

Jan 1, 2022

# Christian Peace

Its Ground, Root, Flower and Fruit

JIM BEALE

FREE GRACE MISSIONARY BIBLE CHURCH | Upper Darby, PA

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23 KJV)

## 1. Introduction

### a. Peace defined

#### i. Negatively, as absence of adversity, conflict and contention

1. This is something that we all long for, at least from time to time. We take vacations to get away from the rat race, to step back from the daily grind. We seek out places where we can have some peace and quiet.
2. Is this removal of all adversity, conflict and contention the true idea of peace?
  - a. Have you ever been on a vacation which seemed great at first but then boredom set in and you were actually waiting to go home? Tranquility may bring a sense of peace for a short time, but then perhaps boredom.
  - b. Boredom is contrary to peace because it drives one to restless action. Augustine wrote, "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."
    - i. Why?
    - ii. He is all-sufficient!
  - c. It shows that true peace is more than just a removal of adversity and conflict. We need more than that to be at peace.

#### ii. Positively, as the sum of all good. Consider the Hebrew word **שָׁלוֹם** and the richness of the variety of its usage and meaning. SHALOM is a comprehensive concept, not merely the absence of the negative but the full richness of the positive. "We looked for peace," says the prophet Jeremiah, "but no good came" (Jer. 8:15).

1. safety, soundness of body and soul. In the time of Jacob, after his brothers came down to Egypt, Joseph asked them of their welfare, he asked how was their shalom. And likewise, when he asked, "is your father well?", it reads, how is the peace of your father? (Gen 43:27).
  - a. As we all can attest, some dear brothers, can say that pain is the indication of trouble, or often the trouble itself. So, even if we have the absence of external strife, yet have pain in the body, then our all-inclusive peace is marred.
2. strength – The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace. (Psalm 29:11)
3. wholeness, completeness – in Jer 13:19 shalom is used to mean "wholly", as in all of the people, the complete number.
4. peace with God – always expressed in terms of the covenant. Phinehas the son of Eleazar in Numbers 25:11-12 was a type of Christ and it says, "Behold, I give to him My covenant of peace." This is the covenant of peace with God, of friendship with God.
5. peace with other human beings – peace from war, etc.

6. the peace of the Messianic reign – the child born of the virgin is the Prince of Peace and of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end (Isaiah 9:7)
7. contentment – the rare jewel of Christian contentment is an aspect of Christian peace. It is by the grace of God which gives us such an abundance of inward satisfaction in Christ that we are enabled to rejoice in whatever outward circumstances we find ourselves in the will of God.

b. Christian peace

i. Objective: peace with God

1. There is no true subjective peace which is not grounded on the objective peace with God.
2. And, by nature men are not at peace with God. Men seek out many inventions to pacify their consciences. Religion, psychology, drugs and alcohol, etc. are all used to mollify a troubled conscience.
  - a. Isaiah 57:20-21 KJV — But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.
3. There is no objective peace with God apart from the Mediator
  - a. Men can only be reconciled with the Father through union with the Son, by grace through faith. “For God, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by Christ to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (Col 1:20).
  - b. Men cannot be reconciled with the Father in any other way, except through union with the Son, by grace alone through faith alone. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12 KJV). No man comes to the Father except through Christ.

ii. Subjective & internal – peace with conscience

1. Our experience of the sufficiency of the gospel offer to take away all our guilt and make us accepted by God is a necessary belief, the the blood of Christ washes us from all sin. Only through the triple agency and efficacy of the water of the Word, the shed blood of Christ, and the power of the Spirit, can the conscience be pacified.
2. and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7)

iii. Subjective & external – peace with fellow men

1. Those who are at peace with God and at peace with their own conscience will tend to be at peace with their fellow men. The violating of conscience is worse than the pain and agony of any hurt or violence done to the believer.

- a. as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them (Gal 6:16)
      - b. Great peace have those who love Your law, And nothing causes them to stumble. (Psalm 119:165)
    - 2.
  - c. God's peace
    - i. God's peace in Himself
      - 1. God dwells in eternal blessedness
      - 2. Perfect harmony in the Godhead
      - 3. Perfect love, joy and peace
    - ii. God's peace in the believer
      - 1. Starts in seed form
      - 2. Advances through adversity
      - 3. Triumphs through tribulation
2. Peace with God – the root of peace
- a. By nature, we are enmity against God
    - i. The enmity is not superficial
      - 1. properties can be accidental or essential
        - a. accidental properties might be otherwise
          - i. a circle might be big or small, colored red or blue or partly red, partly blue
          - ii. a triangle might have 3 equal sides or 3 unequal sides
        - b. essential properties cannot be otherwise
          - i. a circle must be round
          - ii. a triangle must have three sides
      - ii. The natural man's enmity against God is essential
        - 1. The prophet Jeremiah says so: Can the leopard change his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil (Jer 13:23)
        - 2. Jesus argued that "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" and "the flesh profits nothing."
        - 3. Likewise, Paul argued that the mind of the flesh is enmity against God and cannot be otherwise.
        - 4. The controlling, dominant quality of the natural man is opposition to the God of the Bible. Open warfare is carried out against God at the deepest levels of the soul though, amazingly, at more superficial levels there can be seemingly sincere displays of religiosity.
    - ii. The natural man's enmity against God is essential
      - 1. The prophet Jeremiah says so: Can the leopard change his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil (Jer 13:23)
      - 2. Jesus argued that "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" and "the flesh profits nothing."
      - 3. Likewise, Paul argued that the mind of the flesh is enmity against God and cannot be otherwise.
      - 4. The controlling, dominant quality of the natural man is opposition to the God of the Bible. Open warfare is carried out against God at the deepest levels of the soul though, amazingly, at more superficial levels there can be seemingly sincere displays of religiosity.
  - b. By nature, God is enmity against all sin
    - i. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men (Rom 1:18)
    - ii. For thou [art] not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. (Psalm 5:4 KJV)
    - iii. God is angry with the wicked every day. (Psalm 7:11)
  - c. The creature is bound in covenant relation to God

- i. Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by [that] man whom he hath ordained; [whereof] he hath given assurance unto all [men], in that he hath raised him from the dead. (Acts 17:31 KJV)
    - ii. 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. (Hebrews 4:13 KJV)
    - iii. God will by no means clear the guilty (Ex 34:7). The LORD will not at all acquit the wicked (Nahum 1:3).
  - d. Peace with God requires reconciliation on God's terms
    - i. Reconciliation is carried out in justification and adoption
      - 1. Justification is our being accepted by God as perfectly righteous because of the righteousness of Christ only
      - 2. Adoption is the acceptance of our persons in the Beloved by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God.
    - ii. Justification and adoption are outside our experience. We do not experience them because they are forensic or legal. They are objective and take place outside ourselves, in the court of God. So, our situation is that the peace which grounds our experience of peace is not a matter of our experience.
      - 1. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 5:1)
      - 2. We must know whom we have believed, and we must be persuaded that He is able to keep what we have committed to Him against that day (2 Tim 1:12)
  - e. Peace with God is the foundation of our experience of peace
    - i. Reconciliation presupposes union with Christ because we are justified and adopted only in personal union with Him.
    - ii. Union with Christ presupposes application of the blood of Christ to the heart
    - iii. The application of the blood of Christ is by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrument of faith alone. The connection between the objective work and the subjective work is the seemingly slender reed of faith. But it is not our faith nor the strength of our faith but the object of our faith, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is able to keep us against all opposition.
- 3. Subjective & internal: Peace with Conscience
  - a. The conscience is God's witness in the soul of man
    - i. The great Puritan writer, Gurnall wrote, If a friend should come to a criminal on his way to the gallows, put a sweet smelling rose into his hands, and bid him 'be of good cheer, smell on that,' alas! this would bring little joy with it to the poor man's heart, who sees the place of execution before him. But if someone comes from the prince with a pardon, which he puts into his hand, and bids him be of good cheer; this, and this only, will reach the poor man's heart, and overrun it with a sudden ravishment of joy. Truly, anything short of pardoning mercy is as

useless to a troubled conscience towards any relieving or pacifying of it, as that rose in a doomed prisoner's hand would be.

- ii. Conscience demands as much to satisfy itself as God does to satisfy himself for the wrongs the creatures have done him. Nothing can quiet the conscience of its accusations but that which fully satisfies the justice of God.
  - iii. Conscience is God's sergeant he employs to arrest the sinner. Now the sergeant has no power to release his prisoner upon any private agreement between him and the prisoner, but he only listens to whether the debt be fully paid, or the creditor be fully satisfied; then, and not till then, does he discharge his prisoner.
- b. True inner peace comes by believing the gospel
- i. Conscience is a lock that is hard to turn; though the key fit it yet, if this key be in a weak hand that has not the strength to turn it in the lock—as it is whenever a mere creature holds it—conscience will not open; its doubts and fears will not be resolved. No, this must be the work of the Spirit, or else it will never be done.
  - ii. True cleansing of conscience must be the work of the Holy Spirit in applying the resurrected Christ to the soul, otherwise the conscience will not be fully pacified. What else but the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, is able to purge our consciences from their dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:14 KJV)
  - iii. By faith we receive forgiveness of sins and being justified by faith we have objective peace with God. And so, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience (Heb 10:22).
  - iv. Peace of conscience is the discharge under God's hand that the debt due to divine justice is fully paid. How precious then is a cleansed conscience?! What a great work had to be performed at such a high price to cleanse the conscience!
- c. Have you experienced peace of conscience?
- i. Before the conscience can be pacified, it must be troubled. The consciences of some are as seared with a hot iron and so numb to the sin and equally numb to the healing balm.
  - ii. Psalm 51 presents the troubled conscience of David after being confronted by Nathan. First, David hid his sin and wrote, “when I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long” (Psalm 32:3) but when he acknowledged his guilt the burden of his conscience was cleansed by the blood of Christ. He believes that he would be washed thoroughly from his iniquity, Ps 51:3.
4. Subjective & external: Peace with our Fellow Men
- a. Peace flows from righteousness.
    - i. Love does no harm
    - ii. love suffers long and is kind
    - iii. Peaceable fruit of righteousness
  - b. Peace of brothers
    - i. Where love is strongest, there peace reigns.

- ii. The gospel knits the hearts of men together, as it propounds powerful arguments for peace and unity; and indeed such as are found nowhere else. It hath cords of love to draw and bind souls together that were never weaved in nature's loom: such as we may run through all the topics of morality, and meet with [in] none of them, being all supernatural and of divine revelation, Eph. 4:3. The apostle exhorts them 'to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.'
  - c. Peace of persecution
    - i. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but [rather] give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance [is] mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. (Romans 12:18-20 KJV)
    - ii. being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: (1 Cor 4:12) Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. (1 Peter 3:9 KJV)
- 5. The Peace of the God-man, Jesus Christ
  - a. The peace of Christ is merited
    - i. It is the peace of the conqueror because He overcame the world.
      1. "I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev 3:21).
      2. [And] having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. (Colossians 2:15 KJV)
      3. His Father's throne is "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all [things] under his feet (Ephesians 1:21-22 KJV)
    - ii. It is the Divine peace, which is infinite and beyond comprehension
      1. How can we comprehend the perfect peace of the Triune God? The Father, Son and Holy Spirit enjoy intimate communion far above any strife or contention.
    - iii. Christ, in His humanity, is now exalted above the heavens and is far above all strife and contention, being Himself the One who upholds all things. The Potter forms the clay as He wills and is ever at peace in Himself as He forms one vessel for honor and another for dishonor. It is He who works all things according to the counsel of His own will.
  - b. The peace of Christ is vicarious, propitiatory peace
    - i. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. (Romans 6:10 KJV)
    - ii. having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself (Col 1:20)
  - c. There is perfect peace between the Priest and the King on the throne. The One who is the Conquering King upon His Father's throne, is also "a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zec 6:13).
- 6. Fruit of Peace

- a. The seed of peace is the gospel of peace implanted in the heart
  - i. Initiated by an operation behind enemy lines (2 Cor 4:4,6)
  - ii. Birthed into immediate conflict (Rom 7:14)
  - iii. Brought to perfection through adversity
    - 1. Chastening
      - a. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. (Hebrews 12:11)
    - 2. Persecution and tribulation
      - a. We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22)
      - b. "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)
- b. Analogy
  - i. The Israelites passed 40 years in the wilderness before God brought them into the Promised Land. The people had been promised a good land, flowing with milk and honey, and given a vision of all-encompassing peace, in which every man would be able to sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree. The realization of the full dimensions of the peace was directly related to the land; not just cessation from war but the fullest provision to meet every need.
  - ii. Did they enter the land and then immediately declare peace? Did they speak peace to the inhabitants of the land? No, they were commanded not to do this. The Lord commanded them – "Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee:" (Exodus 34:12)
  - iii. The peace that was promised to them lay at the other end of a long and difficult war. It isn't until the reign of King Solomon, more than 400 years after the entrance of the people into Canaan, that we read, Solomon "had peace on every side all around him. And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, each man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan as far as Beersheba, all the days of Solomon" (1 Kings 4:24-25). Solomon, whose name means peace, was a type of Christ and yet the kingdom and the nation did not last.
  - iv. What do we learn from their mistakes? James asks, "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). And so the Israelites failed to achieve peace until the time of King David because they continually made peace with the nations around them.
  - v. **Judges 10:10-16 KJV** – And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim. And the LORD said unto the children of Israel, [Did] not [I deliver you] from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines? The Zidonians also, and the Amalekites, and the



Maonites, did oppress you; and ye cried to me, and I delivered you out of their hand. Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more. Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation. And the children of Israel said unto the LORD, We have sinned: do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day. And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the LORD: and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel. (Judges 10:10-16 KJV)

- vi. Now the point of all this is that the incorruptible seed of the gospel of peace is implanted within us, and it is Christ who is formed in us and is given dominion. It is written, “For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace” (Romans 6:14). The peace of the gospel is objective, in Christ’s perfect peace in which we participate, but the fruit of peace comes through war within us.
  1. Our war against remaining, indwelling sin within us is like the Israelites of old. How often do we find ourselves in bondage to some wordly ideology because we, like them, have made peace with the inhabitants of the land? Friendship with the world is enmity against God.
  2. And so we must grow up in all things into Him who is the head — Christ — so that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting (Eph 4:15,14)
  3. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare [are] not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; (2 Corinthians 10:3-5 KJV)
  4. Therefore, the production of the fruit of peace in the believer is like the conquest of the land from the time of Joshua until the time of Solomon. The Israelites experienced two kinds of peace during that time – the peace of victory (righteousness) and the peace of defeat (subjugation). The peace of subjugation comes by compromising with the world and thereby becoming an enemy of God. By grace, God made it painful so that they cried out to Him. And for us, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.
- vii. The Lord promises that having begun a work, He will see it to completion at the day of Christ Jesus.

## 7. Application

- a. If you have never experienced peace of conscience from the shed blood of Christ, then we should sit down and go carefully over the gospel from the beginning.

- i. The vast majority of people seem to live calmly under the mistaken belief that they are at peace with God. The mistake is both simple and deadly. We've all done it! One major error is to mistake common grace for special grace.
  - 1. Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? (Romans 2:4)
  - 2. The temporal blessings that God gives often go to those who are devoid of eternal blessing.
    - a. For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. (Psalm 73:3-4)
    - b. These goods make them think that God is at peace with them and so they feel at peace toward God, all the while enduring a guilty conscience.
    - c. Micah mentions those who chant "Peace" while they chew with their teeth, but who prepare war against Him who puts nothing into their mouths: (Micah 3:5)
- b. Be careful not to misinterpret God's goodness and longsuffering as condoning sin. Do not interpret God's common grace as being in His favor. God is good to all, that is His nature, but He is also holy.
- c. If you have never experience the war of the fruit of peace, or if that idea doesn't make sense, then we should sit down and go carefully over the gospel from the beginning.
- d. If your experience of peace of conscience is an on-again-off-again affair, remember that, there is a one-time forgiveness, but also a continuous fountain opened for daily or more often, cleansing of conscience. We live with the paradox of having to confess sins which we know were already forgiven once and for all. But this fountain is given to show the preciousness of a clear conscience.
  - i. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." (Psalm 103:12),
  - ii. "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).
- e. I will finish with the words of the hymn writer, Frances R. Havergal, whose hymn captures some of the mysteries of this peace which passes understanding – perfect, yet growing deeper all the way.

Like a river glorious is God's perfect peace,  
 over all victorious in its bright increase:  
 perfect, yet still flowing fuller every day;  
 perfect, yet still growing deeper all the way.

Refrain:  
 Trusting in the Father, hearts are fully blest,  
 finding, as he promised, perfect peace and rest.

Hidden in the hollow of his mighty hand,  
 where no harm can follow, in his strength we stand.

We may trust him fully all for us to do;  
those who trust him wholly find him wholly true.

May we have a deeper experience of peace in the year ahead. In the world we will have tribulation, but we have every reason to be of good cheer, because our precious Savior has overcome the world.

Now, may the LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. (Numbers 6:24-26 KJV)