

The Dawn of Hope

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Date: 03 December 2023

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[0 : 0 0] We're going to be in Isaiah chapter 9 this morning and then in the weeks to come in December! We'll be going through Luke's narrative of the birth, the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

If you're there in Isaiah, would you stand with me as we honor the reading of God's Word together? But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time, he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time, he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee, of the nations. Those who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shown. You have multiplied the nation. You have increased its joy. They rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For every boot of the trampling warrior in battle, tumult, and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. For to us, a child is born. To us, a son is given.

And the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace, there will be no end. May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated?

I received some gift cards for my birthday to Barnes & Noble, and over Thanksgiving break, I used those to purchase a couple of books. Masters of Command was one of the books I purchased by Barry Strauss. He's a history professor at Cornell University, and it covers the conquests and the demise of Hannibal Barca, Julius Caesar, and Alexander the Great. The other book that I purchased is called Dominion, and that's written by Tom Holland, not our Tom Holland, who is our elder, and not Tom Holland, who plays Spider-Man, either. This is a different Tom Holland. He's also a historian, but he's an unbeliever. And what he does in that book is he examines Christianity's influence, its impact on civilization, and he writes about how our culture is saturated by Christian concepts and assumptions and assumptions and how it's influenced and how it's transformed the modern world unlike anything or anyone else. I had a chance to read Masters of Command. I just started reading

Dominion, but what instantly stood out in my mind is the comparison between Alexander the Great and Jesus of Nazareth and Jesus of Nazareth. I think I'd be correct in assuming that if you asked any objective historian to come up with a short list of people who have had the greatest impact in history, that those two names would appear on their list, and they'd probably be in the top three.

[4 : 0 9] Hopefully, they would list Jesus Christ as number one. Alexander the Great was born in 356 BC, and he became the king of Macedonia in 336 BC. He became king after his father Philip II's assassination.

Alexander inherited his father's throne, but he also inherited his father's debt. A debt his father had accumulated by fighting wars. And ironically, Alexander aimed to restore his nation's wealth by going to war, by conquering other countries, which he did. He conquered many. He conquered in his lifetime about 2 million square miles worth of land in 11 years. Alexander was an astute general. As it pertained to his military strategy and his quick decision-making on the battlefield, few could match him. Alexander was great at conquering kings, but he was not a very good king. He was more of a warlord than he was a statesman. His passion was to amass a vast empire through war, but he lacked the appetite or the interest to govern what he had accumulated.

He was unable to unite the different cultures that he had conquered under one banner. And when he died of an illness at the age of 33, he left no heir and he left no lasting form of government to preserve the empire that he'd shed his blood and the blood of countless others to acquire. Eventually, it all fell apart.

Just as the Bible said that it would. Do you know that Alexander the Great is in the Bible? That he's mentioned in the Bible? 250 years before Alexander began his conquest, God provided Daniel with a glimpse into the future. And in Daniel chapter 8, the Medo-Persian empire is depicted or symbolized as a ram.

And in verse 5, a male goat comes from the west with a single horn between its eyes, and it moves swiftly, and it moves powerfully, casting the ram to the ground and trampling it to death. And that horn is a symbol of Alexander and who he was and what he would do. In verse 8, though, that horn is broken into four separate horns depicting the quick accumulation and decimation of his kingdom. [7 : 26] 200 years before Daniel's prophecy of Alexander, Isaiah foresaw the coming of another conquering king.

But this king's dominion, unlike Alexander, would never be divided. It would endure forever. This king, unlike Alexander, would not conquer by shedding the blood of others. He would conquer by shedding his own blood. His conquests, unlike Alexander's, wouldn't enslave but set people free. The king, this king, like Alexander, would die at the age of 33. However, like Alexander, or unlike Alexander, I should say, who conquered the world in his life but lost it all in death, this king conquered death by dying on the cross, giving up his life, but then rising again.

That those who believe in him shall never perish but reign with him eternally. And this king, his name is Jesus. And it's the birth of this king that Christians celebrate, not just at Christmas, but all the time. Our scripture today comes from Isaiah. Again, Isaiah was a prophet in and around Jerusalem from 739 to 686 BC. He was primarily called to prophesy to the southern kingdom of Judah during the reigns of four different kings as the nation went through a series of revivals and then reversals in their obedience to God. And chapter 9 continues with the doom and gloom forecast in chapter 8.

God's people rejected him. God's people rejected him once again. They were dabbling in occult practices as they sought wisdom from mediums and necromancers. The rulers of the nation were corrupt. The people were corrupt. They refused to acknowledge God's warnings about the consequences of that corruption.

[9 : 53] And the result of their unwillingness to repent and trust in God resulted in doom, gloom, distress, anguish, and deep darkness. But all hope was not lost. Light would come in the form of a perfect ruler who would be born as a child in Bethlehem. A son would be given to us whose reign would bring eternal peace and prosperity to his people. And again, his name is Jesus. And this passage reminds us of a truth that you and I should always celebrate and a truth that we should never forget. It's the main idea for this morning's sermon. Jesus is who you need. Jesus is who you need.

You know, I know, especially at this time of year when our TV is on and our kids are watching kids' shows, that commercials come on and they're advertising the latest toy, right? This toy, and especially Hazel, she's just captivated. She's watching it. She's taking it all in. And I know what she's going to say. She's going to say, as soon as it's over, your kids have probably told you the same.

Turn to you and they say, I need that. I need that. I have to have that. You know, as adults, we do that too. We're just more subtle in how we do it. Dropping hints and clues, leaving a trail of breadcrumbs to that object we hope to unwrap on Christmas Day and that we have justified in our minds this. This is something I need. But Jesus is all, is the one who we most need, truly need, more than anything, more than anyone else. And if you know Jesus, Jesus is not only someone who you know you need, Jesus is somebody that you want in more and greater measure. And so my hope for you today, if you're an unbeliever or as a believer, as an unbeliever to show you, as a believer to remind you that Jesus Christ is who you need. He's the answer. He's the answer to the doom and the gloom that you may be experiencing right now in your life. He's the answer to the doom and gloom that we're experiencing in our world today. Jesus is who we all need. In Isaiah 9, 1 through 7, the prophet presents us with four facts about Jesus that reveal to us all that Jesus is who we need. The first fact he presents about our need for Jesus is that Jesus is the light. He's the light. Look at verse 1 again.

But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. And the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali. But in the later times, he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. Now, I believe that Isaiah is directing these words to a remnant of Israel that had been faithful to God while everybody else had

not been. And he's saying to them here in effect, things are bad. They've been bad before, but this is really a mess.

You're grieving the current state of things as they are now, and you don't see a light at the end of the tunnel. And you're probably doubting in all that you're seeing that there ever will be one.

[14:29] In that case, their situation is not much different from our situation today. Things have been bad in our nation, in our world before, but these present times seem to be as bad bad and maybe worse. It got worse for them and it could get worse for us.

But the message for them back then is as true for us today. There is a light. There is a light that overcomes the darkness. Do you believe that?

It's human nature to fixate on the bad, isn't it? Just to focus on how bad things are.

And our news reporters know that, that there's something about our sinful nature. We just would rather hear the bad news and feel anxious and stressed and fearful and justify our reason to lock all our doors and all our windows at night, right? We fixate on bad news to the point where I, it's hard for me to watch the news with our kids in the room. A lot of times I end up changing the channel just because of some of the things that they're reporting and they're saying. I don't want my kids to be exposed to just how dark the world is. But as Christians, we can't lose sight amidst all of this darkness of the good news that we have, the good news that we've received, the good news that we have to share. We need to preach the good news to ourself, the gospel every day. And like Isaiah here, we need to be those people who draw others' attention from the darkness to the light. Verse 2, he continues, the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them a light has shown. And so here Isaiah pictures a light source outside of this earth shining down like our sun. Without sunlight, things would die.

[17:09] And it would get very cold. We would freeze to death. God created the sun both as a source of light that produces life. The sun is a star. It's fueled by hydrogen. And eventually, scientists tell us it will run out of fuel and it will begin to die. But I guess take heart because they say that's not going to be for another five billion years. And hopefully, Jesus has come back by then. However, the light source in Isaiah's prophecy comes in the form, not of a burning ball of gas, but a person, a person who gives light and life. And again, that person, his name is Jesus.

In the New Testament, John begins his gospel, his testimony of Jesus with these words, John 1, 1 through 5. In the beginning was the Word, and he's speaking of Jesus here.

And the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. In John 8, Jesus said of himself, in chapter 8, verse 12, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. Light gives life. Light reveals truth.

Light brings joy. Don't you hate how early the sun sets this time of year? Man, I hate it. It's depressing. A few weeks ago, Danny and I went to a movie, and it was daylight when we went in. And when we came out, we opened the doors, and we expected to be engulfed in the light of day, but it was dark. And it felt like we had missed something, and it was depressing.

[19:42] There are some places in the world that received just a few hours of sunlight during this time of year. And in those places, many people suffer from depression. And you know, to me, it's no coincidence that the more our society, our culture rejects God as the source of truth, the more depressed and miserable people in our society have become. I think St. Augustine said it best, our hearts are restless until they find rest in you. And that you whom he speaks of is God.

There's a lot of restlessness in our world. There's a lot of restlessness in our community. If you guys have been paying attention to the news, people are in darkness all around us, and they need to turn to the light. Matthew quotes Isaiah 9, 1 through 2 in his gospel.

And soon after, he records Jesus' rejection by his own people in his hometown of Nazareth. And after quoting Isaiah 9, 1 through 2, Matthew shares the main point of every message that Jesus preached, Matthew 4, 1 through 2, Matthew says, it's realizing the depths of your depravity, the deepness of your darkness as a result of your sin against God. And it's seeing Jesus as the light, as who he truly is. The one who has light, the one who gives life. It's understanding that Jesus is what you need, who you need to bring an end to your gloom, and to the deep darkness that has enveloped your heart and your soul. Seeing that he is the only one who can fill that God-sized hole in your heart. It's seeing the light that only he can rescue you from, the despair that you are in. He is

the only one who can liberate you from deep darkness and bring you everlasting life and true joy because he is the light. That's the first fact. Now the second one, you need Jesus because Jesus is liberator. He's light, he's liberator. Verse 3 again, you have multiplied the nation. You have increased its joy. They rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest and they are glad when they divide the spoil. Here the Lord through Isaiah confirms his covenant with his people. He has not forgotten them nor has he gone back on his word. Though the people are in darkness and they felt, I'm sure, like the battle had been lost, they are reminded that the war will be won.

In verse 4, Isaiah makes reference to a battle recorded in Judges, recorded in Israel's history before the moments in Isaiah. And this battle that Isaiah reminds the people of would shed further light on this future liberator whose victory will greatly increase his people's joy. Look again at verse 4.

For the yoke of his burden and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. Judges 7 records the battle between Gideon, God's judge, and his 300 men against the oppressive Midianites who had joined armies with the Amalekites against Israel. At that time, Israel was powerless to save itself. They were enslaved by the Midianites.

[24 : 31] And God raises up Gideon to deliver them. And after God shrinks Gideon's already small army compared to the Midianites, after God shrinks his army down to 300 men, he promises Gideon victory against their oppressors. Now understand, this wasn't 300 against 500. This wasn't 300 against a thousand. This was 300 against tens of thousands. And they're described in Judges 7, 12.

And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the people of the east lay along the valley like locusts in abundance, and their camels were without number as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance.

So this is the match. We got 300 people over here, and we have an army so big over here that we can't even count them. They're that numerous. The odds, though, are always in God's favor. And so Gideon, upon the Lord's instruction, he divides his 300 men into three different companies. And he gave each man three things, an empty jar, a trumpet, and a torch, a light. And they surrounded the camp of the Midianites and the Amalekites at night while it was in deep darkness. And they blew their trumpets, and they smashed their jars, and they held up their torches, and they shouted a sword for the Lord and for Gideon. And the evil forces gathered under Midian's banner were so terrified, were so caught off guard that they turned on themselves. Their camp imploded as they destroyed one another. And as a result, the oppressive yoke and the rod on the shoulders of God's people, the staff of their oppressors, was shattered, was shattered. The Israelites then plundered their camp. And there wasn't a single Israelite casualty in this battle. Could you imagine the joy?

[27 : 30] Could you imagine hearing the news? What? What? You guys defeated all of them? 300 of you? And not one of you died. God is amazing. You should understand how they must have felt if you know Jesus. And if you know what he has liberated you from. Look again at verse 5. For every boot of the trampling warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. Jesus, the sinless Son of God, was yoked to a cross that he bore on his shoulders to the place where he was crucified.

To Jesus' enemies, to Satan, it seemed like the battle had been won. But God doesn't win battles like men do.

Jesus' death and his resurrection three days later destroyed Satan's kingdom of darkness. He routed it. He made it to explode, to implode.

Satan turned his evil weapon of death against Jesus by killing him by the hands of sinful men. But in doing so, he fulfilled God's redemptive plan. His plan from the beginning. And in the process of this, he destroyed his own kingdom of darkness. And we who were enslaved to sin and the fear of death have been released. We've been set free to serve God in joy. That's what Hebrews 2, 14 through 15 reminds us of. Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself, speaking of Jesus, partook of the same things. That through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver all those who through the fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

Brother, brother, sister, Jesus is who you need. He is the light who overcomes the darkness.

[30 : 17] He is the liberator who sets us free from sin, Satan, death, and the consequences of sin. You can't do this for yourself. No therapist or counselor or consultant or any other person.

As much as they might help you, they cannot liberate you from the oppressor. Because there is no one who is like Jesus, who is the light, who is liberator, who is truly man, but was also truly God. And so the third fact, Jesus is divine. He's divine. Verse six, for to us, a child is born. To us, a son is given. And the government shall be upon his shoulder.

And the government shall be upon his shoulder. And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. This one verse, this very long sentence, packs a lot of theological punch. It contains perfect proof of the deity of the Messiah and the doctrine of the incarnation. God became one of us in the person of Jesus Christ. He is the light that overcomes darkness. He is the liberator who defeats the oppressor. And he's able to do it because he is divine. The four titles Isaiah assigns to this human are titles that belong to God alone.

The titles come in a series of couplets, four pairs of two words that link the human and the divine natures of the child that was to be born and given to us. The first couplet is Wonderful Counselor. The word translated Wonderful refers to the ability to work supernatural signs. It's the same word God uses to describe the wonders he will perform against Egypt in Exodus chapter three, verse 20. [32 : 42] And the word Counselor refers to the giving of advice. Jesus came. And when he came, he performed many wonders. He gave sight to the blind. He brought dead people back to life. He cured people of incurable diseases. He walked on water. He commanded the elements to obey him. He did many, many things. But all of these wonders that he did, they proved his divinity, but they served the purpose to verify that the words that he spoke were true words. And the Holy Spirit continues to give us wise counsel through his word today. He's Wonderful Counselor. He's also Mighty God. The word translated Mighty was a common word to describe a powerful man, a warrior who had proven his grit on the battlefield.

The word translated God is El. That's the most common Hebrew word for God in the Old Testament. And these words coupled together show the infinite power of Jesus Christ, our Savior, who is our omnipotent champion.

In his first advent, he arrived as a fragile infant, a sacrificial lamb.

But when he returns, he'll come as a conquering warrior, a ferocious lion, bringing an end to all who would dare oppose him. One of my favorite passages in scripture, Revelation chapter 9, verses 11 through 16, describing our Lord when he returns.

Then I saw heaven opened and behold a white horse. The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire and on his head are many diadems. And he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is the Word of God. And the armies of heaven arrayed in fine linen and white and pure were following him on white horses. From his mouth came a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Be glad that he will be the one going before, right? Instead of the one who is coming to face you. He is mighty God, he is everlasting Father. The title Father is an everyday word, but to couple it with the word eternal makes this a supernatural phrase. Ascribing fatherhood to Jesus is unusual given that we usually refer to God the Father as the Father, but Jesus did play a fatherly role towards his disciples. He called them his sons and his daughters. But again, this title communicates his equality with God the Father and the Holy Spirit in the Trinity. Prince of Peace.

[36 : 28] Prince was a common word for a government official. Isaiah will use it a couple other times in his book referring to other rulers of nations. But he, this prince, will be a ruler who brings peace and is characterized himself by peace. And this again is the very thing that most warlike conquering kings struggle to bring about.

Alexander the Great, for example. But Jesus speaks peace to his disciples. He spoke peace to his enemies from the cross when he prayed, Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do. Before going to the cross, Jesus spoke words of peace to his disciples in John 14, 27.

Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. After his death and his resurrection, he spoke words of peace to his disciples again in John 20, 19 through 21. On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, Peace be with you. When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side.

Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. And Jesus said to them again, Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you. Ultimately. And most of all, Jesus gives eternal peace to you through faith in him. Romans 5, 1. Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. In his humanity, Jesus lived the sinless life that the law of God demanded and that all of us fall way short of being able to fulfill. In his humanity, he did that. In his flesh, he could be a sacrifice to atone for our sins as our substitute on the cross, being the Son of God, being divine, where the blood he shed as he endured God's wrath covered our discretions and erased our iniquities. Now here in Isaiah 9, he talks about the incarnation, the coming of Christ. And in Isaiah 53, he talks about and he prophesies about what his coming would accomplish. Let's look at Isaiah 53, 3 through 5. Again, a prophecy describing what this coming child given to us would do. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised and we esteemed him not.

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. [40:12] Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace. And with his wounds, we are healed. Because Jesus is divine, his sacrifice is complete. There's nothing left for you to do.

There's nothing left for you to do. There's nothing left that you can do to have peace with God than to repent of your sins and turn to Jesus Christ in faith.

Do you trust him? Have you trusted him? Do you know that Jesus is who you most need?

Now the fourth fact. Jesus' dominion is eternal. His dominion is eternal. Verse 7.

Of the increase of his government and of peace, there will be no end. On the throne of David and over his kingdom to establish it and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore, the zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. Now I'm thankful for the word increase that begins verse 7. Wouldn't you like a government that increases your prosperity and your peace instead of your taxes? Amen? The Hebrew word translated increase gives a sense of an ever-growing, abundance or multiplication. Here Isaiah looks past the incarnation, past the cross, past the resurrection, past the time of the church to the eternal kingdom of Jesus Christ, which will be characterized by never-ending unending multiplication and prosperity as we dwell eternally with the Lord forever.

[42:28] And I take this to mean that in heaven, we'll have gone through that final state of our salvation. We'll be glorified. We'll be without sin. We'll be perfect.

We'll be pure as Jesus is, but we'll continue to increase in our knowledge. We'll continue to increase in our estimation of how blessed we are to know Jesus. We will never stop increasing in our love for him, in our knowledge of him, in our passion of him, in our worship of him, in our worship of him, in our knowledge of him, in our knowledge that Jesus is who we need.

Does that sound good to you? We're not going to be in heaven and thinking, when is this going to be over? Or, you know, I've had enough of all of this. I'm ready for something different. No. It'll be like seeing Jesus. It'll be like being hungry and never being full on Thanksgiving.

You know, give me more. Fill, fill, fill, fill, fill till it's all gone. Oh, there's more. There's pie. Give me that too. This is what awaits us. But in a very real sense, Christ's kingdom, his dominion is already here. It's already here.

This world is a dark place, but the light has shown in Jesus Christ through his life, death, and resurrection. He's liberated those held captive to sin.

[44:14] He gives us reason to hope in every single season of life. No pit is too deep.

No darkness is too dim. No sin, no oppressor is too great for Jesus to overcome.

Jesus is who you need. How should we adjust to all of this? Well, understanding only Jesus can give you what you need. Do you look to Jesus in that way?

Do you understand Jesus in that way? Only you, Lord, can truly give me. Only you have what I need.

On the day when Jesus was crucified, the Bible says that darkness fell over the land. This was afternoon time. And the land was full of darkness.

[45:17] The light of the world descended. And on the cross, in his incarnation, he descended. On the cross, he descended into the deepest, darkest darkness to bring us into God's glorious light.

First Peter 2.9. But you are a chosen race. A royal priesthood. A holy nation.

A people for his own possession. That you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

And I pray that this Christmas, and I hope this all the time, that you will constantly be reminded in all of the hustle and all of the bustle and all of the planning and all of the potential disappointments, that Jesus is who you need.

And that you will take every opportunity, like Isaiah did here, and be used of God to go to people walking in darkness and lift their face to Jesus.

[46 : 52] By proclaiming his excellencies. He is the light. He is liberator. He's divine. His dominion is awesome.

And it's forever. That they would know him too. If you're here this morning and you're an unbeliever, I'm so glad that you're here.

And my hope and my prayer is that through God's word this morning, the Holy Spirit has revealed to you that Jesus is who you need. And it's not about you going up and getting cleaned up and, you know, coming to church 10 consecutive Sundays and then feeling worthy of being a Christian or turning to the Lord.

No, you do that now. Once you realize that Jesus is who you need, you turn to him right now. And his promise to you is that he will forgive you.

He said, come to me, you who are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. My yoke is easy. My burden is light because I do all the work for you that I might bless you with love and my forgiveness and hope that overcomes the deepest darkness.

[48 : 18] Because I am the light who can liberate you from sin and death and hell. Turn to him.

Receive service. Invite one of those people whom you know to be walking in darkness to come. And they'll hear the gospel when they come. And you will be amazed that if you invite them to come, they're probably going to come.

They're just waiting for you to extend that invitation. And I pray that you will take the opportunity to do that. That's my challenge to you.

Be like Isaiah. Even more, be like Jesus. Four application questions for you all to look at later today, tonight in community group. Question number one.

Isaiah 9, 1 through 7 reveals that darkness gives way to light. Gloom turns to joy. Oppression gives way to freedom. And war gives way to peace. How did these promises bring comfort to God's people then?

[49 : 47] And how should they bring comfort to God's people now? Question number two. How is the defeat of Midian under Gideon a prophetic picture of Christ's victory over Satan at the cross?

And encourage you to read some or all of Judges 7, especially the end where they're victorious. And then compare that with Hebrews 2, 14. Question three.

How is Jesus the Prince of Peace? And how would you relate this to Romans 5, 1 and Philippians 4, 6 through 7? And then finally, and again, here it is.

Who do you know that is walking in darkness that you will share the light of Christ with? And I encourage you to begin praying for them and for that conversation today.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for the truth that you have given to us. The reality of the incarnation that the second person of the Trinity, the divine word, descended, humbled himself.

[51 : 02] By taking the form not just of a human being like us, but a servant. Who willingly gave his life to die a humiliating death on the cross.

But knowing that what he would do there would accomplish our salvation, our liberation. From sin and Satan, death and hell.

Lord, I pray that we would never lose sight of the fact, the reality that Jesus is who we need. Lord, for those who have not trusted in you today, I pray that they will hear this message.

And that you will turn their face to you. And that they will see the light of your truth. That they'll be liberated. That they will dwell now and forever in your dominion, in your kingdom.

And Lord, I pray for those of us who have graciously been saved by you. That we would never lose sight of the fact that Jesus is who we need. Every day.

[52 : 04] We need you. May we never be distracted from you. Or be so fixated on the bad that we forget of the great news that we have. And the great news that we have to share.

And so, Lord, I pray for each one of us. That, Holy Spirit, you would put our hearts and our minds. Put somebody on our hearts and our minds. That we need to share Jesus with.

And I pray, God, that you would give us the courage and the strength and the determination to do that. That the results will be yours and that you will be pleased.
And we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.