

Pax Ecclesia

Acts 9:26-31

Introduction

Pax Ecclesia (Latin/Gk) = 'The peace of the church'

"brought him to the apostles"

"so he went in and out among them"

"So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied." v31

Reasons for the peace: circumstantial/providential

- 1. The Jews became wholly occupied with the bold audacity of the Roman emperor Caligula.**
- 2. The conversion of the chief persecutor of the church, Saul of Tarsus.**

Reasons for the peace: practical/deliberate

Jesus promised that *He* would build His Church.

1. The congregation itself is a spiritual building.

- 1) Is our local church being built up a spiritual house of God?
- 2) Is it rising, in maturity, unity, and purity?
- 3) Is it giving signs of its assembly as a habitation of God?

2. Each individual member is a spiritual building.

How am I progressing as an individual child of God?

- 1) Are the foundations deeply and soundly laid in the faith of Jesus Christ?
- 2) Is the internal framework rising day by day gradually, regularly, quietly, yet consciously, perceptibly, visibly?
- 3) Am I growing in grace? Am I more and more prevailing over sinful passions? Am I better able to do the work which He has given me?

The Church enjoys peace and progress in two things: walking in --

1) *The fear of the Lord.*

People sin because they have no fear of the Lord (Rom. 3:18).

All sin and wickedness flows from a disregard for God.

Jeremiah 5:23-24

Psalms 36:1-2

Ecclesiastes 8:12-13

“Moses said to the people, ‘Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin.’” Exodus 20:20

Here Moses makes a sharp distinction between being afraid of God and fearing Him.

Proper fear of God keeps us from sinning.

What does it mean to *walk in the fear of the Lord*?

1. A habitual and profound veneration for His character and institutions.
2. A humble and unreserved submission to His authority.
 - 1) Compel the will to submit to the authority of God's revealed will.
 - 2) Control and regulate the affections and emotions.
 - 3) Guide and govern the imagination and the thought life.
 - 4) It will create a watchful care to avoid everything which may grieve, displease, or provoke God.

2) *The comfort of the Holy Spirit.*

The fear of God brings the *comfort of the Holy Spirit.*

Isaiah 11:1-2

“The highest reaches of sanctification are realized only in the fear of God” (John Murray).

What does it mean to *walk in the comfort of the Holy Spirit*? Having --

1. **Peace of conscience, peace with God.**
2. **A strong and well-grounded hope arising at times to a full assurance.**
3. **A strong sense of the joys of heaven.**