

57. Peace – a gift of God

November 20, 2011

According to the dictionary I regularly use, the definition of peace is:

- 1) An agreement or treaty between warring or antagonistic nations, groups, etc., to end hostilities and abstain from further fighting or antagonism.
- 2) A state of mutual harmony between people or groups, especially in personal relations.

A former president of the Norwegian Academy of Sciences and historians from England, Egypt, Germany, and India have come up with some startling information: Since 3,600 B.C. the world has known only 292 years of peace! During this period there have been 14,351 wars, large and small, in which 3.64 billion people have been killed. The value of the property destroyed would pay for a golden belt around the world 97.2 miles wide and 33 feet thick.

Since 650 B.C. there have also been 1,656 arms races, only 16 of which have not ended in war. The remainder ended in the economic collapse of the countries involved. Moreover, in excess of 8,000 peace treaties were made – and broken. In other words, humans have been killing each others for 94.8% of the known human history. Nice people, aren't we?

The Bible reveals to us the true reason for wars and fights:

James 4:1-3 Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? 2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.

Yet, our idea of peace and God's idea of peace are completely different. As a matter of fact, they are not even in the same dimension. People see quiet and tranquil scenery and consider it peaceful like these scenes – one from Lake Tahoe and the other from Alaska.

But do people really find peace from those tranquil and quiet places? What if a person who has turmoil in his heart goes to Lake Tahoe, would his turmoil go away? No. It is not a matter of places, surroundings, people, philosophies, nor circumstances.

However, God's peace is different. You might have a terminal illness, yet you can have a complete peace of God; you might face a life threatening situation from a criminal or a terrorist, yet you can have a complete peace of God; you might be in the middle of a total financial meltdown personally, corporately, or nationally which is not very far for us, yet you can have a complete peace of God.

We should not be confused between peace of God and tranquility. Tranquility depends on the circumstances and our emotional situations. But the peace that comes from our God alone has nothing to do with our situations at all, rather it has everything to do with our God's promises and faithfulness.

A. THE HELPER WHO REMINDS JESUS' TEACHINGS

John 14:25-26 "These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. 26 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.

In the original Greek, it is a little bit different in the second half of v26. It reads, "bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you when you have a major Green Valley Moment."

These two verses explain how Jesus' disciples, John Mark and Dr. Luke could remember all the things Jesus taught them. If they were like us, they probably couldn't remember what they ate the day before for breakfast, but they remembered Jesus' teachings even though they were pretty much uneducated fishermen mostly except Dr. Luke.

How did they remember Jesus' teaching? The Holy Spirit brought them to their remembrance. I know some of you are thinking, "Bingo, I don't have to memorize those weekly Scripture memory verses. The Holy Spirit will remind me automatically." No way, Jose. First, you have to put the Word of God in your heart for the Holy Spirit to bring them to your remembrance.

I am sure that you might have had a situation – when you were witnessing to your coworker or a relative. Out of the blue, you started to quote one Bible verse after another. You were so impressed with yourself and were thinking, "I should record this. This is so good. I sound like a Bible scholar, much better than that broken-English speaking Southern Swedish pastor at the church." In case some of you didn't know, I am from Southern Sweden. That is why I have heavy accent, ja?

Please notice the words "all things" in v26. Teaching and reminding are two of the Holy Spirit's ministries.

1 Corinthians 2:10-12 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

Maybe you have grappled with a certain problem. Then as you were reading the Bible one day, a verse suddenly jumped off the page, got hold of your complete attention and spoke to you. It is as though it had been written for you. "This is exactly what I am going through," you are thinking.

This also happens when God's Word is being proclaimed from the pulpit. Maybe you are sitting in church and listening to the message. As I was speaking, you think, "This is for me. I was just asking the Lord about this yesterday. This is exactly what I was dealing with." You start to wonder if I have been reading your emails or eavesdropping on your conversations with your friends. Yes, I've been doing that for a long time. No, just kidding. It is the Holy Spirit speaking to you. It is His ministry to you.

Ain't that just cool? The Holy Spirit is our personal Tutor.

B. PEACE FROM GOD

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 heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

I find three important points we must heed:

- 1) **Jesus is the One who gives us His peace.**
- 2) **Jesus' peace is not the same as the world idea of peace which has no lasting capacity and it strictly depends on individual's emotional status.**
- 3) **With Jesus' peace, we don't have to be afraid and have our hearts be troubled.**

We don't want the peace that is offered by the world. It comes with a hefty price tag that would drag down our souls. Besides, their idea of peace is only temporary – like drinking sea water while you are lost in the middle of sea, it might quench the thirst a short time, but now craving sea water for more intensely than ever before. Eventually the thirst will kill you while you are surrounded by water.

But God's peace is so different. It is not the power of positive thinking. It is not feelings the we have to conjure up or circumstances we have to be in. It deals with our inner person. It strengthens our spirits with His Word and faithfulness. His peace gives us an inner calmness in the midst of tempestuous outer storms.

Philippians 4:7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

The peace which the world offers us is the peace of escape – avoiding any types of trouble even if you have to compromise your standard and embrace your enemy. But the peace which Jesus offers us is the peace of conquest. No experience of life can ever take it from us and no sorrow, no danger, no suffering can ever make it less. This kind of peace is a completely foreign for those who are not born-again.

Why is it foreign to them? There are two kinds of peace we can have from the Lord:

- 1) **Peace with God**
- 2) **Peace of God**

We cannot, absolutely CAN NOT have peace of God until we have peace with God through Jesus Christ. What do I mean? When we were not born-again Christians, we were enemies of God.

Colossians 1:21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled

Now, when we sing worship and praise songs, some of us lift up our hands. Just in case you think that it is sacrilegious or unbiblical, it is not true. As a matter of fact, it is very biblical. The Bible tells us to do so, but without drawing attention to ourselves:

Psalm 134:2 Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, And bless the Lord.

We lift up our hands for two reasons:

- 1) **In adoration to our Lord Jesus**
- 2) **In surrender to our Lord Jesus**

When we surrender our will to His will, we do it on His terms, not ours. The ones who surrender cannot demand their way, rather leave everything at the mercy of the One who receives the surrender. And our God is merciful and compassionate.

Psalm 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart-- These, O God, You will not despise.

When we surrender ourselves to Jesus on His terms, we can truly have peace WITH God. We are no longer enemies of God, but we become His children. What a change! From the enemies of God to His children, the joint heirs with Christ.

Romans 8:17 and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

Someone who is very wise once said, "When you make Jesus as your Savior, you have peace with God; when you make Jesus as your Lord, you have peace of God."

The believers of Jesus Christ can enjoy peace in spite of trials because of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. People in the world walk by sight and depend on the externals, but Christians walk by faith and depend on the eternal.

But those who have not made peace with God through Jesus Christ will never be able to experience peace of God in their hearts. They have constant voids in their hearts. They may try to fill them with work, relationship with people, alcohol, drugs, sex, religions, and many other things. Nothing will help until they surrender themselves to Jesus.

I like what Charles Spurgeon, a famous British preacher of the 19th Century said, "Little faith will take your soul to heaven, but great faith will bring heaven to your soul." When you have peace of God, your heart can become a 'heaven on earth' as you commune with the Lord and worship Him.

C. MY FATHER IS GREATER THAN I

John 14:28-29 You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming back to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I. 29 And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe.

Why should Jesus' disciples and we rejoice because He returned to the Father? Because His return made possible His wonderful intercessory ministry on our behalf, our great High Priest in heaven. Check this out, we have the Holy Spirit, the Helper within us, Jesus the Savior above us, and the Word of God before us! What tremendous Resources for peace!

Jehovah's Witness and Mormons would get excited about what the end portion of v28 says. Because they insist that Jesus is inferior to God the Father:

John 14:28c for My Father is greater than I.

This statement refers to position rather than essence. Jesus was speaking from the standpoint of His humanity, the incarnate state He assumed in order to fulfill the purposes of redemption. The numerous statements in the Gospels that God the Father had sent Him confirm that Jesus was acting under authority and was obligated to fulfill the Father's commands.

The Trinity is co-equal in all senses except in Their positions. God the Father is not better than Jesus, nor is the Holy Spirit less than God the Son Jesus. They are co-equal and co-eternal, the only wise God. Be glory and majesty and dominion and power, both now and forever, amen?

D. SATAN HAS NOTHING IN ME

John 14:30-31 I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. 31 But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.

I love the way Jesus said about satan here. Even though satan is the ruler, or prince of this world if you have KJV, NIV, or NLT versions of the Bibles, he is nothing to Jesus

and has nothing in Him. Jesus has no fear of satan, but satan does have fear of Jesus.

How did the fear start? Fear is an instinct as old as Adam.

Genesis 3:9-10 Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

When Adam and Eve sinned, they suddenly became self-conscious, covering themselves with fig leaves. Since then, cover-ups began with the fall of mankind and have been used to hide guilt ever since.

If you have a hidden sin, it actually is not a hidden sin to God at all. Confess it to Him and make it right with Him. Don't try to cover it up. It is a futile effort. Satan can have something in us if we hide sins in our heart. We literally are giving him a foothold to oppress us.

Some of you might have fear of death. Again death came from the fall of mankind. But Jesus conquered the death, the last enemy.

1 Corinthians 15:25-26 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

I like the way apostle Paul said about death:

1 Corinthians 15:54-57 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." 55 "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus overcame death and satan. And we are with Him.

E. APPLICATIONS

1) Peace of God does not grant us exemption from the storms of life, but promises us the power of Jesus and the faithfulness of the Lord to weather any storm.

2) When we put our problems in God's hands, He puts His peace in our hearts.

3) Know God, know peace; no God, no peace.