

Sunday, December 19, 2021 Advent 4 “Developing a Peaceful Heart”

John 14:26-27 (Luke 2:1-20)

This is the Fourth Sunday of Advent. With us is our friend the Grinch who has gone through major changes developing a larger heart! Throughout Advent, we have focused on the Grinch’s transformation of heart with the hope that God will enable our hearts to grow and develop so that we will experience Christmas in new ways. Our focus verse of Proverbs 4:23 reminds us of what we need to do so that our hearts may grow. It states, “Above all else, guard your heart for it affects everything you do.” The transformation of developing a heart twice as large as before has included focusing on purity, passion, and patience. And today’s focus on developing a peaceful heart will lead us into a special story shared by the Grinch.

What do we need to develop a peaceful heart? We need to look at our lives as a whole so that we might know God’s peace. And to know God’s peace means to spell it out:

P- Priority—we need to make God the priority in our life and doing what God wants (Matthew 6:33) What are the priorities in your life? What number or rank do you have for God? The thing we should want most is God’s kingdom and doing what God wants. Then all these others things will be give to you. “Seek ye first the kingdom of God”

E-Exchange- we need to exchange my problems for God’s peace If we give to God our problems, God will help us to find resolutions and then we can rest. (Matthew 11:28) Jesus calls us to come to him. We are weary and we each carry heavy burdens of every day life, and if we come to Christ, he will exchange our problems by granting us peace within.

A-Accept our limitations; we are not in charge of the universe- God is. We can only do so much but what we can do, we can do well! (Judges 20:16) Think about what you do well; focus on this and offer these gifts to God. If you know your limitations, God will help you enhance your gifts and use them for His sake.

C-Confess our sins to God daily; that is if we tell God how we have gone against his plan for us; he will forgive. (I John 1:9) God is faithful and reliable. We are forgiven because of our faith in Him.

E-Enjoy God’s peace If we make God our priority in life grow in relationship with Him, know that we can do many things within our own limitation, and confess to God what we did not do or failed at doing well, God forgives and we can live in peace.

In John 14:26-27 it says " I am leaving you with a gift- peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is not like the peace the world gives. Do not be troubled or afraid." To have the gift of peace of mind and heart enables us to grow in grace not just in Advent and Christmas but each and every day.

We are called to pray and keep peace in our hearts all year long.

SING "Make me a Channel"