



Discussion Guide

Date: 12/7/2025

Sermon Title: Is peace really possible?

Scripture: Luke 1:76-79

This discussion guide is a layout to be used with a group or class. We have included opening and closing prayers to start and end your group. The guide may be used for personal or family reflection as well.

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious and merciful God, as we gather in this season of waiting and hope, open our hearts to Your peace. In a world full of shadows, shine Your light upon our path. As we read Your Word, speak to us again through the proclamation of Zechariah who is reminding us that You guide our feet into the way of peace. Calm our anxious spirits, heal our unrest, and form us into people who bear Your light. Amen.

Opening Question:

1. Where in our world either personally, locally, or globally, where do we need peace? Don't try to fix-it just name the spaces, places, and people.

Digging into the Word:

This song of Zechariah is known as the Benedictus. It celebrates God's saving work unfolding through the birth of John the Baptist and the coming Messiah. Peace (Hebrew *shalom*) in Scripture is not merely the absence of conflict, but the presence of wholeness, harmony, restoration, and God's reign breaking into human life.

Peace is the fruit of God's grace. John Wesley taught that God's prevenient grace guides us toward holiness and peace even before we are aware of it. Even in our salvation, there is peace to be experienced. Wesley often linked peace with forgiveness and new birth. However, peace is not passive; it is formed as we walk in grace, love of neighbor, and the imitation of Christ. Peace is social as well as personal. Methodism has always emphasized peace as justice, reconciliation, and the mending of a broken world.

"While we are in the light of God's countenance, we enjoy not only peace but joy unspeakable... the beginning of heaven." -John Wesley, Sermon 10: The Witness of the Spirit

Read Luke 1:76-79 (NRSV). Try a few different versions prior to digging into these questions.

1. What words or phrases in Luke 1:76–79 stand out most to you? Why?
2. How does the imagery in vs 78 that says, "dawn from on high" speak to your experience of God?
3. Verse 79 speaks of light to those in darkness and guiding of feet in the way of peace. What do you believe these verses signify where and whom our peace lies?

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4. In Ephesians 2:14–17 we find Christ being our peace, how has or do you wish for Christ to be that for you? What peace have you experienced?
5. What practices help you stay in the light and on the path of peace?
6. How does forgiveness—mentioned in this text—open the door to peace? (For Wesley, forgiveness and peace are inseparable.)

Other scriptures to consider:

Isaiah 60:1–2; Psalm 85:8–13; John 8:12; Philippians 4:6–7

Sermon Questions:

1. In the opening of the sermon Pastor Clayton references a painting of John the Baptist pointing to Christ. In what ways are we called to be like John the Baptist's finger, pointing others toward Jesus rather than drawing attention to ourselves?
2. The sermon mentioned the painting by Grunewald of John the Baptist pointing to the crucified Jesus. Why do you think this image is so powerful? What does it teach us about our purpose as followers of Christ?
3. Pastor Clayton said, "Jesus didn't come to condemn us, but to save us." How does this truth change the way we approach God? How does it change the way we share our faith with others?
4. The sermon reminds us that Jesus is the source of light not us. How does understanding salvation as a gift of grace rather than something earned change the way we approach our relationship with God?
5. Christmas season has begun and the overwhelming feeling of being busy and frenzy we can lack the peace that this season promises. How can we find genuine peace in the midst of the frantic busyness of the Christmas season rather than just waiting for it to be over?
6. Pastor Clayton described peace (shalom) as "wholeness" and "the presence of Christ with us" rather than the absence of conflict. How does this definition differ from how the world defines peace?
7. This week in worship we participate in Holy Communion as a community. How does participating in Holy Communion help us remember and experience the grace, light, and peace that Jesus offers?

Applying it:

1. How might we be “dawn bringers” in a world overshadowed by conflict, fear, and division? What would it look like for you to guide someone's feet into the way of peace this week through your words or actions?
2. Where are you experiencing darkness, unrest, or uncertainty and how might God be guiding your feet toward peace? These may be like how you started with the opening questions.
3. How has God’s prevenient grace (God love goes before you even before you were aware of it) been at work preparing your heart, as John prepared the way for Jesus?
4. Where is God inviting you to participate in His work of peace in your relationships, community, workplace, or world?
5. What small but meaningful act could you take this week to embody Christ’s peace?

CLOSING PRAYER

God of tender mercy, as dawn breaks upon us, shine Your light into every shadowed place in our lives. Lead us

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from fear into hope, from anxiety into trust, from division into reconciliation. Guide our feet, step by step, into the pathway of peace. Make us instruments of Your peace in our homes, our communities, and our world. Through Jesus Christ, our Light and our Peace, Amen.

WAYS TO RESPOND

Choose one or more of the following practices this week to walk in peace.

1. Take a daily moment of stillness (5 minutes) praying, "Guide my feet into the way of peace." Just meditate, think, and pray for those words of peaceful guidance.
2. Seek reconciliation with someone where tension exists in your relationship.
3. Perform one intentional act of kindness that reduces someone else's stress or burden.
4. Limit one source of noise or anxiety (news, social media) and replace it with Scripture or prayer.
Practice Sabbath rest this week by intentionally slow down and spend time with Jesus When you feel frenzied or anxious, pause and pray for God's peace
5. Light a candle each evening and name a place in the world where peace is desperately needed.