

PEACE WITH GOD THROUGH JESUS

- A. Introduction: For a number of weeks we have been discussing the fact the Jesus promises peace to His followers. In these lessons we've emphasized that the word peace had the idea of peace of mind or freedom from anxious and troubling thoughts and emotions. John 14:27
1. The word peace also carries several other ideas that we need to address. In the next part of our series we're going to expand our discussion of the peace that Jesus brings. Jesus brings us peace with God.
 - a. Luke 2:14—The night Jesus was born into this world angels appeared to shepherds in the fields outside of the town of Bethlehem (Jesus' birthplace) and proclaimed: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.
 1. People misinterpret this verse to mean that Jesus came to bring peace to this world, meaning no more wars or conflicts. (He will bring peace to this world at is second coming. I'll say more about that later in the lesson.)
 2. Luke 12:51—Jesus Himself said: I have not come to bring peace, but division. (He meant the division that comes between those who believe on Him and those who reject Him, v52-53).
 - b. Jesus came to earth to bring or make peace between God and men. Because of sin, men and women women are alienated or cut off from God.
 1. That night Jesus was born the angels proclaimed peace to men of good will. Good will is from a Greek word that means to think well of. It can be translated good will, kindly intent, delight, satisfaction. The word has the idea of delight in a person or thing or favor toward them.
 2. Jesus came to restore men and women to God's favor. Favor means friendly regard, approval, gracious kindness (*Webster's Dictionary*).
 - c. Luke 2:14—Glory to God in the highest [heaven], and on earth peace among men with whom He is well-pleased—men of good will, of His favor (Amp).
 2. We're going to begin to look at why we need peace with God, how we obtain that peace, and what peace with God means for our lives. In this lesson, I'm going to introduce a number of points that I will discuss in more detail in the next several lessons.
- B. We must understand peace with God terms of the big picture—why God created mankind and what He is doing in the earth. Almighty God desires a family with whom He can live forever and through whom He can express His glory. Before time began, the Lord devised a plan to accomplish His will.
1. God created men and women to become His holy, righteous sons and daughters through faith in Christ. He created the earth to be a home for Himself and His family.
 - a. Eph 1:4-5—Long ago, even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave him great pleasure (NLT).
 - b. Isa 45:18—For the Lord is God, and he created the heavens and earth and put everything in place. He made the world to be lived in, not to be a place of empty chaos (NLT).
 2. Neither the family nor the family home are as God created them to be. They have been damaged by sin.
 - a. When Adam, the head of the human race, chose independence from God through sin, both the race resident in him and the earth itself were affected. Rom 5:12—When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. His sin spread death throughout all the world, so everything began to grow old and die, for all sinned (TLB).
 1. The earth is no longer a fit home for God and His family because it is infused with a curse of corruption and death. Because of Adam's sin, natural laws were altered and now produce destruction and death (disease, earthquakes, killer storms, harmful plants and animals). Moths and rust corrupt and thieves break in and steal. Gen 3:17-19; Matt 6:19; Rom 8:20

2. Men became sinners by nature, disqualified for sonship as holy, faultless sons and daughters of God. When we are old enough to know right from wrong, we all choose disobedience and become guilty of sin before a holy God, deserving of punishment. Rom 3:23
 - A. God is righteous (right) and God is just (always does what is right). It is right to punish sin. However, the only penalty that will satisfy divine justice in regard to our sin is death, or eternal separation from God who is life. Gen 2:17; Rom 6:23
 - B. If the just and righteous penalty for sin were to be carried out all humanity would be forever separated from God and lost to our created purpose—God’s plan for a family thwarted. But because God remains true to His holy, righteous nature, He cannot overlook sin.
- b. The fall of man did not take God by surprise. Almighty God devised a marvelous plan. God Himself (the Word) took on flesh (John 1:1; John 1:14) and came into this world to satisfy divine justice on our behalf. Jesus is called the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev 13:8).
 1. Jesus went to the Cross for us as us. As the representative man He took the punishment due to every man and woman. Because of the value of His person (fully God and fully man, without sin), He was able to satisfy justice through His sacrifice on the Cross.
 2. Isa 53:5—The chastisement (punishment) needful to obtain peace and well-being was upon Him (Jesus), and with the stripes that wounded Him we are healed and made whole (Amp).
3. The apostle Paul wrote much about peace with God. Paul was personally taught the message that he preached and wrote by Jesus Himself (Gal 1:11-12). Consider a powerful statement Paul wrote about peace with God. Col 1:20-22
 - a. Let’s get the context. In Col 1:15-19 the apostle Paul makes specific statements about the fact that Jesus is God become man without ceasing to be God (lessons for another day).
 - b. Then in Col 1:20 Paul informs us that through Jesus God reconciled all things to Himself and made peace by Jesus’ blood that was shed at the Cross.
 1. The Greek word translated reconcile means to reconcile fully; to change from one state to another. Note these translations of the verse: through him to win back all things...into union with himself (Knox); through Christ God has brought all things back to himself again (NCV).
 2. According to *Webster’s Dictionary* the English word reconcile means to make friendly again. Through Jesus’ sacrifice at the Cross we change from enemies of God to friends of God.
 - c. Col 1:21-22 give us information about what we were before we acknowledged Jesus, as well as what changes God intended and intends to accomplish in us through the Cross of Christ.
 1. v21—This includes you who were once so far away from God (alienated). You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions (NLT).
 2. v22—Yet now he has brought you back as his friends. He has done this through his death on the Cross in his own human body. As a result, he has brought you into the very presence of God. And you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault (NLT).
 - d. I need to make an important point right now that we will address in more detail in a later lesson. Verses like this can be difficult to believe because they bring up an obvious question. How can we be holy and blameless in God’s sight when all of us miss the mark and sin from time to time?
 1. We need to understand that there is a difference between what we are through faith in Christ (our standing before God) and what we do (our life experience).
 2. When we believe on Jesus, a process begins that will ultimately restore us to all that God intends us to be—in every part of our being and all of our thoughts and behaviors. God deals with you now on the basis of what you are because of Jesus’ sacrifice, since He is confident that what has begun in you will be completed. Phil 1:6
4. Rom 5:1—Note something else Paul wrote concerning peace with God. When a person believes on Jesus (acknowledges Him as Savior and Lord) the effects of His sacrifice are applied to them. That

person is justified or declared not guilty and now has peace with God.

- a. Jesus' death on the Cross satisfied divine justice on your behalf. You are no longer guilty of sin before a holy God. God can now declare you just or justified. The Greek word that is translated justified means to render (show or regard) just or innocent. All charges are dropped
 1. Col 2:14—He (God) canceled the record that contained the charges against us. He took it and destroyed it by nailing it to Christ's cross. (NLT).
 2. Because of what Jesus accomplished through the Cross, when you believe on Him, God can deal with you as though you never sinned. Your sins no longer separate you from Him.
 - b. 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 (Amp).
5. II Cor 5:18-19—Consider another statement about what Jesus did for us through the Cross. There's more in this passage than we can address right now, but notice these statements. God has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, no longer counting (imputing) their trespasses (sins) to them.
- a. The Greek word translated world is used several ways in the New Testament—one of which means mankind. How can God stop counting men's sins against them?
 1. He can do it because the punishment due them for sin went to Jesus. Justice has been satisfied and when a person believes on Jesus, the result of this sacrifice goes into effect for them. God can now welcome men into His favor again. That has been the plan since before time began.
 2. That's why Jesus came to earth. Remember the words the angels proclaimed the night Jesus was born? Luke 2:14—Glory to God in the highest [heaven], and on earth peace among men with whom He is well-pleased—men of good will, of His favor (Amp).
 - b. The word translated *goodwill* is used for the grace, favor and goodwill of God exercised toward men through Jesus. It's the same word used to describe God's plan for man in Eph 1:4-5.
 1. Long ago, even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave him great *pleasure* (NLT).
 2. Notice the very next statement. Eph 1:6—Thus he would manifest the splendour of that grace by which he has taken us into his favour in the person of his beloved Son (Knox); that we might learn to praise that glorious generosity of his which has made us welcome in the everlasting love he bears toward the Beloved (J. B. Phillips).
 - c. Through the Cross of Christ we have been reconciled to God and restored to our created purpose. Therefore, we have a future and a hope, not just in this life, but in the life to come.
 1. I Pet 3:18—Christ also suffered when he died for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners that he might bring us safely home to God (NLT).
 2. II Tim 1:9—It is God who saved us and chose us to live a holy life. He did this not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan long before the world began—to show his love and kindness to us through Christ Jesus.
- C. Let's go back to a statement made earlier. Jesus did not come to earth two thousand years ago to bring peace (an end to war and fighting). However, Jesus will bring peace to this world when He comes again.
1. Jesus came to earth the first time to go to the Cross, pay for sin, and open the way for men and women to be restored to their created purpose as sons and daughters of God through faith in Him.
 - a. He will come again in the not too distant future to restore the family home and establish His eternal kingdom on earth. As part of His restoration Jesus will bring peace to this world. The kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. Rev 11:15

- b. Isa 9:6-7 is a prophecy concerning the coming of Jesus, the Savior of mankind. The Old Testament prophets were not clearly shown that there would be two separate comings of the Savior (Redeemer) separated by at least two thousand years.
1. Consequently, many prophecies make reference to both Jesus' first and second coming in the same statement. This is one of those prophecies.
 2. "For a child is born to us, a son is given to us" refers to Jesus' first coming and "the government will rest on his shoulders" refers to His second coming. Among other titles given to Jesus, He is called the Prince of Peace.
 - A. Isa 9:7—His ever expanding peaceful government will never end. He will rule forever with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David. The passionate commitment of the Lord Almighty (the zeal of the Lord) will guaranteed this (NLT),
 - B. The Hebrew word translated peace in these passages is *shalom*. It comes from a word that means to be safe, to be completed or uninjured in mind or body. It has the idea of health, prosperity, peace—nothing missing and nothing broken.
2. This agrees with what Paul wrote in Col 1:20. God, through Jesus, reconciles all things to Himself. The Greek word translated reconcile means to reconcile fully; to change from one state to another.
- a. We cited these translations of that verse: through him to win back all things...into union with himself (Knox); through Christ God has brought all things back to himself again (NCV).
 1. According to *Webster's Dictionary* the English word reconcile means to make friendly again. Through Jesus' sacrifice at the Cross we change from enemies of God to friends of God.
 2. But there is more to it. God's plan of salvation through Jesus and the Cross provides ultimate restoration of both the family and the family home so that God's plan will be completed—nothing missing, nothing broken; ultimate peace.
 - b. Note this rendering of Col 1:18-20—He (Jesus) was supreme in the beginning and—leading the resurrection parade—he is supreme in the end. From beginning to end he's there, towering far above everything, everyone. So spacious is he, so roomy, that everything of God finds its proper place in him without crowding. Not only that, but all the broken and dislocated pieces of the universe—people and things, animals and atoms—get properly fixed and fit together in vibrant harmonies, all because of his death, his blood that poured down from the Cross (The Message Bible).
- D. Conclusion: We have a lot more to say next week about peace with God through Jesus. But consider these thoughts as we close.
1. We've made the point that peace of mind comes to us through God's Word because the Bible gives us information that enables us to deal with troubling and anxious thoughts.
 2. When we know (from the Bible) that we have peace with God because of Jesus' sacrifice, it gives us peace of mind when we fall short. If the Lord went to such lengths to restore us to Himself when we were His enemies, why would He not help us now that we are reconciled to, friends with, Him?
 - a. Rom 5:10—For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, it is much more [certain], now that we are reconciled, that we shall be saved [daily delivered from sin's dominion] through His [resurrection] life (Amp).
 - b. Rom 8:32—He who did not withhold or spare [even] His own Son but gave Him up for us all, will He not also with Him freely and graciously give us all [other] things (Amp).
 3. As the world gets crazier and more dangerous in the years leading up to the Lord's return, knowing that the ultimate restoration of this world is coming gives us hope and peace of mind in the midst of the increasing turmoil. More next week!