

## THE BIG IDEA: We can rest in peace even when the rest of our lives are in pieces

### The Take-Off

If the first week of “The Unexpected Christmas Playlist” is an indication, this is going to be a great month!

Last week we kicked it off talking about “White Christmas” and how we need to know how to deal with disappointment since the CLT region only gets Christmas snow once every 33.75 years, and then.....

IT SNOWED!!!

If what we talk about is going to happen, then this week we all need to be watching out for wild reindeer, right?!

I’m sure you’ve heard this week’s song the radio or at an office Christmas party, and it’s the perfect song to set the table for talking about how to handle loss and hard times during this time of year.

A couple of things that we need to clear up right away:

1. I’m not making light of loss. I’ve experienced it and the pain is real. We’re just having some fun with the song.
2. This time of year can be painful for many people for many reasons.
3. I’m going to focus more on how the gospel addresses that reality instead of addressing the question, “Why do bad things happen to good people?” I’ll be answering that question in depth during our upcoming series “Asking For a Friend.”

But for today, let’s talk about how peace can help when we find ourselves dealing with loss and pain in this season

Just like last week, let’s split this into 2 parts: what is peace and how can peace help us rest even in difficult times

### 1. What exactly is peace?

- a. Maybe it’s easier to start with what peace isn’t: it isn’t an emotion or a feeling
- b. **Matthew 8:23-27** gives us a beautiful picture of peace
- c. Storm all around, and yet Jesus is asleep in the boat
- d. Let’s use that passage to define peace: peace is *internal rest that is greater than external reality*
- e. What does that mean? It means that peace is possible even when our worlds are upside down
- f. That’s really good news for those of us who deal with a lot of painful emotions during this season
- g. If we think peace is an emotion tied to our experiences, then we’ll find ourselves rolling our eyes overtime we hear the words “peace on earth” because we don’t think it’s possible
- h. That’s a small step from beginning to doubt the very heart of the gospel that was announced on the hillside to the shepherds - **Luke 2:14** - Peace on earth
- i. Can I get some help illustrating this? Can we go full on crowd participation for a few minutes?
- j. I need you to see the real story of Christmas instead of the Hallmark version.
- k. [Manger melodrama]
- l. See, Jesus brought peace into a chaotic world - a smelly, noisy, distraction filled world
- m. What we need to see is that *Jesus BRINGS peace because we NEED peace*
- n. We don’t have to get our lives cleaned up or wrapped up with a bow in order for Him to come to us
- o. He brings the peace that we need
- p. **2 Thess. 3:16** / He’s committed to our peace / “at all times in every way”
- q. Think about this: he brings His message of hope into the messiness of our lives!
- r. **John 16:33** / In the world, we have trouble. In Jesus, we have peace.
- s. His peace > our trouble.
- t. The Big Idea says it like this: **we can rest in peace even when the rest of our lives are in pieces.**

### 2. How do we rest in peace?

- a. Let’s flesh this out by talking through 4 steps that can help us REST in peace...
- b. **R - Remember God’s sovereignty**
  - **Job 42:2** / Job’s response after his trial
  - **Psalm 103:19** / God hasn’t slipped off the throne
  - **Proverbs 19:21** / God’s purposes will stand
- c. **E - Embrace God’s goodness**
  - **Exodus 34:6-7** / Either it’s true or it isn’t
  - **Mark 10:18** / God is good - He IS good even if we don’t think He doesn’t DO good
  - **Psalm 84:11** / God gives good to us

- d. **S - Seek God's presence**
- **Psalm 23:4** / I won't fear (in other words, I will be at peace) - Why not? "You are with me"
  - **Psalm 34:18** / He is near when we are hurting
  - **Proverbs 18:24** / Others will fail us, but Jesus will never leave us - He's in for the duration
- e. **T - Trust God's process**
- **Philippians 1:6** / He will finish what He has started in us
  - **Romans 8:28** / If it's not good, He's not done
- f. **[VIDEO / Our mess, His masterpiece]**

### The Landing

Listen to the powerful words of Jesus in **John 16:33**

What do we learn from them?

***Peace isn't the ABSENCE of pain; it's the PRESENCE of Jesus.***

***Jesus doesn't STOP pain; He OVERCOMES it!***

I want to close this morning praying for those here who are hurting - who didn't lose Grandma to a reindeer but are struggling through loss of love, income, hope, etc.

I want to pray that you would **rest in peace even though the rest of your life is in pieces.**

I'm praying that the presence of God will OVERSHADOW the pain, and that you would experience peace in the pain and a miracle in the mess.

Let's pray.