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The Impossible Possibility¹

During a Christmas Eve Service, a Pastor's sermon went on and on. The longer he spoke, the more scattered his thoughts, and it was difficult to follow what he was saying. At the door after the service, one member said, *Pastor, your sermon tonight reminded me of God's peace and love.*

The pastor was quite flattered. *Really? How so?*

It reminded me of God's peace in the way it surpassed all understanding! And it reminded me of God's love because it seemed to endure forever!

Tonight, I want to avoid both these pitfalls!

Every year, at this time, we hear familiar Scripture passages and sing well loved Christmas carols about *peace on earth and good will to men*. We light candles and sing *Silent Night, all is calm and all is bright*. It's traditional, it's nostalgic and there is a warm, fuzzy, coziness to it all.

But does it make any difference? Year on year, unrest, violence, pain and brokenness seems to be on the rise. Can anyone blame you for thinking, ***Is peace really possible?***

After several years of arguing over contentious issues ending in an election fraught with anger, we are left with deep divisions in families, fractured neighbourhoods and an increasingly broken society. ***Is peace really possible?***

But pain and brokenness are not just around us, it's also within us: restlessness in our spirits, an ache, a longing for something more, for our lives to be well and whole. ***Is peace really possible?***

This is not the way the world is supposed to be!

You don't need me to tell you, our lives are not the way God made it.

What was in God's mind when in the beginning, he went about creating the world and everything in it?

¹ Isaiah 9:1-2, & Luke 2:1-20 (words used by the Swiss Theologian, Karl Barth)

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In six days, *and let's not argue whether it was 24 hour days or a thousand or millions of years equal to a day in God's sight! Feel free to hold your position and I'll hold mine, but it doesn't change the fact, God made it all, God created **SHALOM!** God project-managed every phase of creation, and certified it as "good", i.e. **PERFECT!***

Everything God created was perfect, as He is perfect. All creation was **SHALOM**, which we understand as "peace".

But **SHALOM** is so much more.

It represents wholeness, completeness, by which everything is in a right relationship with its Author, its Creator, everything had a relationship with God the way He made them!

It is in this perfect state, everything God made would flourish and prosper.

We lost **SHALOM** when we broke faith in God's word. He said, ***don't... until I tell you,*** and we fell for the question, ***Did God really say that?***

Tonight we celebrate the event when God stakes His claim to restore His creation to Himself. ***I shall come and restore SHALOM among those who have lost Shalom with me; I shall break the wall that holds them back from Me, the barrier wall called death, then, like Berlin Wall, and the walls of Jericho, both of which came tumbling down, so have the walls of death come tumbling down and MY people will scramble across into freedom, back with me, into life eternal with ME***

This is the REAL Christmas - a celebration of God coming to us from Heaven in the person of a little infant named Jesus, ***who comes to restore Shalom to God's creation.***

No wonder the angels sang out across the Heavens on that first Christmas day: ***Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth, peace (SHALOM) among those whom He favours! AMEN.***