

Movie Message on Advent Peace: King Kong
Isaiah 11:1-9
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St. John United Methodist Church
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I know what you are thinking. With the theme of Advent peace how could I have possibly chosen the movie “King Kong?” The reason has to do with how we picture peace. Let me illustrate.

Long ago a man sought the perfect picture of peace. Not finding one that satisfied, he announced a contest to produce this masterpiece. The challenge stirred the imagination of artists everywhere, and paintings arrived from far and wide. Finally the great day of revelation arrived. The judges uncovered one peaceful scene after another, while the viewers clapped and cheered. The tensions grew. Only two pictures remained veiled. As a judge pulled the cover from one, a hush fell over the crowd. A mirror-smooth lake reflected lacy, green birches under the soft blush of the evening sky. Along the grassy shore, a flock of sheep grazed undisturbed. Surely this was the winner.

The man with the vision uncovered the second painting himself, and the crowd gasped in surprise. Could this be peace? A tumultuous waterfall cascaded down a rocky precipice. Stormy-gray clouds threatened to explode with lightning, wind and rain. In the midst of the thundering noises and bitter chill, a spindly tree clung to the rocks at the edge of the falls. One of its branches reached out in front of the torrential waters as if foolishly seeking to experience its full power. A little bird had built a nest in the elbow of that branch. Content and undisturbed in her stormy surroundings, she rested on her eggs. With her eyes closed and her wings ready to cover her little ones, she manifested peace that transcends all earthly turmoil.

King Kong is a movie with lots of turmoil and violence. But I want us to focus on those few moments of peace and serenity in between the chaos. In our scripture for today Isaiah offers a vision that seems to transcend the brutal reality of life. It is a vision of a day when a messianic king will come to rule in the ways of God. There will be wisdom and justice. This image of right living will not be confined only to humans, but will affect the animal kingdom as well. Isaiah offers us the image of a wolf living with the lamb, the leopard lying down with the kid, and the calf and lion living in peace.

Isn't there something in your heart that longs for a new day when violence of all kind will vanish from the face of the earth? In the movie we get a similar glimpse of this vision when Kong is perched high on a precipice with Ann Darrow who notices that this huge beast is not paying attention to her, but to the sunset.

Video clip

In no way am I trying to portray animals in ways that would deny humans the right and need to hunt them for food. I used to hunt when I lived on the Kenai Peninsula. But there are those who hunt, especially native Americans, who believe that

there is a spiritual connection that must be honored. They believe that if the spirit of the hunter is right that the animal will offer itself to the hunter and the families it will feed.

Isaiah talks about this messiah coming from the family of David and the spirit of the Lord shall be upon him. And he will bring a peace that extends beyond humanity to all of creation. Wolves and lambs lying together. In other words there will be a time when the peace of God will overrule animal and human nature. There are those who live so much for the real world that they cannot fathom such a world. But this is part of the future yearning in the human spirit for a new and better world. The catalyst for such a world centers on this new messiah to come.

Probably the best connection we humans have with the animal kingdom is with our pets, especially our cats and dogs. One of the reasons for this comes when we feel a bond with our pets, a bond that deepens when we see them at play. This happens in the movie when King Kong and Ann Darrow play together on an ice pond in New York.

VIDEO CLIP

Sometimes the bonds people have with animals are extremely deep. One of our members, Gail Dudley, had a beloved dog, Millie, who went everywhere with her. Gail once said to me, "If I get to heaven and find out that dogs aren't allowed, then I don't want in!" Millie has since passed on and I don't doubt that when it's Gail's turn she will keep her word.

Animals living in peace with each other is an image Isaiah offers so we can visualize the ultimate, peaceful world God desires for all humanity. We don't know when it will come in all its fullness. But we need to keep in our imagination so we can work to help bring it to a world in desperate need.

In the final scene King Kong has climbed the Empire State building with Ann Darrow in hand. Just before the air attack there is a peaceful moment as they gaze at the sunrise. King Kong remembers the sunset they shared on Skull Island. He remembers that it was beautiful.

VIDEO CLIP

You and I experience moments of peace and non-peace all the time. Especially at this time of year we don't exactly experience holiday traffic and shopping as peaceful moments. It is important that we begin to prepare ourselves for the coming of God's peaceable kingdom. And this includes crazy traffic and long lines.

We need to hold Isaiah's image in our mind, an image of peace in the midst of the chaos of life. We can see this peace when we make time to watch a sunset or sunrise. We can see this peace when we take time to play with a puppy. We can see this peace when we learn to slow down our breathing to feel moments of stillness when we know that God is God.