

GALATIANS - SERMON 30
GALATIANS 5:22 — THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT - PEACE - εἰρήνη
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INTRODUCTION: Read Galatians 5:22-23

The concept of peace prevails through Scripture. The Word of God deals with the peace with God lost because of sin. The Bible also deals with peace regained and the terms upon which peace can be reinstated. The Scriptures also describe eternal peace. It would be expected that the man who believes on God would have some experience of peace. From verses 19 - 21 there is described the one who walks in the flesh and has no peace.

Isaiah 57:20-21

But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."

The reason why the ungodly have no peace is because sin destroyed peace in the first place. As long as there is sin there will be no peace. Sin and peace cannot co-exist. When sin is removed peace is regained. Only a righteous man can know true peace. Saved people have peace with God (having been justified by faith) and they have the peace of God which passes all understanding.

What is peace?

Negatively, peace is the absence of war. It is a state of freedom from conflict, with God, with self, and with one's fellow man.

Positively, peace is a state of harmony, friendliness, and goodwill towards God, self, and one's fellow man.

Peace is more than a truce. It is a positive reconciliation. It is achieved by;

- 1) resolving the source of the conflict (removal of sin)
- 2) by the establishment of a positive relationship (righteousness and truth - imputed)

In establishing peace God removes sin and establishes righteousness and truth. Peace is therefore the removal of enmity and the establishment of harmony.

OUTLINE:

- I THE CHRISTIAN IS ONE WHO HAS PEACE IN HIS INNER MAN
- II THE CHRISTIAN IS ONE WHO MAKES PEACE WITH HIS FELLOW MAN

I THE CHRISTIAN IS ONE WHO HAS PEACE IN HIS INNER MAN

The peace which is spoken of as a fruit of the Spirit, like all the fruit, is something of a personal subjective experience. These fruit are all things we either experience or do or experience and do. Love and joy are experienced. So it is with peace.

A First of all the Christian is the man who has peace with God.

Romans 5:1

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

Because of God's work of regeneration in saving us we are no longer at war with God. Our whole nature and disposition is changed from one of rebellion, enmity, and hatred towards God to submission, friendship, and love towards Him. The Christian knows that the thoughts of God towards him are ones of peace and not of evil.

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

God now looks upon on the Christian as a Father and not as a Judge. The Christian knows that there is not only no condemnation for him, but that there is a perfect love towards him that casts out all fear. As for himself he wants to please and serve God, he is filled with love and affection for God. The Christian is consumed with thankfulness and praise towards God. His sins are forgiven, his guilt removed, his fears abolished, he knows that he has been reconciled to God, and that he is loved with an everlasting love. This is peace with God. The indwelling Spirit gives to us that sense of peace by shedding the love of God abroad in our hearts, by giving us the assurance of adoption, and bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. This is the peace within the Christian.

B Secondly, the Christian also has peace with himself. The unsaved do not have this.

Isaiah 57:20-21

But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."

There is inward turmoil within the unsaved. The Christian, now at peace with God finds peace with his own conscience. A Christian does not defend or cover his sins, he confesses and repents of them. When there is a struggle with the conscience the Christian goes to Christ the fountain to find forgiveness and cleansing from all unrighteousness.

The Christian has peace within himself because his self-destructive ways are changed.

Proverbs 23:29-30

Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine, those who go in search of mixed wine.

Proverbs 17:22

A merry heart does good, like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones.

Proverbs 10:27

The fear of the LORD prolongs days, but the years of the wicked will be shortened.

Self-destructive ways are changed at conversion and pursuing the way of the Lord brings peace and life.

Proverbs 3:1-2

My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commands; for length of days and long life and peace they will add to you.

Proverbs 3:7-8

Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones.

Pursuing the godly life causes one to engage in a pattern of life that promotes physical health.

- C Thirdly, in his inner man the Christian has peace with his circumstances. Prior to salvation circumstances are not specifically ordered to one's benefit and blessing. Though the sun and rain fall upon the just and the unjust, God nevertheless orders all things to the good of the called. This produces peace.

Isaiah 26:3

You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.

Philippians 4:6-7

Be anxious for nothing, 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 minds through Christ Jesus.

Psalms 4:8

I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; for You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

David had great confidence in God even while surrounded by his enemies.

In Acts 12 Peter, under the sentence of execution, lays down and sleeps between the two soldiers. The angel has to awaken him to rescue him. Peter had such confidence in the Lord.

And so the Lord Jesus promises the Comforter to His people.

John 14:26-27

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

The Christian man has peace in his inner man with reference to God, himself, and his circumstances.

II THE CHRISTIAN IS ONE WHO MAKES PEACE WITH HIS FELLOW MAN

The peace which is a fruit of the Spirit is not only peace with God and with our inner man, but it is also peace with our fellow-man. The peace that characterizes the Christian is a peace in reference to other people as well.

Matthew 5:9

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

A Christian seeks to keep and make peace with others. He does not love conflict and strife. His motto is Paul's.

Romans 12:18

If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

The peace that the Christian seeks to make and keep with his fellow man is a biblical peace. A Christian realizes that the breach of peace is the result of sin. He recognizes the need to confront sin and resolve sin. Righteousness and truth must be restored if there is to be real peace with his fellow man. Just as inner peace came as a result of righteousness and truth established with God (forgiveness of sin and repentance), even so with fellow man, sin must be dealt with.

It is a misconception to think that a peacemaker is one who is never in conflict with others. There is a difference between a peacemaker and a compromiser. The former is commended, not the latter. A compromiser seeks peace at any price. Any conflict provokes them to give in and appease the source of the conflict. No attention is given to righteousness or truth. The peace they achieve fails and it only delays the conflict. Compromisers are not people of conviction. Permitting that which is wrong does not promote peace. Wrong and peace are mutually exclusive.

Peacemaking is not merely the absence of war. Such is only a truce. A truce is not peace because attitudes of hostility continue. They are not resolved. Peace involves the resolution of the root of the conflict. Sin is confronted, removed, and righteousness substituted for it. The peace of the Bible does not evade the issues. It is not cowardly silence. It is not peace at any price. The peace of the Bible faces the issues, calls for a change from sin to righteousness, and truly conquers the problem.

Peace achieved in a marriage, or church, or any union that does not uncover, address, and

overcome the sin that provoked the breach in the first place is not true peace and it will not last.

This is why world organizations (e.g. United Nations) cannot succeed for they do not uncover, address, and overcome the sin which is at the root of conflicts.

James 3:17

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

Psalm 85:10

Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed.

Isaiah 32:17

The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.

James 3:18

Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

If we are to be peacemakers, then we must bring forth the fruits of righteousness. Peace must not be sought at the expense of righteousness. Breaches in peace are not healed by time without the confrontation of the issue at the root.

Hebrews 12:14.

Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:

We see peace continually linked with righteousness or holiness.

Often peace can only be achieved by means of a conflict. We must fight sin. We must do battle with unrighteousness. Though the conflict is not pleasant, it is, nevertheless, the way to true peace.

The Lord Jesus Christ, the greatest of peacemakers, was surrounded constantly by conflict. It was because He confronted sin. Peace was pronounced by Him after repentance and cleansing (*go in peace*). Jesus Christ did not avoid conflict.

Biblical peacemakers are not quiet, easy-going people who do not want to make waves or deal with difficult issues. They do not lack an understanding of righteousness or justice. They are not compromisers or appeasers. Such is not Christian.

Conclusion:

This is the peace of the Christian. This is the peace the Christian pursues. Anything less falls short of this fruit of the Spirit.

Hymn # 505