

## Peace and Joy!

*Luke 2 (NKJV):*

*Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. (v10)*

*Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace, goodwill toward men! (v14)*

*John 14 (MSG):*

*Jesus said, I am the Road (the Way), also the Truth, also the Life. No one gets to the Father apart from me. (v6)*

*Believe me: I am in my Father and my Father is in me. If you can't believe that, believe what you see—these works. The person who trusts me will not only do what I'm doing but even greater things. (v11,12)*

*If you love me, show it by doing what I've told you. I will talk to the Father, and he'll provide you another Friend so that you will always have someone with you. This Friend is the Spirit of Truth. (v15-17)*

*I'm leaving you well and whole. That's my parting gift to you. Peace. I don't leave you the way you're used to being left—feeling abandoned, bereft. So don't be upset. Don't be distraught. (v27)*

You may recognize the verses above, at least in part, but do you see how they tie together? The passage from Luke is the well-known announcement made by the angels to shepherds of the birth of Jesus Christ. The passage from John is part of a conversation that Jesus had with His disciples telling them that He would soon be leaving them, but that He would send to them the Holy Spirit as a “friend” for them.

They are both announcements of some kind, introductions to a new personality. Luke introduces the infant Jesus, the “Savior who is Christ the Lord”. John introduces the Holy Spirit, the “Friend”, the “Comforter” (as put in some translations) to Christ's followers. But beyond the personalities they introduce, they are announcements of a relationship. A relationship between God and human beings. As used in the Gospels, the words Peace and Joy indicate the connection that is made between individuals even if they are separated physically by distance. It is this same connection that God extends to us, the followers of Christ. This is a radically new relationship between human beings and God.

What relationship do you turn to when you want to find Peace and Joy?

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What is there in that relationship that allows you to feel Peace and Joy?

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Do you find those things in your relationship with God?

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Both the shepherds and the disciples would have understood that they are being invited into a new relationship with God, and with each other. To Jesus, there was no differentiation between our relationship with God from our relationship with others. In every practical aspect, He saw them both as the same thing, the one relies on the other for its source of connection. This is NOT an easy thing, we never find in Jesus an EASY path of discipleship. However, here in John, Jesus offers his life and His ministry as an example how to make this relationship real, he asks us to carry that ministry on in our lives and relationships; not only that, He offers us His Spirit as a friend to help and guide us down the Road.

Please pray this prayer with me:

*Holy Spirit we invite you to Come, in peace and joy, and fill this room with the presence of Christ. Help us to see our connection with each other, with those that are here in this place, and those who cannot join us today and are separated by distance. Through those connections, help us realize our relationship with You. Make our relationship with God more real through our relationships with each other. Amen.*

# Let There Be Peace on Earth

Let there be peace on earth,  
And let it begin with me;  
Let there be peace on earth,  
The peace that was meant to be.  
With God our creator,  
Children all are we.  
Let us walk with each other  
In perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me,  
Let this be the moment now.  
With every step I take,  
Let this be my solemn vow:  
To take each moment and live each moment  
In peace eternally.  
Let there be peace on earth,  
And let it begin with me.

Sy Miller and Jill Jackson  
1959 and 1983