



**THURSDAY 12.16.10**

**Luke 6:27-36**

In his book, *The Divine Conspiracy*, Dallas Willard writes, "Most of us as individuals . . . live at high speed, and often with no clue to whether we are flying upside down or right side up." One of the great challenges of Jesus' teaching is that he seems to indicate that most of the world is flying upside down and not even aware of it. Is it possible that the pace and challenge of life has deceived you as well?

- Why does Jesus place such a high value on living in such a radically counter-cultural kind of way?
- Can you think of a situation in your life where you were deeply challenged by this teaching from Jesus? When was the last time you did something good for someone who may not have been your biggest fan? Who might God be calling you to love and serve today?

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**FRIDAY 12.17.10**

**Isaiah 2:1-5**

The second chapter of Isaiah contains one of the most vivid images of what peace looks like in God's kingdom and how peace is finally and fully achieved. According to Isaiah, Israel will participate in bringing the law and the word of the Lord to the nations. The example of God's chosen people will lead all of humanity to the mountain of the Lord where swords and spears will be discarded for tools used to grow and develop creation.

- Jesus said, "You are the light of the world." More simply, we might say, "You are an example to others." When we do that well, we are "walking in the light of the Lord." What have you learned about peace by the example of others? What have the people in your life learned about peace from you?
- How might you be a better example of peace?

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# GROW • PRAY • STUDY

A RESOURCE FOR DISCIPLES SEEKING TO LOVE GOD, LOVE OTHERS & SERVE THE WORLD . . .

**Series:** *The Prince of Peace*  
**Message:** *Understanding the King and His Kingdom*  
**Scripture:** *Matthew 13*

*Things I'd like to remember from today's sermon:*

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## Introduction

In previous weeks of our GPS readings for our *Prince of Peace* message series, we have looked at the promises made to the people of Israel as well as the hope-filled poetry of a people depending on God to fulfill those amazing dreams. In this week's reading, we turn our attention to trying to understand the nature of the kingdom that God is bringing into the world through God's promised *Prince of Peace*.

As we continue to look at the prophecies which preceded Jesus' birth, we will begin this week looking at some of Jesus' major teachings as well as the formative thoughts which developed within the early church around the identity and mission of Jesus. Our hope in this week's reading and in the final week to come is to challenge ourselves to consider where we need God's peace. We continue to wait with grateful expectation for the coming of our King. May this prayer continue to guide you in this season of anticipation.

***Holy God, we wait in hopeful expectation for the coming of our King. We hold firmly to the promise you have made to each of us to come and set us free from the chains which bind our hearts and lives. Lord, in this season which is often dominated by the busyness and chaos of our lives, bring us the true and lasting peace that only you can bring. AMEN.***



## TUESDAY 12.14.10

## Isaiah 61:1-3

In Luke chapter 4, Jesus returns to his hometown of Nazareth. Before many who knew him well, Jesus stood in the synagogue and read these words from the prophet Isaiah. In doing so, Jesus indicated that, "Today, this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." Later in Luke's gospel, John's disciples inquire of Jesus, "Are you the one who was to come?" Jesus replies by saying, "Tell John: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor."

- Rev. Mike Slaughter, a prominent United Methodist pastor, explains these words from Isaiah in this way. "If our understanding of the gospel isn't good news for the poor, it isn't the gospel."
- In what ways does your own commitment to Christ represent good news for the poor?

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## MONDAY 12.13.10

## Micah 6:8

Like his contemporaries Isaiah and Hosea, Micah prophesied of the destruction that was coming to Israel because of their corruption. In the verses that precede our text today, Micah writes, "The Lord has a case against his people; he is lodging a charge against Israel." God has already shown Israel "what is good." It was time for Israel to listen and remember.

- Justice, mercy and humility are the three "requirements" listed by Micah. What does this list tell us about God's character and what God values? In which of these areas do you struggle to model God's character and embody God's value?
- Take some time today to consider what it means to live with a commitment to justice, mercy and humility. What would that look like in your life? In what ways might a commitment to these three "requirements" challenge you to live differently?

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## WEDNESDAY 12.15.10

## Colossians 1:15-20

In the first chapter of Colossians, Paul dedicates eight verses to outlining his understanding of the person of Jesus Christ and the mission that he came to fulfill. In the first half of that explanation which we have read today, Paul not only affirms the basic doctrine of Christian faith that Jesus participated in the creation of the world, he identifies his purpose as reconciling and renewing all of creation. Jesus came to put us back together.

- The kingdom of God is a place where we are renewed and reconciled to God. In your understanding, how does Jesus accomplish this work in us? In your life today, how would you describe the progress of that work? In what ways do you need God to make peace in your life?
- In what areas might God be calling you to take the next step?

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