



## **UNEXPECTED CHRISTMAS (Part 2) - “Unexpected Peace”**

### **John 14:25-27**

*All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*

### **Philippians 4:4-7**

*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

### **1 John 4:15-18**

*If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.*

### **Romans 5:1-2**

*Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.*

### **Key Points**

- *We live in an anxiety-ridden culture driven by an undercurrent of fear and instability.*
- *Jesus didn't come to bring God's punishment, but to restore God's peace.*
- *Perfect love casts out fear because fear involves punishment.*
- *The unexpected peace God provides doesn't rest on our circumstances, and therefore, it doesn't depend upon them.*
- *God's peace is a result of God's grace. The freedom this peace provides brings a redeeming and restorative justice.*
- *The peace of Christ is His presence.*

## **READ**

Open your time together by reading the Scripture passages on Page 1. Then, take a moment to consider what you just read:

- Read John 14:27. Reflect on the significance of Jesus leaving His peace with His disciples. How does this peace differ from the peace that the world offers, and how can it shape your approach to life's challenges?
- Read Philippians 4:4-7. Paul encourages believers to "Rejoice in the Lord always." How can maintaining a spirit of rejoicing impact your perspective on life, especially during challenging times?
- Read 1 John 4:15-18 and Romans 5:1-2. How does the idea of peace with God through faith influence your perspective on the challenges and uncertainties you face in life?

## **REFLECT**

- Reflect on a time when you felt God's unexpected peace during challenging circumstances. How did it differ from relying on external factors for peace?
- What does it mean for our daily lives to embrace the peace that comes from being in His presence?

## **RESPOND**

- In what areas of your life do you find it challenging to trust that God's peace doesn't depend on your circumstances? Why is that the case?
- In what ways can we intentionally cultivate an awareness of God's peace in our daily lives, especially when faced with challenging circumstances?
- Consider the role of grace in your life and how it contributes to experiencing God's peace. How might extending grace to yourself and others enhance your ability to live in God's peace?

## **PRAY**

Close your time together with prayer requests. Ask how you can pray, support, and lift one another up. Pray over these requests collectively or by breaking into prayer partners.