



CHRISTMAS PLAYLIST

WINNING OVER HOLIDAY STRESS (Week 1)

WELCOME: What's your favorite Christmas song and why?

WORSHIP: Ask three people to share a blessing or learning that they praise God for this past week.

WORD: The peaceful, warm and fuzzy feeling that some Christmas songs convey do not always match with what we experience at Christmas season. We know by experience that the holidays can be the stressful, disappointing and depressing season of the year. Do you remember some of the reasons Pastor Jon shared on Sunday about why Christmas may be the worst time of the year for some people?

The Promise of Peace.

The prophets of the Old Testament declared that when the Messiah comes, he will bring peace. The prophet Isaiah, declared: (Isaiah 9:6) *"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."*

The actual Hebrew phrase is "*Sar Shalom.*" Sar means, the one in charge, Lord, chief, highest general. Shalom means rest, tranquility, wholeness, completeness, satisfaction, contentment.

- What did the angels sing when Jesus was born in Luke 2:13-14?
- What promise did Jesus make to his followers in John 14:27?
- What does having a relationship with Jesus bring in Romans 5:1?

Peace is not the opposite of chaos. Peace is not the absence of conflict.

Peace is not the absence of something; peace is the presence of Someone!

If Christ came to bring peace, why do people get so stressed out at Christmas?

Here's why: WE FOCUS ON THE WRONG THINGS AT CHRISTMAS.

- What occupies most of your time at Christmas season?
- What is the biggest stressor in your life over the holidays?

This season, we will all face unavoidable circumstances, unbearable people, unexplainable problems, uncontrollable worry. But we learned how we could win over these holiday stresses, disappointments and depression. Pastor shared four things declarations to help us focus on the right things this Christmas.

1. I will come under the Lordship of Jesus. When we come under Jesus' Lordship, we recognize that He alone is our King; He alone is the one we live for; He alone will be the source of our joy and peace. This helps us focus on the giver of peace instead of the unavoidable circumstances, unbearable people, uncontrollable worry and unexplainable problems.

His lordship over me brings peace.

- A. I have peace with God (Read Ephesians 2:13-14).
- B. I have peace with others (Read Ephesians 4:32)
- C. I have peace with myself (Read 1 John 3:19-20).

Acts 10:36, “This is the message of the Good News...that there is peace with God through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.”

Live under his covering.

- A. I choose to run to Him for protection (Read Proverbs 18:10). Who is the first person you call when you're anxious?
- B. I choose to make God my refuge (Read Psalm 46:1). What is a refugee? How are we all refugees according to pastor?
- C. I choose to dwell under His care (Read Psalm 91:1-2). What are the benefits of living under God's care (Psalm 91)?
- D. I choose to let His peace rule over me (Read Colossians 3:15).

2. I will bring Jesus into every situation. I want to be a disciple who brings Jesus in every aspect of my life (Read 2 Thessalonians 3:16).

- A. Take Jesus' peace with me everywhere and every situation. Read Zephaniah 3:17.
- B. Bring my Sunday worship experience into my entire week, and use it to witness to the rest of my world. (Acts 1:8)

3. I will seek first the kingdom of God. Matthew 6:33 is about pursuing Jesus and His kingdom as my number one priority in life. Pastor shared this prayer last Sunday: “*God, You will be first in my life—whether that's in my finances, or my relationships, my career, etc. Nothing competes with you in my life.*”

- A. Don't put so much emphasis on things that don't last.
- B. Sow good seeds into people's lives all year long (Galatians 6:9-10).

4. I will keep my mind on Jesus. At the very center of the Bible is this verse: Isaiah 26:3 (read).

I could lose my mind in the middle of all the stress, the disappointments and the depression when my mind is not set on Jesus. What I focus on will shape the way I experience peace. Read Philippians 4:8-9.

WORKS:

- Think of ways you can better celebrate the holidays more meaningfully as a group (Examples: Use the funds you might have for gift exchange and donate it to a charity; Serve at the Olive Tree, send financial support to a missionary church planter abroad).
- Read Romans 15:13. Pray for God's peace to rule in your hearts.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

12/11 (1-3PM) - Christmas Party

12/24 (7PM) – Christmas Eve Worship

Remember Your Part in our Vision

