Let us strive for peace

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It won't be long (if it hasn't happened already), that Christmas cards will begin to appear in your mailbox. Many of them, in bold and fancy letters, will proclaim the words of the angels: 'Peace on Earth."

There are three ways we use the idea of peace. The first is peace with God. In Romans 5: 10 Paul says that we were enemies of God, but are reconciled by the death of His Son. We go from a place of being God's enemies to being His children through the cross of Jesus.

Secondly, we can talk about peace with other people. It isn't hard to see that in much of our world, peace is severely lacking. Recent fighting in the Middle East is just one of about 40 such conflicts in our world today.

Often conflict isn't just on a worldwide scale but is in our towns, among neighbors, and even our homes. As individuals we may not have much chance to stop conflict on a global scale, but we are still reminded to "Strive for peace with everyone" (Hebrews 12: 14, ESV) and "If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all." (Romans 12: 18, ESV).

Just as our peace with God depends on his forgiveness, many times living at peace with others means that we too must forgive each other.

The third kind of peace is peace with yourself, inner peace. Health care professionals suggest that about 43 percent of Americans have some kind of stress related illness. At Christmas stress can build up as we try to get all of our holiday tasks completed.

Depression, loneliness, and worry, can also rob us of our peace. The good news is that the same Savior who calmed the sea can calm our hearts and give us peace.

It is a rare person who doesn't desire peace. May you find peace with God through his son, peace with others through forgiveness, and peace in your hearts from the God who gives "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding." (Philippians 4: 7, ESV).