**Peace in Our Hearts (Colossians 3:12-15)**

 Christ’s coming transformed us to live out God’s peace as a church. Greetings to you all dear brothers and sisters as we meditate on the blessing of peace on this second Sunday of Advent. How important the Lord’s peace is, that the word “shalom” in the Hebrew language encompasses all kinds of positive expressions for life! The word itself did not only include the meaning of the absence of war, but also healthy interpersonal relationships as well as physical well-being. Even more, for the people of God, peace would come upon them as a nation both economically as well as politically when they enjoyed God’s peace as a result of their obedience to Him. Knowing the above, today we’re going to talk about a passage taken from the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Colossians in which he speaks about the peace of a believer. My prayer is that in this season of Advent, we see and establish the Lord’s peace within us, instead of being swept away by our worldly cares and worries. Again, Christ’s coming transformed us to live out God’s peace as a church. Let’s speak, then, about this important calling of ours…

 Our life is called to progress under the umbrella of the peace of God. The background of the passage in question helps us to understand that the church in Colossae had issues with people living worldly (meaning ungodly) lives. The members were immature and were still bound by sins such as prostitution, evil desires, greed, and other ills. We find these just a few verses back, starting from verse 5. The Apostle Paul was calling them to dust off all of that junk. He was asking them to put aside their anger, their evil thoughts, their cursing and lying. He was calling them to take off the “old man” (their sinful tendencies) like a garment once and for all and to put on the new life, which is full of the knowledge of God. In that new life, there was no discrimination between Greek and Jew, in other words, uncircumcised and circumcised. Neither the slave nor the free person was to be discriminated against, because the church members were all filled with Christ, and He was and still is everything, the most important thing/Person, and not subjugating themselves their previously unsaved mentality. On the contrary, their lives were to express themselves under the influence of God’s peace.

 What was that life under God’s peace? It was one full of compassion – full of kindness, meekness, humility, patience and bearing with on another. It was the life of forgiving each other when there were grievances among the believers, because Christ has forgiven all who believe in Him. This is the life that the church members were supposed to be living – a life that enjoyed both an individual-internal Divine peace, and also among the relationships as a church.

 There is what is called the "cushion of the sea." Down beneath the surface that is agitated with storms, and driven about with high winds, there is a part of the sea that is never stirred. When we dredge the bottom and bring up the remains of animal and vegetable life, we find that they give evidence of not having been disturbed for hundreds of years. The peace of God is that eternal calm which lies far too deep down in the praying soul to be reached by any external disturbance.

 We need God’s peace as a church body. That peace starts from within us and spreads through us reaching even our relationships. When we forgive each other as church members – when we show compassion, when we show patience, when we bear with each other – a different kind of atmosphere reigns.

 If you told me, “Badveli (or Pastor), this person upset me or that person hurt me in this or that way, my answer to you will be these verses: *“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another…”*  and then I would say to you, *“…As the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”* Therefore, let us practice God’s peace both within us and among us. Let us come together and forgive each other, let us be patient, bearing with one another. These are the qualities which will lead us in the path of peace. Let us have God’s peace upon us, so that we can reflect Christ’s life to the unbelievers – so that we may know the Lord (more fully), who has united us to each other through His blood and resurrection.

 Our life is called to progress under the umbrella of the peace of God. Christ’s coming transformed us to live out God’s peace as a church. May the Lord’s peace be upon you. The Lord Bless you all. Amen.