

Sermon Title: **“PEACE - Prepare the Way of the Lord”**

Bible: **Malachi 3:1-4 & Luke 3:1-6**

When: on 2nd Sunday of Advent, December 5th, 2021

Where: about 30 people (plus YouTube live streaming viewers) at Gilroy UMC

### **Opening Prayer**

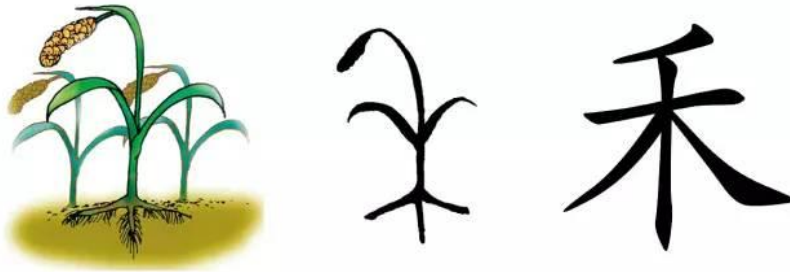
Gracious God, we are waiting for your coming. We are preparing the way of the Lord. Please lead us to your way. Let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock, and our Redeemer. Amen.

### **1. Peace 평화 (平和)**

Today is the 2nd Sunday of Advent. We lit two candles; the first one means Hope, and the second one means Peace. Because my name is Hwapyoung, which comes from “Peacemaker” in the Bible, I would like to share the meaning of peace in Korean. Peace in Korean has two syllables. Each syllable has its own meaning. Korean has its own pronunciation, but many times, Korean uses the meaning of Chinese characters. Each part of the Chinese characters come from picture symbols.



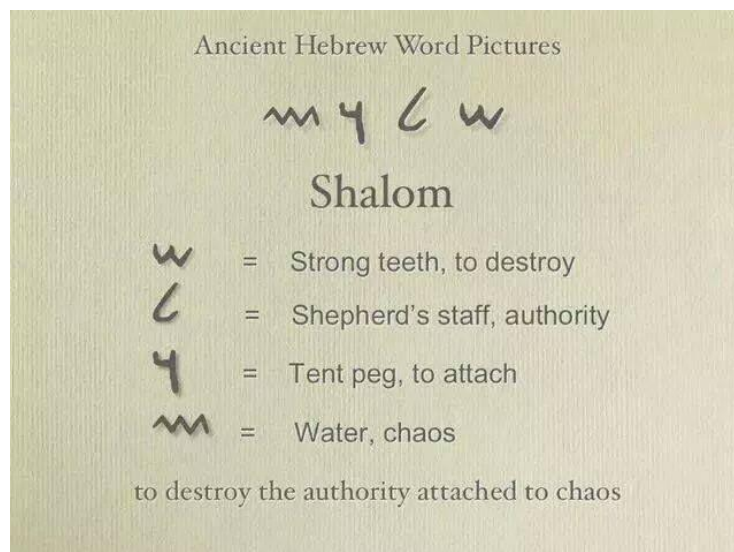
The first letter of peace is “平”, which means sharing equally. The second letter of peace is “和”. The left part of this letter “禾” is rice, which means food.



The right part “口” is a person’s mouth. The second letter means food into a person’s mouth. Thus, if we can share the food equally with others, there is peace. Does this make sense?

## 2. Shalom שלום

The most famous word for peace to us as Christians is “Shalom” in Hebrew. “Shalom” means peace, harmony, wholeness, hello, and good-bye. But like Chinese characters, if we see each word picture of “Shalom,” we can find another hidden meaning.



Hebrew was written from right to left. The first word picture means “strong teeth,” or “to destroy.” The second word picture means “shepherd’s staff” or “authority.” The third word picture means “tent peg” or “to attach.” The last word picture means “water” or “chaos.” In this way, “Shalom” means to destroy the authority attached to the chaos. Maybe, we might expect “Shalom” to be a very calm or peaceful moment. But it is not. “Shalom” is challenging the status quo. Our Jesus came to the earth as the King of Peace, the King of Shalom. Probably, that’s why some people in the Bible could not welcome our Baby Jesus. Some people were even against our Jesus. That’s because it was not the kind of peace that they wanted. They wanted to keep the status quo: the deep valleys, and the high mountains. However, when the King of Peace comes, every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low.

### **3. The Foolish Old Man Removes the Mountains: 우공이산(愚公移山)**

During the pandemic, it looks like we have been discovering more valleys and more mountains that were hidden. Rather than helping each other and working together, it seems like we intend to find a scapegoat or someone to be blamed. We are all so vulnerable in the face of this global pandemic. There are many frustrations, but I would like to share an old Asian story of “The Foolish Old Man Removes the Mountains,” from about the 4th century BC. There was a 90-year-old-man named “Woo Gong.” Because of the mountains, he had many struggles, and he decided to move the mountains, while digging them out. Someone argued with him that moving mountains was impossible. Then he answered that he might not

be able to finish it in his lifetime, but his children, his grandchildren, and many generations would be able to do it, if they keep at it. Someday, the mountains will be removed. Was he foolish? This story is called “The Foolish Old Man Removes the Mountains.”

#### **4. Prepare the Way of the Lord**

John the Baptist shouted out, “Prepare the Way of the Lord, make his paths straight, every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low.” To prepare the way of the Lord, to follow Jesus, to be peacemakers, to be shalom-makers, might sound foolish. But our King of Peace, our Jesus, came to us, and the Kingdom of God is already in us. The hope and the peace will be overflowing through us, because we are the people of God. The valleys are deep and the mountains are high, but please do not be afraid and please do not be frustrated. Let us be foolish for God’s hope, and God’s peace. As Jesus started God’s Kingdom in us, God’s hope and God’s peace will be on earth through us. Later, after many generations, there might be an old story, “The Foolish Methodists Bring God’s Peace.”

#### **Closing Prayer**

Gracious God, we are so weak. We are so vulnerable. But we have your peace, your Shalom in us. We have you, Jesus. Please guide us to be foolish and to be bold for your peace! Please lead us to prepare your way! In Jesus’ name. Amen.