



# Links Players

## Advent Fridays, 2022 - Peace Through War

*The LORD is a man of war; the LORD is his name. (Exodus 15:3, ESV)*

In 1991, the stage was set for one of the most hotly contested Ryder Cup matches ever held on either continent. America's best efforts to hoist The Cup had fallen short in its three previous attempts. To say the "stage was set" is a classic understatement. We might more accurately say, The Ocean Course at Kiawah resembled a "battlefield."

The metaphor of "war" seemed inevitable. The Americans were intent on reclaiming The Cup. The Europeans had won in '85 and again in '87. In '89, the Europeans retained the Cup by "halving the match."

We know the difference between real and metaphorical wars. Our generation watched as terrorists hijacked commercial planes, converted them into weapons, and killed thousands of our finest citizens. Like every age, our age is filled with "wars and rumors of wars." Will we ever know peace?

Jesus made an unbreakable promise that one day he would return and end all wars, crushing all who opposed his universal reign and renewing the world in everlasting peace (see Psalm 2). How do we know with certainty that Jesus can win the war to end all wars?

The answer is found in another decisive battle fought two thousand years ago. It wasn't fought on a battlefield. It wasn't fought between two armies. It was a battle that Jesus voluntarily entered on our behalf.

To understand Jesus' death as mere martyrdom, reducing it to a moral example, misses the significance of Calvary by a million miles. To only see the physical torture and social humiliation of our Savior hanging on that tree ignores vast swaths of what Scripture reveals to us.

What do we mean when we say, "Jesus took our place?" No doubt, we will spend all eternity trying to wrap our minds around such sacrificial love. But at its core, the death of Christ as our substitute means he went to war with sin, Satan, death, hell, and the grave.

The agony of his suffering, in body and soul, as a man for sinful men is unspeakable. The cost of his death is incalculable. To explore the depth of meaning

in his cries, "My God, My God, why has thou forsaken me?" is beyond our reach.

When we say with the church throughout the ages that Jesus's death was "substitutionary and penal," we are saying Jesus bore the judicial wrath of God's hatred against sin. He absorbed the thunderbolts of God's judicial fury, and he did it for us, the enemies of God (Romans 5:10).

How do we know that Jesus' sacrificial death for us was accepted as the atoning sacrifice for sin? Answer: God raised Jesus from the dead and seated him at the right hand of the Father, and that for all eternity!

To have the peace of God, we must first have peace with God. For that to happen, Jesus had to drink the cup of wrath and drink it dry he did.

Prayer: Father, remind us that the peace we know in our hearts is a down payment for peace that one day will prevail over the entire world.

### READING - Colossians 1:15-20; John 14:26-27; Philippians 4:4-7

**OPENING QUESTIONS:** First tee jitters; virtually everyone has them. How do you manage your nerves on the first tee?

**1. Colossians 1:15-20**, after exalting Christ's person, he mentions reconciliation and peace. What transpired that created peace between God and us? Discuss.

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**2. In John 14:26-27**, Jesus is announcing a transition in his relationship with the disciples. What connection might there be between the promise of the Holy Spirit and the gift of peace?

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**3. Philippians 4: 4-7** is a "go-to" verse for finding peace. Peace seems to be tied to some previous actions by the believer. What are those?

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