

Peace with God

Therefore being justified by faith, we have **peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:1

SUMMARY

This message is about making peace with God. Romans 1-4 shows the route to that peace. Those Scriptures declare we have a judicial conflict with God because we have broken God's standards. Our punishment is death, but Jesus Christ, who has never broken God's standards and deserves no death, died in our place. People who believe these truths can be justified by faith and have peace with God.

Peace with God, then, is the issue. Have you made your peace with God?

True religion is often represented as making peace with God. See: "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ" (Acts 10:36) and again "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace." (Romans 10:15)

Peace can be defined in negative or positive terms. Negatively, we can call it a cessation of conflict. Positively we can call it the unfathomably deep, incommunicably wonderful calm that accompanies right standing and vital contact with the living God.

The primary focus of our text today is on that first kind of peace: the cessation of conflict. The laying down of arms. The end of war. Our text describes not the peace OF God, but peace WITH God.

Even on the human level this sort of peace, the cessation of conflict, seems rarely achieved. Look about you and scan the family landscape, the political landscape, the international landscape. As for that last category, perhaps you've heard the report of London's Society of International Law, that during the last 4,000 years there have been only 268 years of peace, and in the last 3 centuries there have been 286 wars on the continent of Europe alone.

What is common on the human vs. human level is *universal* on the human vs. God level. And while it is good to resolve human-human conflict, it is *essential* to resolve human-God conflict.

Most of this message will focus on convincing people that we indeed have this conflict with God. The question is: do we see that we have been or still are at war with God?

The truth is that the majority of humanity may find this charge preposterous! They may think, "I, at war with God! Ludicrous! I have no beef with Him! Surely He has none with me!"

We saw an illustration of such delusion in this week's news: the chairman of a very large company on the west coast came out with a statement of his sinful lifestyle and called it "among the greatest gifts God has given me." He was wrong at every point: not great, but degrading; not gift, but sin; not from God, but the devil. Here is a man at war with God.

We saw another illustration this week with Roman church leadership, who seem to declare what seems right in their eyes without consulting God's Word. The pope's latest teaching in the news confirmed the theory of evolution: for we must not see God as "some magician with a magic wand"!

Friends, like Nabal, who sobered up and saw he was at enmity with a warrior, or like Saul, who heard a voice and knew he was fighting the Lord, we too must awake to the true state of matters. Who will fix a problem before he concedes he has one? Who will pursue peace who does not acknowledge conflict? We must see we are at war with God, and then we must make peace.

I. What the Scriptures Say

A. “The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” (Romans 8:7)

1. Definition of enmity – being an enemy; the opposite of friendship; ill will; malevolence. It differs from mere displeasure by being a fixed and rooted hatred.
2. Examples of enmity: Catholics and protestants in Ireland; Hutu and Tutsi tribes in Rwanda; Sunni and Shiite Muslims in Iraq; Muslims and Jews in the Mid-East.
3. In Romans 8:7, “enmity” is a noun, not even an adjective. This is a stronger expression, the difference between saying a man is adulterous vs. saying a man IS adultery.
4. This enmity is “against God,” not a concept of God, not a deed of God. The unregenerated mind is filled with hatred and malevolence against God Himself.
5. This enmity is raging; it is fixed and unalterable. There is no use of peace talks. No gifts in secret will appease. There will be no simmering down in time.
6. No, here is an implacable rage. See the mysterious yet historic certainty of it in Psalm 2:1-3. See it still there at the end of the world in Revelations 16:10-11.
7. See it in carnal man's treatment of God when He visited earth: “For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on.” (Luke 18:32)

B. “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” (James 4:4)

1. Why is “mere” friendship with one entity ENMITY with the other? What is going on here?
2. Here's the answer: The actual object of all sin is *God*. The command from Satan is the same that the Assyrians had from their king: “Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel.” (I Kings 22:31)
3. There lies the secret of all friendship with the enemy of God.
4. Sin is not opposing any command from heaven. It is always opposing God in heaven.
 - a. Why else would David say, “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight” (Psalm 51:4)?
 - b. See also Hebrews 4:13 – “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”
 - c. The message of men’s hearts and lives to God is “[YOU] Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways” (Job 21:14)
 - d. Sin is an assertion of self-supremacy and self-sufficiency. Both of those assertions are direct assaults against the Person of God Himself.
 - e. See Galatians 5:17 – “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other.”

II. What the Law Teaches

The proposition that all sin is war against God can be illustrated by the second half of the Ten Commandments. This set of laws appears to legislate behavior among men but ultimately, as all laws, has to do with man's relationship with God.

A. Thou shalt not kill.

1. Any censorial spirit against people is a reaction against the Maker, for in the image of God made He man – Genesis 9:6.
2. See Proverbs 17:5 – “Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker.”
3. See John 15:18 – “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.”

B. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

1. When we commit any sexual sin in thought or deed we may be saying against God:
 - a. God's design for habitation is unjust and unrealistic.
 - b. God has failed to provide sufficient “legal” relief.
 - c. God has not allowed for when love has faded.
 - d. God does not see or does not exist.
2. See how John the Baptist charges Herod with breaking God's law and hence offending God Himself when he married his brother's wife – Mark 6:18

C. Thou shalt not steal.

1. What does stealing say against God but such accusations as:
 - a. God is not alert enough to see what I am doing.
 - b. God is not a requiring Judge.
 - c. God is not a sufficient Provider, so I need to steal.
 - d. God does not merit all credit, so I will take some of it to myself.

D. Thou shalt not bear false witness.

1. This Command includes not only blatant lying but any misrepresenting of God, implying ...
 - a. God is not who He said He is, or
 - b. It's not important to reflect what is true about Him, or
 - c. God will not judge our aligning with the father of all lies, who is the enemy of God.

