Series: The Drumbeat of Christmas

December 23, 2018

Message 3:

**The Drumbeat of Peace**

Isaiah 9:6-7

**Intro:** ***Opening video***

The Drumbeat of Christmas -

Armies have had drummers - a cadence - the drummer helps the army march along in step - in time - helps them get to where they are going -

WWI started with the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand - summer of 1914 -

Austria declared war on Serbia -

Russia declared war on Austria -

Germany declared war on Russia -

France declared war on Germany -

Germany declared war on Belgium -

Britain declared war on Germany -

All in a few days!

The war would last over 4 years - as many as 20 million people lost their lives.

The method - Trench warfare -

Establish your position - dig yourselves in - hide down in that position - never look the other person in the eye - haul off as much ammunition as you can.

For years the battle lines never moved - not much was accomplished -

6 months into the war - the first Christmas of the war -

On the western front, someone stepped out into the battlefield without their weapon and declared a Christmas Eve ceasefire.

In spite of all the differences and the killing, they stopped to observe Christmas - they all claimed to be Christians!

For a moment, they stopped fighting, they looked each other in the eye, they shared a meal, they played games together!

***Pics - you can probably put both on the same slide -***





The next day, they had trouble pulling their triggers! The commanding officers had to reassign them to different fronts so that they would rejoin the battle.

This led to the new rule - no fraternization - if you become friends with the person you are at war with, you won’t want to kill them!

It was called **The Christmas Truce of 1914.**

Today there is a war going on in a lot of people’s hearts. We get entrenched in our positions - we hurl our ammo at one another.

If you are on social media at all … the comments people post on articles … some of the most terrible words, hatred, people being horribly vicious towards people they don’t even know.

This is powerfully destructive!

This is a kind of trench warfare. It is being used by the enemy of our souls as a weapon of mass destruction to destroy many people’s spirits and lives.

No one wants to move one bit in their positions.

Sometimes we can go through battles that just wear us out - sometimes we allow ourselves to get pulled into battles that we don’t have any business being involved in.

Sometimes we get pulled into drama that we don’t have any business being a part of!

Word of wisdom: walk away! Don’t get pulled in!

You’re getting ready to have family Christmas time - someone starts some big dramatic hoodoo over nothing - CHANGE THE SUBJECT!

When you’re playing that game - word of wisdom - decide at the beginning that you don’t care who wins and loses! Just have fun!

Decide that you are going to come out of your trench, stand in the middle of a battlefield, and you are going to look people in the eye, get to know them, share some blessings with them, and call a truce to the battle.

**The Christmas Truce of 2018**

Stop the drama - stop the fighting - let families be healed - let relationships be healed - postpone the social media post not just until you cool off - but until you forget about it! Enjoy this holy time!

God can heal families - Christmas can be a time of miraculous healing.

Isaiah 9:6-7 - For a child is born to us,

a son is given to us.

The government will rest on his shoulders.

And he will be called:

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

His government and its peace

will never end.

**Truce: a suspension in the fight.**

“I’m mad. I’m angry. I’m upset. I feel I have every right to be - but I’m going to call a truce!” It’s Christmas - let’s put our weapons down.

**How to walk to the Drumbeat of Peace:**

**> Someone has to take the first step.**

We’re always waiting on someone else to take the first step. Everyone else is wrong - I’m right -

I am calling on people who believe in Jesus - the Prince of Peace - to be the one who brings peace to our culture and to our families.

Jesus brought peace to hearts - we are His representatives! It’s up to us to do it!

Put down your weapons - put down your anger - step up like Jesus - take the beating if you have to - and be a peacemaker!

Blessed are the peacemakers …

ILL - Couple giving each other the silent treatment … went on for days … he had to take a business trip - put a note on his wife’s bed - “Wake me up at 5 a.m.” - He woke up at 9 a.m.! Mad as he could be! But he found a note on his nightstand from his wife: “It’s 5 a.m.!”

I know - he could have set his own alarm - the story is not funny that way!

Someone has to take the first step -

**> We have to be willing to drop our weapons.**

Sometimes we make our concern more important than people. Is the thing you are so concerned about more important than the soul of the person you are fighting with?

**> Focus on what unites.**

Why can’t we have disagreements without being so disagreeable? Why is it that when we disagree we have to vilify the other side as if they are personal agents of the devil himself?

Let’s focus on what unites us! Sometimes you are never going to convince someone of your position - so change the subject - “How ‘bout them Colts?”

You say, “This is crazy! It’s not this easy, Pastor!”

No it’s not - but it wasn’t easy for those soldiers to get out of their trenches either and share a meal and play games in the middle of a real war - with real bullets - but they did!

You have the power to make a change - you have the power to bring peace!

**> Leave changed.**

Determine today that you are going to leave this place changed. Determine that this is not just going to be another Christmas Sunday service - a nice thing to attend. Determine that you are going to be a peacemaker.

If you will - it will be different than how most people in the world deal with conflict.

The world does this thing called “Conflict Resolution” but what they do is they keep at it - keep at it - keep at it - until there is a winner and a loser.

So, the boys went back to their trenches and went back to war until one side had so many people killed they couldn’t send anyone out to be killed anymore.

There is a better way:

Conflict Reconciliation

**Reconcile: to bring back together by bringing the balance to zero.**

Like balancing your checkbook…. (if you do that) …

This is what Jesus did for us!

Our lives were a mess … sin …

Jesus took my sin away!

We have a balance of sin! Some have created quite a balance! …

Jesus came in and said - you have all of your sin on one side - I put my blood on the other side - and the balance is ZERO!

This is how we are RECONCILED to God!

When my account doesn’t reconcile, it drives me crazy! I will not stop until I figure out what I did wrong … it’s almost always me! I entered something wrong by a few cents - it can take me half a day to figure it out!

But - when it’s done - HALLELUJAH! I’m reconciled!

I have done so many things wrong - but when I confess to Jesus what I’ve done wrong - ask for His help and forgiveness - he wipes away the difference that doesn’t balance and He brings my life back into balance!

I want you to have the same feeling! God wants to bring your balance to zero - He wants you to have peace with Him!

If you don’t have peace with God you are not going to have peace with anything or anyone else!

Ephesians 2:14-16 - For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death.

Christ can bring peace to you! Christ can bring peace between any two groups of people!

Hostility can be put to death!

2nd Corinthians 5:18-19 - And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people’s sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation.

God reconciles us to Himself so that we can be reconciled to others - so that we can have peace.

When we are reconciled to God, He gives us the power to reconcile with others.

This is hard - this is not easy - but what did Jesus do to forgive us? He forgot - He let it go - He wiped the slate clean.

Some of you need to forget it - let it go - wipe the slate clean - if you don’t, you will never have peace.

Love keeps no record of wrongs. Love keeps no record of being wronged.

“I can’t do that!” - With God, all things are possible!

Philippians 4:13 - For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.

If you are here checking us out for Christmas - and you think we’re talking crazy -

Give us a year of your life and see what God can do. Go all in - see if God is real.

Go all in for a year - a lot of you have been here for a while and you’ve never gone all in -

* Never come to Next Steps
* Not a part of a Small Group
* Not gotten involved in a ministry

Go all in - get in a Small Group - find our your gift - use your gift to make a difference -

Go all in for one year and see what will happen - I double-dog dare you!

2019 can be a year of reconciliation for you. God can bring your heart balance to zero and bring peace to every relationship and situation in your life.

The first truce was not in 1914 - the first truce was when Jesus came.

The world was in a mess -

Caesar … Herod … the world was literally being run by crazy people … Israel hadn’t had a prophet speak for 400 years!

And a young girl was pregnant … all kinds of consternation in the town …

Ceasar calls for a census … more taxes … more control over the people’s lives - he wanted to know where his enemies were so he could kill them and maintain his power -

Into all that mess - Jesus comes and brings the truce!

Luke 2:10-14 - but the angel reassured them. “Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.”

Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in highest heaven,

and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.”

You control whether or not God’s favor rests upon your life - by whether or not you receive Jesus into your life.

Don’t just celebrate Christmas, experience it!

*Hark the herald angels sing*

*Glory to the newborn king*

*Peace on earth and mercy mild*

*God and sinners reconciled!*

Do you need to be reconciled to God today? Do you need peace in your life today?

**Invitation**

**Blessing**