BREATH PRAYER | *Prince of Peace*

> *The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. … For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government will be upon his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.* (Isaiah 9:2, 6)

Isaiah tells us that despite the fact that the government (of all humanity!) was upon Jesus' shoulders… his core identity was (and continues to be) as the Prince of *Peace*. Do you ever think about that? I mean, if ever there was someone who ought to feel pressure…!?

We've now entered the season that celebrates that incarnational coming of the Prince of Peace into the world He made. And yet I wonder how much "Peace" is the dominant spirit in the air these days. We could probably name a TON of other emotions – good and bad – that likely come in ahead of Peace, in the Christmas season.

And it's so easy for us to let our hearts, minds, and even bodies fill up with the tension around us. To be hyper aware of the PRESSURE of Christmas, instead of the PRESENCE of Christ. So this morning we are going to practice something together – a breath prayer – to specifically try to counter that slide. This is a really simple method of prayer that just aligns our patterns of breathing, with our prayers to God, in a way that helps to re-center us in Christ.

So to begin, make sure you're sitting comfortably wherever you are. Maybe close your eyes. And just start to pay attention to how you're breathing right now. Just notice it. Now try to take your breaths a little deeper and let them out a little slower.

Sometimes using a count of 4 helps – breathe in for four then out for four.

And so, our prayer this morning (keep breathing deep as I talk) is going to be simply "Peace of Christ". So we're going to inhale and then in your mind or out loud, we'll say the words "Peace of Christ" – and then exhale. Let's try that together.

Inhale
"Peace of Christ"
And exhale

Again –

Inhale
"Peace of Christ"
And exhale

Again –

Inhale
"Peace of Christ"
And exhale

Keep going, don't stop. I'm going to name specific places in our body where we tend to hold tension, pressure, stress – all those things that knock the peace of Christ out of us. As I name each one, use your intentional mind to direct your prayer towards that part of your body. And we're gonna speak the peace of Christ directly into these places, as I name them.

So let's start at the top, with our heads. Do you have a furrowed brow right now, is your face holding tension? Try to relax everything. The tension in your neck. Can you speak peace into this part of you?

Inhale
"Peace of Christ"
And exhale

Inhale
"Peace of Christ"
And exhale

Now focus on your shoulders. Notice any tension. You can touch them, or not, if you want as we pray. And let's speak peace there:

Inhale
"Peace of Christ"
And exhale

Inhale
"Peace of Christ"
And exhale

Now move into your chest, and your belly, places we hold a lot of anxiety and emotion. You can even kind of hold yourself as you pray.

Inhale
"Peace of Christ"
And exhale

Inhale
"Peace of Christ"
And exhale

I feel like this one needs a third round…

Inhale

"Peace of Christ"

And exhale

Now your legs, your muscles there, your bones, whether they're holding you up right now or not, they're a part of you.

Inhale

"Peace of Christ"

And exhale

Inhale

"Peace of Christ" (into every part of you)

And exhale

Lastly, let's pray it right down into our feet, into that place where your body touches the earth. Feel that right now. And then let's pray.

Inhale

"Peace of Christ" (holding you up)

And exhale

Inhale

"Peace of Christ" (everywhere you go)

And exhale

Keep going for a couple more seconds on your own, see if you notice anywhere else in your body that is holding tension instead of holding the peace Christ.

Conclude with prayer.