

R12.2 August 2023 Blog Peace Be With You

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”
(The words of Jesus from John 14:27)

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”
(Philippians 4:8-9)¹

When I was growing up, our family would periodically attend Westminster Presbyterian Church in Nashville, Tennessee when visiting my grandparents. Unlike the church we attended back home, the congregation had a tradition of extending the peace of Christ to one another at the beginning of the service. We would turn to greet the people near us in the pews saying, “Peace be with you” and responding with “and also with you.” When I was younger, this tradition held little biblical significance for me, and although I enjoyed connecting and being welcomed by new faces, I viewed it simply as a friendly greeting. While studying God’s Word, I recently reconsidered the meaning behind this nostalgic tradition, and have since gained a newfound appreciation that brought biblical significance to these words.

What does scripture tell us about true peace, and what does it reveal about its source? How does this peace differ from the worldly/temporal peace much of our society strives for?

Peace is commonly defined as freedom from disturbance, or tranquility. The world can only offer us temporal peace when circumstances allow for temporary feelings of tranquility. We know, however, that life is inherently unpredictable and chaotic. Jesus confirms this by telling us, “I have told you these things, so that in me

¹ All scripture references in this blog are NIV unless otherwise noted

you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”² Why then do so many people cling to a false hope of temporal peace when the Lord promises eternal peace through Him? Without Christ, the pursuit of true peace is a futile effort. Thankfully, He has provided another way.

In a broken world of social, political, and spiritual turmoil, what do we need to have peace? Without the Lord, we are hopeless, lost, and depraved; our sin nature taking full control of our thoughts and actions. True eternal peace is only available through Him. As Paul wrote, “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”³ By accepting Christ as our Savior, following, and obeying Him, and devoting ourselves to His cause faithfully; we have eternal peace available through our spiritual rebirth in Him. Just as Christ told His disciples soon after His resurrection, “Peace be with you!”⁴, may we remember Him suffering as our substitute to make peace with the Father for our sins every time we repeat these words to others. In Christ, we are offered peace with God since we “who once were far away”⁵ have now been reconciled to God through Jesus’ death and resurrection. Only through His act of propitiation, may we have peace with God - and as believers, have the Holy Spirit reside within us.

His good news of eternal peace does not promise perpetual harmony. We must realize, with certainty, that we will face trials and tribulations. This is why putting our hope in the promise of eternal peace through Christ is imperative, unlike the false, failing hope many attempt to put in worldly peace. The Lord knows we will come to face these difficult times, but scripture reminds us, “do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”⁶ Having this constant awareness that the

² John 16:33

³ Romans 5:1

⁴ John 20:19

⁵ Ephesians 2:13

⁶ Philippians 4:6-7 (ESV)

Holy Spirit dwells within us, we can have peace no matter how challenging the situation presenting itself appears. For “If God is for us, who can be against us”⁷. May we apply this knowledge through obeying and serving the Lord joyfully, dedicating ourselves to Him in all our actions, thoughts, and prayers, and sharing the good news of the peace of Christ with all.

Applications:

1. Do you thank the Lord frequently for the eternal peace He purchased for you?
2. Do you harness this peace in your daily life, or do you allow frustration to take hold?
3. Do you ask the Lord for opportunities and courage to share this good news with others?
 - a. Are you burdened for the unsaved in your sphere?
4. Does your obedience and service to the Lord exemplify the peace He has shown you?
5. Are you living “of” the world, feeling stressed and anxious rather than trusting the Lord to equip you to live out the fruit of the Spirit (see Galatians 5:22-23). If so, what steps will you take to change?

⁷ Romans 8:31