

PEACE IN THE STORM

- A. Introduction: I Cor 15:58—For a number of months, we have been talking about how to become unmovable in the face of life’s hardships. Far too many Christians get moved from their faith and trust in God by the difficulties of life.
1. We have already made the point that, to become unmovable, you must develop an eternal perspective. This means that you recognize that there is more to life than just this life. We are eternal beings, and the greater part of our existence is ahead of us, in the life to come.
    - a. Living with this awareness helps you keep the difficulties of life in proper perspective. It’s not what you see that defeats you, it’s how you see what you see.
    - b. Everything in this life is temporary because this life comes to an end for all of us. And, in comparison to what is ahead for those who know the Lord, even a life time of hardship and pain is nothing. Therefore, it’s worth whatever you have to do to stay faithful. Rom 8:18; II Cor 4:17,18
  2. In this part of our series, we’re working on the fact that some people get moved for faith and obedience because they misunderstand God’s present purpose in the earth and consequently have inaccurate ideas about what He will and won’t do for us in this life.
    - a. Because of misunderstanding and misinformation they have false expectations about what Jesus came to do. These false expectations lead to disappointment and disillusionment when we don’t get or God doesn’t do for us what we mistakenly thought He promised us.
      1. Jesus didn’t come to give you an abundant life in this life. He came to earth to die as a sacrifice for sin so it can be removed from all who repent and believe the gospel. Mark 1:15; I Cor 1:1-4
      2. Those who bow their knee to Jesus as Savior and Lord can then receive eternal life and be transformed from sinners into sons and daughters of God, restoring them to their created purpose. Eph 1:4,5; Rom 8:29,30
    - b. God’s primary purpose in the earth right now is to bring people to saving knowledge of Himself, not make this life the highlight of our existence. Matt 16:26
      1. Neither is it His present purpose to end all suffering in the world. However, He is able to and does use the harsh realities of life in a fallen world and cause them to serve His ultimate purpose of salvation for all who believe on Jesus.
      2. This doesn’t mean that there is no help and provision for us now—because there is. But the removal of all suffering and pain will not take place until the life to come. (We’ll discuss this in more detail as we work through this series.)
  3. We’re looking at statements Jesus made about why He came to earth and what He has promised to do for us. Last week we began to discuss the fact that He came to bring us peace. We continue in this lesson.
- B. In Matt 11:28-30 Jesus invited those who labor and are weighed down by life’s challenges to come to Him for rest. The word rest is used to describe a number of things in the Bible (lessons for another day).
1. The word translated rest in the passage we’re discussing is from a Greek word that means to repose or rest (lit. or fig.). Repose has several meanings, one of which is calm or peace (*Webster’s Dictionary*).
    - a. Jesus has promised to give rest or peace to all those who come to Him, take His yoke on them (submit to His authority), and learn from Him.
    - b. *Webster’s Dictionary* defines peace as freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts and emotions. Peace is an internal quality that isn’t move by what’s going on around you. Rest is peace of mind. Rest is a peace that passes understanding. It’s peace in the storms of life.
  2. John 16:33—Jesus Himself said that in this world we will have tribulation or trials, distress, and frustration. It’s the nature of life in a fallen, sin damaged world.
    - a. Despite this harsh reality, He assured His followers that we can be of good cheer (or encouraged and confident) because He has overcome the world.

1. There are many points we could and will eventually make about this statement. But for now, notice that Jesus prefaced His statement with these words: John 16:33a—I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace.
  2. Jesus contrasted His statement about life's trials with the fact that we can have peace through Him in the midst of life's hardships.
- b. Jesus made this statement about peace at the end of remarks He made at the Last Supper. The night before He was crucified, at the Passover meal, Jesus spent much time preparing His twelve disciples for the fact that He was soon going to leave them (chap 13-17). Earlier in the evening, Jesus told His disciples that He was going to give them His peace. John 14:27
1. That statement must have astounded His followers because they had been with Him for over three years and had never once seen Him agitated, worried, or fearful. Quite the opposite.
  2. Jesus knew His Father was with Him and for Him, protecting Him and providing for Him. Consider just a few examples:
    - A. I'm not alone; My Father is with Me (John 8:16;29). My Father loves Me (John 17:23,24).
    - B. My Father always hears Me when I pray (John 11:41,42). My Father provides (John 6:11). He gives His angels to protect Me (Matt 26:53).
- c. Remember, Jesus is God become man without ceasing to be God (lots of lessons for another day). The point for now is that while Jesus was on earth, He did not live as God. He lived as a man, in dependence on the life of His Father in Him. Acts 10:38; John 14:9,10; etc.
1. That's why He is our example of how we as sons and daughters of God are supposed to live. Jesus is the standard for Christian behavior. I John 2:6
  2. If Jesus lived as God while on earth, we can't be held to the same standard because we aren't God. We are human beings who have God as our Father, through faith in Christ.
3. Consider the way this verse is rendered in a paraphrase by James Riggs and note several points. John 4:27—And now in the words of men as they take leave of each other, I say to you, "Peace be with you!" But the peace I leave with you is not the empty salutation of everyday leave-taking; it is *my* peace—the peace of soul which amid conflict and trouble has its source in my trust in God and in my future. That is my peace and I give it to you, through your unshadowed faith in me, not as the world gives, thoughtlessly, conventionally, and therefore with little meaning, but really, efficaciously, truly. In view of it and of all I have said to you, I pray you not to let your hearts be distracted by anxiety and grief, neither let them be afraid.
- a. Jesus wanted them to understand that what He was doing was more than a casual wishing them peace when He left them, as was customary in their culture. I'm giving you the peace that I have, through your faith in Me.
  - b. It is peace of soul (or mind) in the midst of trouble and conflict and it comes out of My trust in God My Father and knowledge of My future.
    1. Jesus (in His humanity) lived life in this fallen, damaged world with peace of mind because He knew His Father was with Him and would help Him.
    2. Jesus knew that He was going to the Cross the next day to take the sin of the world on Himself. For the first time ever, Jesus would be cut off from His Father and face a horrific fate. But He knew His future was in His Father's hands and that He could trust His Father to get Him through. He knew that what is ahead far outweighs any challenges He had to face in this life. Matt 27:46; Heb 12:2; Heb 2:9; Heb 5:7; etc.
  - c. In both this verse and John 16:33 and Matt 11:28-30, Jesus said that this peace comes in part through His words to His followers. We learn of Jesus, the Living Word, through the written Word, the Bible. His Word shows us what God is like and how He works. It shows us what He has done, is doing, and will do, and this information gives peace to our soul in the midst of the storms of life.
- C. Jesus came to earth to bring peace to men. He came to bring us peace with God which in turn gives peace to

our soul (or gives us peace of mind).

1. We must understand that our greatest problem is not our lack of education or advantages in this world. It's not our bad marriage or our lack of money or our unfulfilling career choice. Our greatest problem is that we are guilty of sin before a holy God, and that makes us His enemy. Rom 5:10
  - a. All our other problems end when we die. But the consequences of our greatest problem kick in because, when we leave our bodies at death, we go to a place of everlasting separation from God and all that is good. There is no peace for the wicked. Isa 57:21
  - b. Jesus came into this world to bring peace between God and man. The night Jesus was born into this world, angels appeared to shepherds who were tending their sheep in a field and proclaimed: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men (Luke 2:14, KJV).
    1. People misunderstand this well-known verse to mean that Jesus came to bring world peace. He did not. Peace among nations means nothing if everyone goes to Hell. (And, there can be no lasting peace among men until they are first at peace with God.)
    2. Jesus will establish world peace in connection with His Second Coming. In one of the best known prophecies of Jesus before He came into this world, the prophet Isaiah referred to Him as the Prince of Peace Who takes the governments on His shoulders and brings unending peace. Isa 9:6,7
    3. Luke 2:14—and on earth his peace for men on whom his favor rests (NEB); and peace on earth to men that are God's friends (Knox); and on earth peace among men with whom He is well-pleased—men of good will, of His favor. (Amp)
2. All human beings are cut off from God because of their sin. Eph 4:18—We were “alienated (estranged, self-banished) from the life of God with no share in it” (Amp).
  - a. Jesus came to earth to make it possible for enemies of God to become friends of God by making peace between God and man through the Cross.
    1. At the Cross, Jesus took our sin and guilt on Himself and paid the price we owed by dying in our place. He took our place and died for us as us. In doing so, He satisfied justice on our behalf.
    2. Col 1:20,21—Jesus made peace between us through His death so that we can be reconciled to God. He did this so that: “Although you at one time were estranged and alienated from Him and of hostile attitude of mind in your wicked activities, Yet now has [Christ, the Messiah,] reconciled [you to God] in the body of His flesh through death, in order to present you holy and faultless and irreproachable in His [the Father's] presence” (Col 1:23, Amp).
  - b. Jesus came to earth to save us from our sin by justifying us. To be justified means to be declared righteous or acceptable to God because justice has been satisfied on your behalf through the work of your substitute.
    1. Rom 5:1—Therefore, since we are justified — acquitted, declared righteous, and given a right standing with God — through faith, let us [grasp the fact that we] have [the peace of reconciliation] to hold and to enjoy, peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One. (Amp)
    2. Isaiah also prophesied, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, of the effects of the righteousness the coming Messiah would bring to His people. Isa 32:17—And the effect of righteousness shall be peace [internal and external], and the result of righteousness, quietness and confident trust forever. (Amp)
3. Once we are justified God can then treat us as though we never sinned and do what He planned to do since before the foundation of the world. He can give us eternal life. Titus 1;2
  - a. Eternal life is not live forever life. All human beings have eternal life from the moment of their conception in their mother's womb, in the sense that no one ceases to exist at death. The only question is whether or not you will live eternally with God.
    1. Eternal life is a type of life. It is the life in God Himself. This is why the analogy of new birth is used to describe conversion to Christ. We are born of God and become literal sons and

daughters through receiving eternal life. I John 5:1; 11,12; John 1:12; John 3:3-5; etc.

2. Christianity is more than a legal relationship with God. It is a vital, organic one. When we believe on Jesus we are united to Him, to the life in Him. The New Testament uses three word pictures to describe our relationship to Jesus, all of which depict union and shared life; Vine and branch (John 15:5); Head and body (Eph 1:21,22; Col 1:18); Husband and wife (Eph 5:31,32).

b. In John 16:33 Jesus said “In Me, you have peace”. The idea there is through union with me. It can rightly be translated this way: Through me (Mont); through union with me (Williams).

1. Union with Christ, made possible because we have been justified, gives us the same standing that Jesus, in His humanity, has with the Father.

2. Jesus gives His peace He by giving us the same standing that He (in His humanity) has with God the Father. Eph 2:17,18

A. Eph 3:12—Through union with him, and through faith in him, we have courage to approach God with confidence. (Goodspeed)

B. Rom 5:2—Through Him we also have [our] access (entrance, introduction by faith into this grace—state of God’s favor—in which we firmly and safely stand (Amp)

3. John 16:33—And now my words are finished. I have spoken them that, in all the life which you live in communion with me, you may have peace—a constant stay for your hearts amid the tribulation of the world. (Riggs Paraphrase).

4. Before Jesus went to the Cross to pay for sin and make it possible for men and women to become literal sons and daughters of God through receiving eternal life, Jesus began to prepare His followers for what that would mean.

a. He taught them (and us) that God is a Father Who takes care of those who trust in Him. Jesus assured us that, just as the Father took care of His Son Jesus, He will take care of those who seek His kingdom and His righteousness. Matt 6:25-34

1. Paul, who was personally taught the message he preached by Jesus Himself (Gal 1:11,12), wrote that we can go to God our Father with the certainty that He will hear and help, This security and certainty gives us peace that passes understanding. Phil 4:6,7

2. His ears are open to the prayers of the righteous. I Pet 3:12—For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous—those who are upright and in right standing with God—and His ears are attentive to their prayer. (Amp)

b. When Jesus was in the storms of life (literally and figuratively) He knew He had His Father’s help and that gave Him peace. Because of the Cross and the new birth, God is now our Father and we have the same access to Him that Jesus (in His humanity) did when He was on this earth. And we, too, can have peace in the storms of life.

D. Conclusion: We have much more to say about this, but consider one thought as we close.

1. Jesus has given us the same peace He has by giving us the same standing with the Father that He has. Let me say that another way: He has given us the same peace potentially.

a. Jesus did put some conditions on experiencing this peace. He told His followers that we must submit to Him and learn from Him, and not let our hearts be troubled. Matt 11:29; John 14:27

b. We must find out from His Word what He has done for us and will do for us so that our expectations are consistent with what He has promised to do for us. And, we must learn to recognize and resist things that will rob us of our peace if we let them. But those are topics for another day.

2. Until then, take time to think about what it means to be reconciled to God, to have peace with God. Go over the verses we’re covered and let the Word of God build a confidence in your heart that nothing can come against you that is bigger than God your Father. Lots more next week!