kingdoms and empires that have come and gone. What comfort do you have that the Messiah's patriarchal authority will never end, and that His responsibility for you will not go away?
3. Who was the peacemaker in your family? How was the peace "made" and "kept"?
 - The Hebrew word for peace - *shalom* - means to be complete, knowing that all is well within the very depths of your being. On a scale of 1-10, how is your *shalom* meter reading these days? Why?
4. Read Philippians 4:2-9. What is someone described by verses 4-6 like? What would their *shalom* meter read?
 - How do these qualities (v.v.4-6) relate to what Paul writes in verse 7 - *and the shalom of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus.*
5. In verse 8, Paul instructs the Philippians to abandon with their minds anything that is not true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent or praiseworthy.
 - What is the connection between God's *shalom* in our hearts, and what we think with our minds? What comes first in finding *shalom* - the heart or the mind? Why?
6. Paul obviously enjoyed a deep sense of *shalom*, because he could state a few verses later (v.11) that he had *learned to be content whatever the circumstances.*
 - What "adjustments" do you need to make to keep your circumstances from affecting your *shalom*? Identify what you need to give fully to God, so that His peace will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus.