

"Here's One for You, Peace Brother"



The sermon slides are [available here](#).

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."

Pastor Thom Rittichier:

I guess I should say this is a starting point. We've got some new technology that's going on with the streaming of this. I don't know if you've seen the streaming and the new technology for our church, we are using Discord. That's different, believers are to be in one accord. But this Discord has provided us with this upgrade in technology. And last week, I had the humiliating experience of sitting down and watching how much sharper this technology is. Wow! And as a result, I decided I need to smile more. I need to be a little bit more upbeat, because it's too crystal clear. So I hope you're enjoying the new technology and the smile. Hold me accountable on that. I'm going to take a lesson from John Piper on this. God is most glorified when we are most satisfied in Him. So this morning, I'm talking about a starting point.

I'm going to use a starting point by making a point. And as I make this point, I want you to consider, reflect on this and decide for yourself. Option one, Yes, I buy that. I'm all about it. The other option is, No, that's really not the way I see it, I'm not all about it. So, two options, Yes. I'm all about it or no, not so much concerning the point that I'm going to make. And here's the point. Christianity is Jesus Christ. It's about following him. So now I want you to pause and reflect on that, Christianity is Jesus Christ and following Him. That's what it's about. That's what Christianity is about. Now, I don't mean following him like on Facebook, or some social media, you know where you like or you dislike this or that. I'm talking about following him in the sense that he directs. And you adjust your thinking, you adjust your speaking and you adjust your actions as he direct. That's following him. And that's what Christianity is about, Jesus Christ and following him.

And as you're thinking about that, I want to give you a couple of things to consider here. One is this. "And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.", Acts 11:26. Now this is a statement where Barnabas, the encourager, find Saul, who becomes the Apostle Paul, as he teaches for over a year, these disciples. The word disciple means someone who is following a teacher. They're learning not only the teacher's doctrine, but also their manner of life. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

The Bible talks about being called Christians, as disciples in the passage. So as you think about this, Christianity is Jesus Christ. And it's about following him. I want you to think of that. And the Apostle Paul added to that a little bit later, "I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.", 1 Corinthians 11:3. Simplicity, singleness, that's what that word means. And purity, straight up, straight forward, just that way, devotion to Christ. So are you settled on your answer? Have you come to it? Do you have it? Christianity is Jesus Christ, about following him? Are you settled? Pastor Paul seems to be settled here. Are you settled? And I'm talking about for you, this answer is for you.

Then I want you to turn with me to a passage about a promise concerning Christ. The passage that I want you to turn to, is in the Old Testament, Isaiah chapter nine. Now this passage in Isaiah was understood to be about Messiah, which is the Old Testament expression for Christ in the New Testament. From the earliest ages, both the Jews and the Christians have seen this as a prophetic note about Jesus. As a matter of fact, it's even quoted in the New Testament as being about Jesus, in Matthew chapter four. Now, what I want to do in this is to run through a reading and a running commentary on what's being said here. And here is the prophetic promise about Christ. Isaiah, chapter nine, verse one, "But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish." It's talking about a nation here, being in anguish, and having gloom. Now this nation is not just some place that has political activities and an economy and a culture that somewhat unifies it. It's not a thing. It's called a group of people here. There will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. "In the former time he", God, "brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali," Now let me put up a map here, a simplistic map of Israel. And it has the time in which the 12 tribes were around, and there's Zebulun and there's Naphtali. And it's kind of in the north there. And that's the Sea of Galilee. And this is the Jordan River. And that's Benjamin and this is the Red Sea, right there. So when he talks about this, he's talking about a nation that has had anguish. And he's talking about the northern part of this nation, with its anguish. And the reason for that was because, in 2 Kings chapter 15, there was an invasion in the land by the king of Assyria. And they were the first to experience it, the anguish of having their nation taken from their hands, their culture, their way of life, the things that they were accustomed to, gone. And he says, "in the former time he, God, brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time, he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations." God makes it glorious though at first it seemed like anguish. He goes on, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. You, God, have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy, they rejoice before you, as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoils." The outcome, that's the kind of rejoicing that is going, when God seemingly, at first, led them into contempt and anguish, he brought this joy. And he begins to explain. He says, because you've done this, verse four, because "the yoke of his burden, this nation, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as in the day of Midian." That was the day in which Gideon had victory over Midian. And you remember, the Midianites were the descendants of Abraham And that whole problem of that prodigy that they experienced going on right there in their own land. There is victory, he says, as in the day of Midian. Remember what God did with Gideon? He said, No, it's too many men, Gideon. Because God wanted them to rejoice in his doing, not in the power of their hand. That's how the joy comes, because this is why they get joy, because "every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire." The warfare, the conflict, the fighting, its ongoing, will be overwith. And here is why, verse six, ...oh, by the way, I need to smile, sorry, getting a little intense...

because "to us a child is born, to us a son is given," ...now this is something to smile about... "and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this." That's a great promise. Some of it was fulfilled when Jesus stepped into that land of the Galilee, Matthew chapter four, and he began his ministry. That's the quote, behold, the people that were in darkness saw great light. But that is only the first stage of the fulfillment of that thing. Most of this prophetic note is still yet future, in the second arrival of Christ. The child, first note, that was born, has the government on his shoulders, second coming, second note, and that the increase of his government is going up and his peace, in that there's no end. It's forever. And the zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this, he will do this.

That's quite a promise that's given to us here. Quite a promise. And there's a point. The point that Jesus made is that your participation, in this peace, is for now. Let me show you, John 14:27, Jesus has told them that he's departing, that he's going away, and in his going away will be able to accomplish a whole bunch for them. And as he's getting ready to go, he promises that he will send the spirit to them to replace him, he will not leave them as orphans, the spirit will be with them, and it will be in them. And then, right after that, Jesus says this, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

Question, what if somebody comes up to you and they say, Peace brother? Peace. And you probably recognize some of the folks here right. Here is Willie Nelson with Bernie Sanders, peace, brother. And boy, that's just the political stuff that I'm talking about. You know what I mean? Man, have I heard it. And there's John Lennon, he sang, Imagine there's no heaven. It's easy if you try, No hell below us, above us only sky. Imagine all the people living life in peace, you may say I'm a dreamer. But I'm not the only one... Peace, brother, peace. And how about this one? That's is Jimmy Martin. That is the picture from the Super Bowl, when he is the honorary captain, who has been in two terms overseas, one in Afghanistan, one in Iraq, came back injured, working now with Wounded Warriors. And you see what he's doing there? You can hardly see it. Right here. It stood out to me when I saw this. He's making the peace symbol. It depends on who it is. Who comes up to me and says, peace, brother. Well, how about this? How about if it's Jesus who comes up to you and says, peace? And I want you to know, that's exactly what Jesus is doing here. "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you." And he meant it for his followers, there and then, all the way up to us, here and now. Peace established, peace experienced, his peace. "Don't let your heart be troubled. Neither let it be afraid." Peace brother, from Jesus, Peace, brother.

What we're going to talk about this morning is this, owning the peace that he leaves. We're going to talk about accepting the "my peace" that he emphasized here, that he gives, accepting this. Owning the peace, accepting his peace, and then using these peace offerings, as he intends, that's what we're going to see here. And again, I like to emphasize this, kind of repeatedly. These are not my ideas. This is not my writing. This is the spirit, who Jesus has just told us would lead them into the truth, teaching them the truth, and bringing these things to remembrance. That's Jesus words, via the Spirit, teaching and bringing to these to our remembrance. That's what this is. So as we're talking about these exceedingly great and precious promises, which the Lord has designed for us to be partakers with him in, the kind of disposition that he has, the outlook, the attitudes, the interactions, that he has, these exceedingly great and precious promises, here's the first, owning the peace. Jesus said that he leaves. He wasn't gone yet

so this was a promise. Peace, peace, I leave with you. What peace did Jesus leave? What on earth is he talking about?

First of all, I want you to know that peace, as a term, is used of a settling down, quietness and harmony. That's how the term peace is used here. It refers to a very prosperous state, not necessarily prosperous financially, but it's a very well off state to be in. And when he talks about "peace I leave with you", because he was going, he talks about peace that "I leave with you". It is described for us in Colossians, chapter one, by the Apostle Paul. It was the peace that he was leaving, you see, he was going away, he was going the way of the cross, and what that meant for them. And the Apostle Paul describes what this way of his leaving involved. I'm going to highlight for you some particular points that are pertinent to this peace in Colossians 1:19, "For in him, in Christ, all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell." Everything that God was, in his completeness, was pleased to dwell in Jesus. Now, Jesus didn't utilize it all. And I won't go into that right now. But it was all there, everything that God is and was and ever will be, was there in Jesus, the fullness of him, verse 20, "and through him, through Christ, to reconcile to himself all things,". This peace as described, as being a reconciled, things here are out of accord with each other. They are in discord, not like our new Accord streaming service, but they're not harmonized, they're not equal. It's kind of like, sometimes you think your bank account is this and the bank thinks your bank account is that and then you have to reconcile that difference. I used to use the illustration of reconciling a checking account, but who knows what a check is nowadays, right? I mean, debit card, credit card, sure. I had to use a check the other day, it was like, Do I know how to do this? Back to reconcile, bringing them out of discord with each other, back into harmony. He was all the fullness of God, reconciled to himself, all things and he goes on here, verse 20, "reconciled them to himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross." This is the peace that he was establishing in his leaving. This is the objective peace, how harmony that was being made through the blood of the cross, reconciling to God, bringing things that are out of harmony back into a settled, calm, quiet harmony, by the blood of his cross. This was the peace that he was leaving and establishing as he went. And this peace by the blood of his cross did this, verse 21, "and you", this involves you, you are here in this, "and you, who once were alienated", that means at odds, "and hostile in your mind" hostile in your thinking....But I really liked God. No, you liked your idea of God and not the God who is there. No, I've always thought of God....No, you had your opinion of God, but the God who is there, you were hostile in mind towards. In our natural state, we are born bent away, we are born enemies of God like he is. And that's where the reconciliation came in. Col 1:22, "You, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing harmful things, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him." That's the peace. That's the peace that he made through the blood of his cross. Totally enemies and hostile towards God, he brings back into harmony, through the blood of his cross, paying the total debt that we have towards God, with our sin. That's the peace. And Jesus, on the night that he's leaving, he looks at them. And he says, Peace, I leave with you. Peace. That's what I've been about, it's what I'm doing, it's what I came for, it's this peace. Oh, oh, that we would own it. Oh, that we would. That there is an objective, established peace, at the very highest plain of hostility, ours as a people, towards God, supreme peace is established. And he says this peace is ours, verse 23, "if you continue in the faith, stable, steadfast, not shifting", get this...not shifting with the changing of the times and the changing of the seasons and the changing of a culture and the fear, and the way things are compared to the way they used to be, and who can raise kids in this time period?... If we're "not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard", the good news of this peace, "which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, of which

I, Paul, became a minister." This is the established peace. This is it. The Apostle Paul in Eph 2:13,14a said, "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace". This is peace. This is harmony. This is settledness. This is the quiet, the tranquility for your soul.

You know, this is not like 21st century stuff, though it's so relevant for 21st century and Christians in the 21st century, and Christians in America in the 21st century. It's established peace. This is an old book. This is a Alexander MacLaren. I've read the messages he preached for years. And he said, "My brother, no man can be at rest down to the very roots of his being, in the absence of the consciousness that he is at peace with God. There may be tumults of gladness, there may be much of stormy brightness in the life, but there cannot be the calm, still impregnable, all pervading, and central tranquility that our souls hunger for, unless we know and feel that we are right with God, that there is nothing between us with him. And it is because Jesus Christ, dying on the cross, has made it possible for you and me to feel this," Oh, that we would own this. In our times that we would own this. So what peace did he leave there? How does this peace come? How does this peace become experienced by this? It's by faith. Romans 5:1-2, "Since we have been justified", put in a position with God where there is an established harmony, made right with Him, "since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God." It's through him we've gained access to this, and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Oh, that we would own this. Oh, that we'd see where this peace takes us. That we would grasp this with our souls, and that we would feel this establish objective, done deal, peace with God. I want you to know, it would change absolutely everything in our experience if we would allow the spirit to turn up our mind, remember, like he said, he'll bring these things to remembrance, if we would allow him. What a peace! This is about trusting. Since we have been justified by faith, we have this peace, and we can rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. You know, this was such a big thing, a reminder that I so needed, that when Aleta and I were first married, we had our checks printed with this verse across the top of our check. So that every time I wrote a check, every time we sent it somewhere, to pay a bill, this would be turned up in our remembered. This message was going out. "Therefore...being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." But I want you to know, this peace doesn't end there. This is an established, done deal, with his leaving. But then, right away Jesus talks to them about his peace.

There's a call here. There's a thing that he's appealing to here for us. As a gift offering, he makes an appeal that we accept this gift. He says it like this, John 14:27, "My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you." It's different than what's going on in the world. It's different. As a matter of fact, a couple of points here. What is Christ peace that's being offered? First of all, it's a specific peace. It's his peace. It's the peace that he experienced, even in times of trouble, John chapter 18. If I had time I would do this. I'd take you to John 18, at the time of trouble, when he was being arrested. When they were coming to take him away, him knowing where he was going, he's well aware of what's coming down here. He just got done sweating drops like blood over this, this whole thing. And then they show up to arrest him, and you know what Peter does, he's ready to fight! This isn't going down without a fight! ...Sorry, I forgot to smile there....Because there's a lot of folks even right now, not smiling. That ain't going down without a fight! And folks, who say they are Christ followers, with shirts that talk about "Jesus Saves", storming the Capitol, because this ain't go down without fight! And I want you to know that that is heresy. That is Christian nationalism. And it is not Christianity, not being about Jesus Christ,

and following him. And it's got so much turbulence and disturbance, and I hear it ongoing, repeatedly. Even now. Jesus talks about a specific peace, my peace, in John chapter 18, when they came to take him and Peter, grabs the knife and cuts off the servant's ear, because this ain't going down without a fight! Remember what Jesus did? He pulled Peter back, he healed the ear. And he went contrary to this. And they came to take him and he said, Who are you looking for? And they say, Jesus of Nazareth. And he says, I am he. You know what happened to them? They fell to the ground. What on earth is that? There is some striking supernatural power thing about Jesus here, that it knocked them on their can. When he said that, there's something supernatural about giving place to God. Don't miss it. He asked again. As they got up, dusted themselves off. Who are you looking for? Jesus of Nazareth, they say. That's me. And they took him. That's the kind of peace that I'm talking about. It's the peace that he possessed, as he moved in accord with what God was doing on this planet. As he decided, Not my will but yours be done. And he went with them. That's the peace. It's a powerful thing. This peace, it's a distinct peace, not as the world gives, you will never get this from the world. Never get this in all the turn of events and circumstances that happen on this planet. This will never happen for you. You will never receive, except as a gift. Christ's peace. The world can't get it. Not when it's all good and everything is going your way. Not when it's all against you and everything is going wrong. It's not gonna happen. The world is not gonna give you peace, it never will, never can, God never intended it to. It's a peace that Colossians 3:15 says can rule in your heart. This settled harmony, this calmness and quietness in your soul can be there. Let this peace rule in your heart to which we were called, all of us who are believers, we were called in one body, one group, to let this peace of Christ rule. It reigns, it calls the shots, it gives the directions in our heart. It can, let it rule.

How, how is Christ's peace experience? How does it come home to me? How does it? You see, when we're born of the Spirit, we're born of the Spirit of God. That's the Spirit that makes us different. It's new. We're like a new person. And being born of that Spirit, it produces this, "joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self control;...Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its desires and passions. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.", Gal 5:22-25. It comes by being produced in us when we keep in step with the Spirit. The Spirit produces love and we keep in step by fostering love. "Love is patient love is kind. Love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, hopes all things, endures all things, 1 Cor 13:4-7. That the neat thing, when we pursue that, when we keep in step with the spirit it produces this supernatural thing. But only if we intend to walk with a spirit, keep in step with expressing love, expressing joy. Can I tell you, I have heard very little joy expressed, very little joy expressed around. I've heard a lot of grumbling and complaining....Do you know how cold it is?! And do you know this is the most depressing time of the year?! And Lady Liberty needs to get up and fight!...Keeping step with the Spirit is expressing joy. "Rejoice always...give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.", 1 Thessalonians :16-19. I seek to express the joy rather than grumbling and complaining. Let's see, the Bible says something about that, Phillipians 2:14-15, "Do all things without grumbling or complaining, so that you may be blameless and pure, children of God who are faultless in a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine like stars in the world," Wow, does that fit! Yeah. And peace, fostering a settledness, a harmony. Does that mean never expressing your opinion, does it mean peace at any price? No, it means that we express our opinion in the right way. And that opinion, as a believer, let's see, Christianity is a follower of Christ, then that opinion has something to do with him. That has something to do with him.

Final thing here, using this peace, because Jesus doesn't leave it there, this offer of his peace, to be accepted, his peace that he experienced, he doesn't leave it there. He doesn't leave it there. He goes one step further, he gives us an imperative. Jesus says this is imperative. This is of necessity. And he does it twice here. He uses two imperatives. He says this is of utmost importance. This is imperative. He says, "Let not your heart be troubled". How do we get in on this? Don't let your heart be agitated, stirred up. Yeah. Just like that washing machine, looking into it, opening the hood and the agitator going on. Don't let that be going on in your heart. Don't let it be troubled. Don't allow that. It's a passive thing that we allow to come on us, by the things that we observe, and what we then keep in step with, the Spirit or the spirit of the age. Don't let it be troubled. Don't be fearful, you know. The younger believers, they have a reason and the older believers, they have a reason. Older believers are kind of fearful about how things are changing. And this isn't a christian nation. And by the way, can I tell you, the nation was never Christian, the people are Christians. And the younger folks, they're kind of saying, you know, there needs to be a fair deal here. How to be in on this as Jesus intended. I want you to get the impression. He goes like this. Phillippians 4:4-8, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I say rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer", talking to God in general, as your day goes on, "supplications", listing out these specific needs to God, asking Him to give attention to, "with thanksgiving let your requests be known to God." and result, how you're in on this, "and the peace of God that passes all your comprehension will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatsoever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is anything excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." Get the impression that it's this ongoing interaction with God, get into your thinking, the focus on what is being accomplished here, by the hand of God, the good that's being shown by believers in this age, and do that. And the God of peace will be with you. And by the way, can I share this with you? This thing of peace. Isaiah 26:3, "You keeps him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you." On what we've talked about, keeps his mind stayed and there is no point of end to this peace. Because the increased of his government and peace, there will be no end. It is forever. The zeal of The Lord of Hosts will accomplished this.

Where do you put your hope? Where do you put your hope in expressing the discontent and letting it be known, focusing on those things? Or is your hope focused on what God has been doing since Adam and Eve? Where's your hope? There's a way, a way that God works. Let's pray, Father in heaven, we are glad that we can run to you, glad that we can be reminded of what you've established, taught about what we can experience of Jesus's peace, knowing that our hearts are so prone to wander. But Lord, there's a way, a way of coming back. It's always the way, it's trusting I AM. You're providing now and forever but we need the way you forgive, the way you provide. Do it for us again. February 2021, Valentine's Day, in Jesus name, Amen.