

Peace

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[0 : 00] Remember, turning back to John, we can read just one or two verses in Galatians chapter 5. This will be the text. I'll explain in a second what we're doing this evening. Galatians 5 verses.

Most of us know so well. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Against such things there is no law. Now, this is the anchor this evening, but we won't actually look at this text or most of John 14.

The plan this evening for our short time together, if you allow me, it is to take as a topic one of the fruits, fruit of the Spirit there, and then to just take a general view, to see what does the Bible say about these things.

Peace. Peace is our topic this evening. Later on, three ways that the Bible reassures the believer about our peace.

[1 : 07] Now, when I planned to do this sermon, it was last week, and the current barrage of missiles and whatever else hadn't yet been launched.

And it was last night into this morning, when you turn on the news and you check online, and the first thing this morning, as my phone turned on, the news reports came pinging onto the screen. And I don't know about yourselves, but I am bemused. I am lost. Politically, wherever we may stand or land, it doesn't matter. Across the board, it seems everyone is equally just bemused and lost as to what's going on.

It does look like we're heading towards the next phase of who knows what. It doesn't take a minister from North Tulsa or anywhere else to remind us, to show us, that we live in a world where peace is just so fleeting.

And this evening, I'm not even touching on the reality of worldwide peace. That's got nothing to do with anything we can do this evening. What does peace look like, then, in our lives?

[2 : 14] Again, I know a good few faces. We've spent some years together over the years. But again, I am willing to say very openly and very easily that I do not know what your story has been this past week.

Even since the last time we were together, which wasn't that long ago. How much peace have you had in your personal life? How much peace do you have even now in your body?

Is your mind at peace mentally? Are you doing well these days? Physically, are you doing well spiritually? Are you at peace? It's just the Christians.

We'll speak to those who, as of yet, aren't Christians later on. As we think about peace and what it means to have peace as a Christian, we'll look at peace.

The Bible reminds the believer of how we have peace. First of all, then, we have peace with God. Obvious, isn't it?

[3 : 19] Obvious, we know it, we believe it. But it does us well to stop and think for a second, what does it mean, truly, to have peace with God, as those who know Him and those who love Him?

Brothers and sisters, we have peace with God this evening. I'll read some verses from Romans 5 to help us here. Romans 5, verses 1 and 2. Therefore, 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 the hope of the glory of God.

Quite simply, brothers and sisters, our peace with God, it flows from the person and the work of Jesus. Now, there's nothing this evening I am coming to say to you that is groundbreaking.

You have heard it before. You have heard it preached before. We've studied it before. Together, at some point, not so long ago, but it does us well to be reminded. I know Thomas himself will say this

to you often, how quickly we forget the simple gospel.

[4 : 35] We are, again, so liable. No matter how young we are in our faith or how mature we are in our faith, we're so liable. At times, to do lots of work for the Lord, to think deeply about the things of the Lord, and at the same time, we leave behind, as it were, the gospel basics, which really are just the gospel foundations for who we are and what we have in Jesus.

And peace is one of them. And the truth is that peace flows from who Jesus is, his person, and what Jesus has done, his work. Words familiar to us, Isaiah 53 verse 5, that great prophecy that tells us and that told God's people of old that one day a Savior would come, a Messiah would come, and how would God bring peace to his people?

Why, Isaiah said, it was by the punishment that would be placed onto the coming Messiah, by his battering, by his bruising, by his life ebbing away, by his very person being attacked, by the Savior of humanity, by the Son of God, by the very chosen one, anointed, set apart one, by his life, by his suffering, by his death, his people are promised peace.

Believers, brothers and sisters, we know, and for some of us perhaps it's quite a while ago, others of us perhaps not that long ago, think back to before you were saved. Now, in terms of our lifestyles, some of us before we were saved had very quiet, boring lives.

We weren't involved in big sin or anything else. Others of us, I know, before you were saved, you were involved in a lifestyle that was clearly against God. So wherever you fall in that spectrum of what your life once looked like, think back to how you thought about yourself, and how many sermons you sat through and conversations you heard, and all the quiet time you spent sitting there thinking to yourself that you are not right with God.

[6 : 55] You knew there wasn't peace there. You didn't feel peace there. God was always there, as it were, hovering over you. Perhaps many of you, you always believed in him, but you knew he was there, and you knew that you had no access to him other than he was there as judge, as king, and you were there, and there was nothing you could do to shake the feeling that he saw you, that he knew you, and that he was not pleased with you.

We come to a God who is holy. We approach a God who is the thing we said in our prayer who is other to us. We can't begin to understand the reality of who he is, not fully.

We live in space and time. We are confined and constrained and constricted by our very creation. He is not. We are confined and constricted by the fact that we daily say, think, and do things that are just awful against God, against goodness.

He is holy. He is perfect. He is totally other to us. And we know ourselves that only a perfect life brings peace with God.

How do we have peace with God? Well, we have to be perfect. If I stop there, then you could gladly kick me out and send me back home to Tolstair.

[8 : 22] I think the heresy is bringing here. But the truth is, Scripture is clear. How do you have peace with God? You must be perfect. There is no other way of having peace with God.

He is perfect. We are not. Our imperfection cannot begin to approach His perfection. Therefore, we have to be perfect first before we approach Him.

And the world hears that and they think, well, I'm trying my best. You know, I go to church. I know my Bibles. Some of us, we know our catechisms and we pray and we do family worship, some of us.

I'm trying my best. I'm a good citizen. I serve well in the village. I'm a good person. I try my best sometimes. I'm good to my family.

I provide and tick the list of things people try and do to make themselves right with God. But we all know that sin separates.

[9 : 20] We all know that sin destroys. And we all know that there is no one who is perfect. None but one. None but one.

And that perfect one, He suffered, as it were, a break in His eternal peace. The Son takes on human flesh. He leaves the perfection, the beauty, the glory of eternity.

Father, Son, and Spirit, our Godhead. Three persons, one God. And He takes on human flesh. He enters into time and space. He is constrained, as it were, by that, first of all.

He is humiliated by that. He who is timeless and endless now exists within time. He is changed. He is fed by His mother.

He has to learn and grow and grow up. Every single moment, He is suffering a break, as it were, from His eternal peace. He then found no peace in this world.

[10:24] Every moment, every part of His life, we are told, He was one who was acquainted with grief, with suffering. His friends would one day abandon Him. Some friends would one day completely deny Him.

Those who once followed Him would fall away. And the Savior of the world, the Creator of all things, the whole world made through Him and made for Him, He is there being spat on, kicked, shouted at, abused, in every way that Scripture makes clear to us.

All so that we would have peace with God. peace requires us to be perfect. He has come to make those who cannot be perfect, but He gives us His perfection, does He not?

What does the Bible say? On the cross, Jesus was what? On the cross, Jesus was made sin for us so that we would receive His what?

His righteousness, His covering of perfection. So what then, how else does peace look like? Peace with God in the life of the believer.

[11:41] It means we have peace, brothers and sisters, right now. Because of the finished work and the person of our Savior, we have peace right now. It means this morning you woke up and God willing, this new week, we go out into the world.

Those of us who are still in the workplace, out into work, those of us who are tired, spend time with our families or in our homes, whatever we're doing this week, we wake up tomorrow morning, we wake up basked and basking in the peace of God.

We have peace, full peace in our current standing. Brothers and sisters, we know that every time we pray, He hears our prayers. Whether we feel that or not, there are certain circumstances that help us not to feel it at times, but we know He hears the prayers of His people.

Not one of them are ignored. It means every time we read His Word because we have peace with Him, that His Spirit inside us, it leads us.

It means that because we have peace with Him, as I read in John 14, that right now God lives within you. He has made His home within you. Again, wherever we feel it or not, wherever we think about it much or not, it's still true for us.

[12:57] Because peace has been made between God and us, He has now made His home within us. There is not a single second of a believer's life, not a single place we go physically, not a place we go mentally, not a place we find ourselves spiritually, where the Lord has not made His home within us and He will not leave us, He will not forsake us or abandon us, that, brothers and sisters, should give us peace.

It also means we have peace, of course, in our eternal standing. We'll see more than that in a second, but just to say in passing, we need not worry about the distant future.

We do. We do. If we're being honest, we worry. I certainly do. Perhaps you do not, but I certainly do. We worry. We worry about what the future might look like.

And not one of us enjoys thinking about passing away. The process of death is not pleasant to think about. It's not something we look forward to.

Of course it's not. But we're not saying we have peace necessarily during the process of dying, although many Christians do. We're saying as a Christian has peace about what happens at the end of that process.

[14:17] We have peace that at the end of the process of dying, however long or short that journey might be for us, we have a sure and certain hope that he has gone, as we read there, to prepare a place for us.

John 14 again, he has gone to prepare that place and he will one day receive us home to be with him. Time without end of a new heavens and the new earth.

It means, brothers and sisters, we need not worry about assurance. Again, many of us do. The Lord says, I have set my love on you and the Lord does not lie.

We have peace now and peace forever. It also means though we have peace in our heart and our mind. Our second point here, peace in our heart and in our mind.

Two verses for us here. John 14, 7, we read in a quick verse, 1 Peter, 1 Peter 5, 7. A reminder, first of all, John 14, 7, Jesus says, Peace I leave with you.

[15:24] 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. And in 1 Peter 5, 7, a verse precious to many of us, cast all your

anxieties on Him because He cares for you.

See, the good news of having peace in Jesus, it is not just there's a distant future of hope and peace waiting us, which there is. The good news also of peace of Jesus is there's peace right now. It's not just some theological concept, not just some distant eschatological idea. Right now, despite how wise we are, despite how much wisdom we have, how much theological learning we may possess or not, despite how far along our journey we are, or how new we are to following Jesus, the Bible is very clear.

We have peace right here, right now, fully available to us. In John, Jesus contrasts the peace that He gives versus the peace the world gives us.

We live, as we said, in a world full of trouble and the missiles landing somewhere out there is bad. It worries us. But let's be honest, the missiles landing out there, that does cause us concern and worry as it should.

[17:00] But tomorrow morning, that's not, I'm sure, the biggest worry in most of our minds. Again, I don't know what is disturbing your peace this evening. I don't know what the biggest cause of concern and distraction for you is.

Is it a family situation? For many of us, I'm sure it is. A health situation? For many of us, I'm sure it is. Physical or mental? Financial situation? The way things are going just now?

I'm sure it could well be. Whatever is on your mind. The Lord Himself knows. I won't give examples because I don't want to not give you an example. The Lord knows what is troubling you this week and what will trouble you in the week to come.

And the world says to us, you can get through it. You can work through it. There's ways and means. I don't know if you've ever discussed with someone who's not Christian, discussed with the source of their happiness, the source of their joy.

It's a terrifying thing to do. Good friends who are very open and I'm thankful to the Lord for that.

Good friends are very open with me about what we think. We're not believers.

[18:15] We're talking about happiness. When it's common conversations, you don't know how you got there, but you land up somewhere talking about happiness. I wasn't trying to be evangelical, I'll be honest.

I was just asking a question. What makes them really happy? I kept pushing and pushing and pushing. I got to peace. What gives you peace?

It becomes apparent very quickly. It is almost totally rooted on circumstance. On a person, on a place, on a certain time.

And you see that, don't you? We ourselves have felt it. When that person goes away, when the circumstances change, when the times change, those who have peace rooted in anything other than Jesus, that peace is gone.

Christians, we're not immune to that. The Scripture is not saying believe in Jesus and never have any trouble in life.

[19:22] We are not teaching a health and wealth prosperity gospel. The gospel has never come to Jesus and never be anxious, never face depression, any or mental issue.

The gospel has not come to Jesus and never have to worry ever again. The gospel is simple. Let not your hearts be troubled. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you.

Following Jesus, it does not, as it were, cure the reality of life in this world, but it does give the Christian real hope that is based on something and someone outside of ourselves.

It is not just cold, mechanical peace, you could say, that Jesus offers us. He offers and shows us peace by reminding us of His care for us.

There in Peter, we are told to cast our anxieties on Him. We are not told, that is a command. In the Greek, in the grammar, it is a command. We are commanded there to cast, to throw our anxieties on Him.

[20:29] Why? Because the Lord in His goodness knows our anxieties are far too big for us, far too much for us. Even the small, so called, normal anxieties of life are big at times and can consume us at times, never mind the bigger things we might be facing just now.

Why? Because we have a Savior who cares truly for us. peace in our future.

Again, very simply, I'll read a section for us. 2 Corinthians chapter 4, I'll read verses 16 to verse 18. So we do not lose heart.

Although our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light, momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comprehension. As long as we look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen. The things that are seen are transient. The things that are unseen are eternal.

[21 : 43] there are many here and online and around our island, believers, brothers and sisters, and the lack of peace we have when we see, as it were, the decay, as it says here, the decay of our body, although our bodies are wasting away, again, illness.

It's a hard thing to go through. Let's not pretend it's not. It's a difficult thing to face illness after illness, physical and mental. It's a hard thing to go through long days, waiting for appointments and word back and hostile visits and waiting weeks for a phone call sometimes and hearing bad news and hearing worse news we all know of a journey.

It's a hard thing to see our bodies and the bodies of our loved ones wasting away, decaying, seeing the reality of sin, the reality of decay in the world.

Some of us, perhaps, with the lack of peace we have in our minds, we see our mental capacities sometimes, as it were, wasting away. We see and feel ourselves declining at times, whether that's conditions we can name or conditions we can't name.

And the glorious contrast here of 2 Corinthians is that all the decay, all the waste, all the decrease that results in a lack of peace here and now, we are looking towards a future.

[23 : 15] As Paul says, that we'll have a weight of glory that is beyond all our comprehension. That is what we're striving towards, isn't it?

The reality that one day, as Jesus says here in John 14, one day we will see him as he is, but one day we will reach that place. I study in Tulsa just now in the prayer meetings, looking at the new heavens and the new earth.

These studies that I've been taking far too long to do, because it's been far too much enjoyment for me, spending weeks looking at heaven. But it's glorious when you dig into it and delve into it and see just what the Lord promises to us.

He promises that there's a future ahead of us without decay, without decrease, with new resurrected bodies that are like us in so many ways, but also unlike us in so many ways, with the same personality, that you're still you, but you're you without sin, without darkness, without decline, you are you with nothing but peace.

Brothers and sisters, we are here this evening with the peace of a future glory ahead of us. Now this is not a motivational speech. We don't say this just to get us through the week.

[24 : 38] If it was, you'd have something far more charismatic than myself come and speak with you. This is not something we just try and hold on to to believe and it gets us through.

This is God's true word, the living word of the living God speaking to his people this evening and he says to us what waits ahead of us, what lies ahead of us, is the eternal weight of glory beyond all comprehension.

And because of that we look not to the things that are seen, but the things that are unseen, what lies ahead, where our Savior awaits us in his risen, resurrection body, fully man, fully God awaiting to welcome us in.

After a long journey of this life, brothers and sisters, that awaits us, this harbor, that awaits us, this beacon, that awaits us, this light guiding us to that home where there be no more concept of a lack of peace.

Peace will be standard, full peace will be standard, no more decay of body or mind, no more anxiety or sadness or darkness or worry.

[25 : 53] That is what lies ahead of us. That is the peace we possess right now, as those who the Lord has set his love on, has set his heart on, those the Lord has set his salvation on.

And all that is true right now of a believer. The obvious question, and the question I'll end with, I'll end with a quote in a second, but the obvious question to ask is, if I was to ask you individually, like I asked my friend this evening, where is your peace?

Where is your hope? Genuinely, what do you base your peace on? What do you look ahead and think, well, there is where I find my source of comfort and peace?

If it's not in Jesus, that peace will one day, perhaps quickly, evade you, escape you, and you're left right back where you started, looking for the next way of peace, the next way of happiness.

And our genuine hope, our genuine prayer, you'll find your peace firmly, fully, and only, in the Lord Jesus, the one who says to you, he has come to give you peace.

[27 : 13] He has come to make peace known to his people. I quote here, true spiritual peace is completely different from superficial, fragile, human peace.

True spiritual peace is a deep, settled confidence that all is well between our soul and God because of his loving, sovereign control of one's life both now in time and future in eternity.

That calm assurance, that calm peace is based on the knowledge that sins are forgiven, that blessing is present, that good is abundant even in trouble, and that heaven is ahead.

The peace that God gives his beloved children as their possession and privilege has nothing to do with the circumstances of life. Our prayer is that you all know that peace for yourselves.

A word of prayer.