**Peace is a Road (Or Journey)**

***67****And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying,*

***68****“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people****69****and has raised up a horn of salvation for us  in the house of his servant David,****70****as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,* ***71****that we should be saved from our enemies  and from the hand of all who hate us;* ***72****to show the mercy promised to our fathers
    and to remember his holy covenant,* ***73****the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us****74****that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear,* ***75****in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.****76****And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;  for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,* ***77****to give knowledge of salvation to his people   in the forgiveness of their sins,* ***78****because of the tender mercy of our God,  whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high* ***79****to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” (Luke 1:67-79, ESV)*

 The peace that Jesus brings is a life-journey for each of us. Greetings dear brothers and sisters as we bring up the topic of Jesus’ birth in connection with the subject of peace. The reality of peace is something that has always been in great need in the world. Peace has a couple of different meanings: first, it is the absence of war. Second, it is when interrelationships are healthy. Third, it can connote good physical health. Fourth, as Scripture has it, it can be used to refer to internal tranquility – a state of being that is not affected by the world’s ups and downs. Most importantly, Peace is the Person of Jesus, who, for the sake of reconciliation between God and man, sacrificed himself as God’s Lamb. Let speak, then, about both today’s Scripture reading, especially Zechariah’s prophetic declaration, and how that connects with our lives today.

 Jesus’ birth was an enormous blessing of peace. God considered Jesus’ arrival so important, that He even put words in the mouth of Mary’s relative, Zechariah. According to the latter, Jesus’ arrival is God’s visitation of His own people, for the purpose of establishing peace. That peace was both a freedom in the political realm (from Rom’s oppression), but also in the spiritual dimension. God’s peace was for the purpose of worshipping Him freely. It was for the purpose of living a holy and righteous life. It was to facilitate a spiritually consistent faith walk among God’s people. John the Baptist was the one who would prepare the way for that Peace, which would result in people knowing salvation. This would come from receiving forgiveness of sins, which comes from God’s mercy. But God’s peace was also like a sun over His people, in the middle of the darkness and death which they lived every day. Whether politically, economically, or spiritually, God’s people needed His Peace, namely His Son the Savior Jesus.

 Thinking for a moment about peace: when we sin against God, we only receive a temporary feeling of peace when we receive encouragement or even forgiveness from human beings – that is because we know against Whom we have sinned. However, when God Himself declares our forgiveness, when He establishes the latter through Jesus, our peace begins to exist on another level. God’s peace is much different than and goes way beyond all other experiences of “peace”.

 Today the world is once again embroiled in many struggles, and desperately needs to accept Jesus to enter into its life. It is not enough to be satisfied with temporary and external Christmas decorations if Jesus does not rule within us. It is not possible for man to be at peace, no matter how may happy songs he or she hears, not matter how many beautiful scenes they witness, no matter how many family members are around the table, or even if there is an absence of political turmoil or war and all the above give an illusory picture of peace. True peace only comes from inner peace, and that – only through Jesus. True peace is walking this life with Jesus, starting with His birth within us. If we have given Him room to stay with us, to grow His influence within us and to accompany us, it is then that God’s peace will steadily rule within us. Then, through us, Jesus will begin to “show up” and invite others to Himself.

 It is time to first have inner peace, through which our circles of influence will be able to approach God’s True Peace as we continue our faith walk in Him.

 Therefore, let us pray for people in this Advent season, that they would not only focus on gifts or gathering around tables, but also (and most importantly) on Christ’s birth and His Presence. May the subject of Jesus be on our mouths more than any other thing.

 Come and let us enjoy His peace, which begins internally and grows with His help over time.

 Jesus’ birth was an enormous blessing of peace, which we live out as an life-long journey. God Bless You All, Amen.