

He Himself Is Our Peace

Ephesians 2:14-18

14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 15 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, 16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. 17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. 18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. (Ephesians 2:14-18)

If you were asked “What is the one thing that you most desire to have take place in your daily life”, “peace” might not be one of your first thoughts. More likely, “love” and other such needs and desires would come first to your mind. And perhaps that would be most appropriate.

But given a few moments to consider the question, “peace” would surely begin to rise close to the top, because “peace” and especially, the “lack” of peace has a way of influencing and even controlling all of the other matters that we involve ourselves within.

Here in this Book of Ephesians, God is directing us to both the cause and to the remedy for our “lack of peace”, the “cause” having its origins in the one thing that seems most often to be at the root of most all troubles, that being “sin”, sin between us and God and sinful conduct between us and other people.

Sin, by its nature, breeds quarrels and brings enmity between God and sinners, leaving us troubled and without peace. But as we have been studying here in this Book of Ephesians, Christ has come to bring the only true remedy that will help our troubled souls. He has come to take away that enmity and to reconcile us to Him and to God the Father.

Jesus came and took up our quarrel, and brought it to an end by the sacrifice of himself on the cross.

By the stripes He received as He was beaten, and then by His death on the cross, the Lord Jesus did all that it would take to remove the enmity that stood between us and God the Father. And immediately, from that first moment forward, peace began to take the place of enmity and all things began to be made well.

In His final words from the cross, "It is finished", Jesus announced the greatest of all "Jubilees". All debts were settled, all trespasses were forgiven and complete, eternal freedom was declared.

And to those who would step forward and receive His wonderful gift of grace, the quarrelling would end, both between God and us, and also between us and other people. All disagreements would be settled and miraculous changes would begin to prevail in each life, with miraculous "peace" replacing the troubled spirits within us.

May we pause for a moment and ask the simple question, "What is peace"? And what does the word "peace" mean to you personally, in your particular circumstance, and in your "condition of soul".

My bible dictionary defines "peace" using several different words . . . tranquility, harmony, security, well-being, and other such words.

And in these scriptures we see the word "peace" being used in varying ways, being mentioned over 400 times, from "inner peace" experienced privately within our own souls, to peace with God and peace with other people.

In whatever way we define it, "peace" is a very special condition of soul like no other. When "peace" is present within us, we have a prevailing comfort that governs all that we think, say and do. But again also, the opposite is true when there is an absence of peace. An absence of peace influences and governs our every thought, our behavior and our well-being.

I'm reminded of a secular song that speaks about "troubled waters". Those words "troubled waters" are a vivid picture to me and do describe well the difficulties that will often consume my soul when I am experiencing a "lack of peace".

I have only to hear mention of difficulties within the relationships of my beloved children, and the "waters" within my soul begin to stir and toss.

But dear friends, I need to always quickly remind myself, you need to quickly remind yourself, that God, our loving and ever-present Father really does know all the intimate needs of our souls. He knows our every thought and He knows that we have need for peace. And as we humble ourselves before Him, He immediately dispatches His Holy Spirit, His "comforter" to give us aid.

But again, no sooner are we comforted from one dilemma, we seem to quickly go out and find another. And the world, the flesh and the devil are quick to accommodate our propensity. They generously provide "troubled waters" all around us.

Today, in our world, we see “wars and rumors of wars”, our beloved sons and daughters dying in Afghanistan. And in just the last few days, Russian has begun to take over Ukraine.

In the skies of Southeast Asia, we see the mysterious disappearance of a whole plane load of people, their lives and the lives of their families on the ground being cast emotionally and perhaps even literally, into a sea of “troubled waters”.

Here in America, we have a government full of national leaders who seem to despise each other, and are continually immersed in nothing but self-seeking politics, making laws that fit the few while bringing disarray and “troubled waters” to the vast majority.

And the crime rates here in America are such that we are often kept in a constant state of abiding fear, and a “lack of peace”, installing alarm systems and bars on our windows, and buying more and more guns to protect ourselves.

And it seems obvious that those same troubled conditions of soul, the “lack of peace”, is the reason why so many people reach for another drink of alcohol or a needle filled with drugs, with none of those self-medications bringing real “peace” to their souls.

And to add to all the self-medicating efforts, the art and the business of psychiatry and counseling and therapy are sky-rocketing, all for the same purpose, the elusive search for relief from the troubling “lack of peace”.

But again, none of those efforts really work out well for us. And they never will work out well for us because the answers they offer are not able to reach to the real source of our troubled condition.

We need another and better answer for our dilemma. And Jesus has said that He can meet that need for us.

Listen! These words from John 16

33 I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

Jesus came to bring real peace for our souls, a kind of peace that surpasses all ordinary concepts and understanding, a kind of peace that the world can never provide through its “artificial” means.

Those words in John 14. There, Jesus said . . .

27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.
(John 14:27)

The peace that Jesus speaks about here really is so much, much more real than the peace that the world has to give!

And as believers, we have an obligation to “let the peace of God rule” in our hearts. Listen! Those words in Colossians 3 . . .

12 Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.
(Colossians 3:12-15)

Note these words carefully! Here, we are told to “let the peace of God rule in our hearts”.

Yes, in other places we are told to “make every effort to be at peace with God and with our neighbors”, but here, our command is far more “submissive”, allowing God to be the one to bring the peace into our hearts, letting His fruits prevail over our troubled spirits.

These words tell us that we really can make the choice, either to trust God’s promises, letting His peace rule, or to rely on ourselves and reject the peace He offers.

Jesus was able to give His disciples peace because He had overcome the world. And He has done the same for you and me now. Listen again from John 14.

27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.
(John 14:27)

And John 16,

33 I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

Folks, please listen! All of this is real and true and it is our only real and true answer for the troubled conditions of our souls. Christ has come to give us life. And He has sent

His Holy Spirit to abide within us every moment of every day, and by His presence within us, to bring “Peace”, a peace that surpasses all understanding.

And it truly is a peace that the world cannot give, because His peace is a “fruit” of His own Holy Spirit. Along with the other fruits of His Spirit, love, joy, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control, His blessed “peace” is able to soothe every ripple of our troubled waters.

My thoughts go to the parable that Jesus gave about the “weeds”. In that parable, we who have Christ as our Savior and Lord are pictured as “wheat” and the “weeds” are those people who choose the other path, to not receive Christ as Lord. And we exist daily alongside and in amongst the weeds. And when asked in that parable if the weeds should be removed, the Master told His caretakers “no” because the wheat may in some way be injured by the process.

This parable informs us that for every day of our lives we will be walking side-by-side with unbelievers. And it will not be an easy walk.

Remember, also that weeds are most always invasive, not only occupying their own space, but also always reaching into your space, taking nutrients from you, and even sometimes intertwining their roots into yours.

But even so, with all of that being true, we can still trust the Lord Jesus for our protection and our remedy. Those words again from John 16.

33 I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

Jesus lives within you and me every moment of every day, and He is always faithfully at work overcoming the ill-effects of the intertwining roots of the weeds. He is able, infinitely able.

And yes, the world, the flesh and the devil will continue to promote quarrels and even wars, both within the souls of men and also between the nations of the world. That is simply who they are and what they do. And we should expect nothing less. But again, Jesus is infinitely able to overcome their troublesome ways.

In Isaiah 53:5, we are told that Jesus took the chastisement of our peace and has made it possible for us to have peace with God. And as His peace rules within in our hearts, we are able to share that peace with others, becoming “ministers of reconciliation”.

Again, here in our scripture text for today, the emphasis is given that while yes, we are always to seek and to pursue peace, “peace” is not the true object of our seeking. It is rather the person of Jesus Himself that we are to seek. Listen, verse 14,

14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, (Ephesians 2:14)

The allegory being given here is the wall within the temple that kept the Gentile believers separated from their bigger brothers, the Jews. But now, in His sacrifice, Jesus has torn down all separations and we Gentiles, you and me, can have unfettered freedom to go right into the throne-room, the Holy of Holies of God and there enjoy the intimate love of a Father for His beloved son.

Folks, this is all very, very real! No more enmity! No more “troubled waters”! Jesus has overcome it all.

Now, all that remains for you and me to do is to humbly accept His loving gift of “grace”, His “generous, free and totally unexpected, undeserved, divine favor, love and pardon, and “peace”.

And again as verse 14 tells us, He Himself is our peace. This word that is here translated as “He Himself” is a very intentional expression from God to emphatically say that the very person of Jesus is the only condition of “peace” that is possible for our souls. With “He Himself” abiding within us, we will have “peace”. But without His Intimate abiding presence, we will not have peace.

This is a “truth” that is inescapable and you and I must embrace it with all that is within us, else we will waste away our lives in a sea of “troubled waters”.

I beg you, I plead with you, receive the blessed presence of the Lord Jesus Himself and He will bring peace to your souls beyond all you can imagine or hope for.

He says to you and me, My

27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.
(John 14:27)