

**Ephesians 2: 14-18; “He Himself is our Peace”, Message # 16 in a series entitled –
“The Exceeding Greatness of His Power”, A Bible Study prepared
by Pastor Paul Rendall on October 16th, 2019,
for those gathered at his home.**

The phrase in verse 14, “For He Himself is our peace”, is very comforting to the Christian. It is not just that we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ and are justified by His grace. That is a very great and wonderful blessing which we glory in. But these words of our text mean much more than that. And this is what we want to think about together tonight. We want to think 1st of all – About how the Lord Jesus is our personal peace by what He has done for us in bringing us to God. 2nd – About how He has broken down the middle wall of separation between Jew and Gentile and reconciled us both to God in one body. And 3rd –About how He came and preached peace and established our access to the Father. I believe that it will be good for us to linger over each of these words and phrases so that we can profit from them in terms of the way that we live our lives to God, and the way that we see our brethren; that is, those Jews who have trusted in Christ for their salvation. This matter was not only important in Paul’s day; it is important in ours.

1st – Let us think together about how the Lord Jesus is our personal peace by what He has done for us in bringing us to God. (verse 14)

“For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity...” Now we need to back up to verse 13 once again in order to correctly understand verse 14. It says – “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” Who are those who were once far off, and who now have been brought near? That’s right; it is us Gentiles who were afar off. Who and what were we afar off from? Yes, that right, we were afar off from God and alienated from Him. That was the worst thing of all for us, spiritually speaking. But we were also aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; that is, we were not a part of the one people of God whom God had chosen to be His own particular people. What Paul is saying is, that now, in Christ Jesus, we Gentiles who were spiritually once afar off, from both God and the people of God, have now been brought near to Him, by the blood of Christ.

So, this is what we can begin with in terms of Christ Himself being our peace. What Christ has done, by His death on the cross, has been to most certainly accomplish redemption and reconciliation for every one of the elect people of God. The truth is, that all elect Jews and all elect Gentiles are all saved in the same way; by Christ’s dying for them upon the cross. This what has brought them real peace with God; that is, Christ Himself becoming the Instrument of their having coming to have peace with God, by His ending the warfare that existed between them and God; they being at enmity with each other.

Both Jews and Gentiles who believe in Christ, they all have peace with God, through Christ’s finished work of redemption being applied to them, not in some general sense, and not in some exclusive national sense, but in a very particular individual sense. He Himself has become our peace. We all, personally and individually, were at enmity with God. We were hostile to the idea that God should rule over us, and command us to live our lives unto Him, rather than unto ourselves. And thus God’s wrath was against us. But look with me over at 2nd Corinthians chapter 5 and verses 14-21.

“For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.” “Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh.” “Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus

no longer.” “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new.” “Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.” “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.” “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

So the love of Christ controls us; it constrains us, and it compels us, to share the gospel with all kinds of people and all nations of people. Why? Because Christ died for all. Does this mean that Christ died in a general sense for all men? No, because then the next phrase would not make any sense at all; that is, the phrase – “Then all died.” In what sense did the “all” for whom Christ died, die? They died to sin and they died to self. They have really and actually spiritually died to the whole idea of living for themselves rather than God. Christ died for them in particular, so that those of the elect who are presently living upon this earth, should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

I would say, that this, in a very real sense, is what it means for Christ Himself to be our peace. He is our peace in the sense that we have been brought near to Him through His blood, and thereby we are not in that agitated alienated state of agitation of spirit because we do not know God or the meaning of life. When we are in an unbelieving state, we have no rest, we have no peace. But we are like the troubled sea, it says in Isaiah 57: 20. We cannot rest, and the waters of our heart cast up mire and dirt. “There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked.” But when we have Christ, when we believe the gospel and receive Christ by faith, to be our Savior and Lord, we have all things which are good and satisfying, and we have them in an eternally good and everlasting sense. We have tasted and we have experientially found the Lord to be good. And now we have peace with God, and we have peace coming to us from God, coming to our heart every day. In Isaiah 57: 19 it says – “I create the fruit of the lips: Peace, peace to him who is far off and to him who is near, says the Lord, and I will heal him.”

Paul goes on then to say in 2nd Corinthians 5: 16– “Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh.” That is, we no longer need to acknowledge all the fleshly distinctions of what it meant to be one of the people of God back in Old Testament times; the distinctions of Jew and Gentile as they once were in the Old Testament times of the Old Covenant. When we realize what Christ has done, in making them both one, and His having broken down the middle wall of separation between them as peoples either knowing God or not knowing God; truly it brings us great peace. All of the elect, Jew and Gentile, since Christ came and did His blessed work of redemption, are now privileged with grace and favor from God if they believe in Jesus Christ. Together they make up the people of God in the New Testament New Covenant Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“If anyone is in Christ, he a new creation; the old things have passed away, behold all things are new.” “All of these things are of God,” Paul says, “who has reconciled us to Himself”. It is a glorious thing to realize that God has given both Jewish and Gentile men and women, the ministry of reconciliation; that is, those of us who know Him. God was in Christ, reconciling the world. Once again, this means God’s reconciling elect Jews and Gentiles, to Himself, through Christ, means His not imputing their trespasses to them. Notice the particularity of redemption once again. This is what establishes real peace. This is what brings peace between God and men; the gospel of the finished work of Christ which we believe in, and then God very definitely applies all the blessings of salvation to us, and they are established to us, by and through Christ’s Spirit. It is because of Christ’s life, His death, and His resurrection that we have peace, and that peace with God is found in Him. He Himself is our peace.

2nd – We want to think together about how Christ has broken down the middle wall of separation between Jew and Gentile and reconciled us both to God in one body.

Verses 14-16 – “For He Himself is our peace who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.” Now, we have to try to open up the meaning of this phrase, “the middle wall of separation”. The phrase has to do with the separateness of Israel from the other nations of the world and peoples of the world, the Gentiles.

You will remember that in the Old Testament temple, there was a wall of partition by which the court of the Gentiles was separated from that of the Jews at all times, during the times of their worship and observance of their ceremonial ordinances. The Gentiles could not come into the temple; only into the outer courtyard, and even the Jews themselves could not come into the Holy of Holies in the temple. Paul is saying here that Christ has broken down this barrier, both literally and spiritually by His death, and in doing so, has made both into one new people. Let’s look at a few verses that will tie Jews and Gentiles together in relation to the death of Christ. Hebrews 9: 1-3 – “Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary.” “For a tabernacle was prepared: the first part in which there was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary; and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All.”

Verses 6-8 – “Now when things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services.” “But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people’s sins committed in ignorance; the Holy Spirit indicating this, the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing.” Now as we read this, we need to understand that these things were given in this typical way under the Old Covenant, to Israel, so that they might better understand their need of someone to enter the Holy of Holies, into heaven itself, having made atonement for the sins of all the people. Was this atonement that would be made by Christ, for the Jews only?

Well let’s read further, from verses 11-15. “But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is not of this creation.” “Not with the blood of bulls and goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.” “For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” “And for this reason He is the Mediator of the New Covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgression under the first covenant, that those who called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.”

Are those called under the New Covenant from the Jews only? No, obviously not. There were vast multitudes of people that have been, and yet will be, called from among the Gentiles as well. That is why it does not say here that those who are called from among the Jews, only, may inherit eternal life. It simply says those who are called. How did Jesus break down the barrier between Jew and Gentile making them into one new man in the Church? He did so by “abolishing in His flesh the enmity, the law of commandments contained in ordinances. You remember that it was the high priest’s once a year going beyond the 2nd veil in the tabernacle and the temple, to present the blood of bulls and goats, that made an atonement for the sins of the people? Well, this was all instruction given by God to be typical of what Christ would come to do for all those who would be called of God; both Jew and Gentile.

Turn with me over to Mark chapter 15, verses 37-39 and you will see an immediate indication of this following Jesus' death on the cross. "And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last." "Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom." "So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said, "Truly this Man was the Son of God!" Now, why do you think that these things are placed so closely together in this way in the narrative; Jesus' death and the veil of the temple being torn in two, and this centurion saying, truly this was the Son of God? The Centurion was not in the temple. He was standing by the cross. But this was written in this way because we are supposed to make the connection in our minds, of seeing who Christ's death was for. His death was for both Jews and Gentiles so that access to God would be opened like a door. The Lord Jesus was, and is, that door. But the centurion is standing there saying that Jesus was the Son of God, representative of Gentiles coming into the Church.

Because Jesus died and rose again, those believing in Jesus would become one living spiritual body of believers in Christ. When Christ died we know that that veil in the temple being torn in two, from top to bottom. And this was showing that Christ had fulfilled all of the righteous requirements of both the moral and the ceremonial law. All believers, Jew and Gentile, could now enter into spiritual fellowship with God and each other, on an equal footing, through our Lord Jesus Christ. He fulfilled the moral law by keeping all the righteous requirements of it so that we might be justified, and so that we might ourselves then be able to learn to keep the commandments of God to His glory, by His life being in our life by His Spirit. He fulfilled the ceremonial law so that it would be abolished, and because of this, we as Jews and Gentiles would be able to love one another.

Turn with me over to Colossians 2: 13 and 14. It says here – "And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us." "And he has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross." The Jewish aspect of it was abolished, but the moral aspect of it was fulfilled in Christ so that we might be justified, and also then, that we might be able to learn to keep God's law knowing that we have peace within our heart, knowing that it's Christ who has satisfied God's justice. "Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 5: 1) So Christ was, through His dying on the cross, offering Himself up as a sacrifice to God for the sins of both elect Jews and elect Gentiles, and in doing so, He breaking down the barrier between Jew and Gentile in doing so. In dying on the cross, having perfectly fulfilled the Mosaic law, both in its moral requirements and ceremonial requirements, the ceremonial would be abolished and the moral law would be established, to both believing Jews and Gentiles. Not as a legal requirement but out of love, that we would keep His commandments.

The Lord Jesus knew that in laying down His life, He would abolish in His flesh the enmity. The difference between Jews and Gentiles was the Jews having the Mosaic law. Because of this, the Jews oftentimes looked down upon and even hated the Gentiles. And the Gentiles because they did not have the law, they often did not care for the Jews because they thought that the Jews were self-righteous in relation to the way that they kept God's law. So there was, and there still is in many places among unbelievers, an enmity that exists between them. In Christ's death, however, this enmity is taken away and replaced with love and peace. He Himself is our peace; that is, by His power He establishes all the good work of applying the blessings and benefits of redemption to all of His people. He by His work at the cross has established one new spiritual man from what was two before. He laid the foundation of His Church, and He is building upon it by saving Jews and Gentiles and adding them to His spiritual building, the Church, and thereby, He also establishes peace between them, for both groups.

3rd – We want to think about how Christ came and preached peace and established our access to the Father.

“And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.” “For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.” Now, when it says that Christ came and preached peace to those who were afar off and those who were near, it does not mean that He came bodily and did this. No, when He came in the flesh He came only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He only came to the Jews who were near to Him. Rather, we are to understand these words of His coming by His Spirit in the ministry of the apostles; those whom He gave the Great Commission to, after He had made peace and reconciliation by the blood of His cross. Matthew 28: 18-20 – “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” This is how Christ has come and preached peace to those who are near (that is the Jews) and those who are far away (that is the Gentiles). He has done so throughout all of this Church age to this very day, and He will continue to do so until He returns again to bring this age to a close.

It is through Christ that we both (Jews and Gentiles) have our access by one Holy Spirit to the Father. We have a Trinitarian faith. I like what Charles Simeon says in his sermonic commentary at this point. He says – “What an astonishing view does this give us of the Divine nature!” “Here we see manifestly the existence of three Persons in the Godhead.” “Here we see the Father, to whom we are to draw nigh, together with the Son, through whom, and the Spirit by whom, we are to approach Him.” “These are evidently distinct, though subsisting in one undivided essence.” “Moreover the offices of the Three Persons in the Trinity are so appropriate, that we cannot speak of them otherwise than they are here declared: we cannot say, that through the Spirit, and by the Father, we have access to Christ; or that through the Father, and by Christ we have access to the Spirit: this would be to confound what the Scripture keeps perfectly distinct.”

He says further – “The Father is the original Fountain of the Deity: Christ is the Mediator, through whom we approach Him: and the Spirit is the Agent, by whom we are enabled to approach Him.” “That each of these Divine Persons is God, is as plainly revealed, as that there is one God.” “It is not for us to unravel this mystery; but with humility and gratitude to adore that God, who has so mysteriously revealed His nature to us.” Brethren, are you not glad that we both, Jews and Gentiles, have one access to the Father through Christ, and by the Spirit. It brings us peace in ourselves and between ourselves, and the joy of knowing that in Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for we are all one in Christ Jesus. We are all heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3: 28 and 29)