



Christmas: The promise of everlasting peace

By Shri Ashish Oommen

Christmas has always been and will remain my favourite time of the year. One of the fondest childhood memories I have is participating in door-to-door carolling in Rajasthan. There was something special about going home to home late in the night, singing as loudly as possible, fuelled by delicious late-night snacks, and being in the company of dear friends.

As I sat down to write this article about Christmas, the word that kept coming to my mind was 'peace' or 'shalom'. It embodies the Christmas spirit marking the birth of Jesus, our Prince of peace. Maybe the reason I felt the tug on my heart to write about peace was that I just went through an unexpected change at work. As I waited for an answer, I waited with God, and it was a beautiful season in life that strengthened my relationship with God.

What is the true meaning of being at peace? Is peace what you feel when you do yoga or take a quiet walk enjoying nature? Or is peace achieved when everything in life is going according to plans (dream job, promotion, financial security, good health, wonderful marriage, successful children)? The answer is No! We may feel temporary peace when things go as we planned. However, the everlasting peace that our Almighty Father wants us to experience is the kind of peace that puts our mind and heart at ease without worry or anxiety even when nothing is working according to our plans.

What the Lord taught me through my experience is that His peace comes from submitting and trusting in Him fully. *Proverbs 3:5-6 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."* We must accept that contrary to what the enemy wants us to believe, we are nothing without God. God's main goal is to continue to shape us in His image so that we can spend eternity with him. Our desires may or may not be aligned with God's plan or his timing. But we have to trust that our Father, the creator of the universe always knows what's best. The key to having God's everlasting peace is for us to submit ourselves, wait with God and trust in Him.

Larry Crabb a well-known American Christian Counsellor & Author, talks about his childhood story. As an 8yr old he got stuck in a bathroom at his home when the locks jammed, he started panicking and having an anxiety attack. His dad tries to guide him through the way to fix it but as Larry is distressed, he cannot understand the instructions. His dad then runs to the garage gets a ladder to climb through the bathroom window and gets to Larry. Larry reflects on the peace that enters with his dad. His situation had not changed but he was no longer afraid as his father was with him.



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It is also important to note that God's peace while we wait is not meant for us to be comfortable but to be on mission. We must live by shining light on the path so that others are pointed to Jesus. It is with this peace that we can share the gospel unashamed and engage the lost. The joy I experienced while carolling in Rajasthan is a feeling I can relive now by sharing the good news with those around me.

In closing, our peace is wrapped in God's promises, in God's power and in God's purpose for us. Peace is not found in the absence of waiting, but in the presence of the one we are truly waiting with. His power is at work even in our waiting.

Christmas means that we can have peace knowing that God always keeps his promises and loves us. As a sign of His promise, He sent his only son to us, the perfect Child that was born on Christmas Day. Merry Christmas!