

“A different kind of peace”

I would like to begin by telling you a story I heard about three churches, Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian and they worked together to sponsor a community-wide revival. After the revival, had concluded, the three pastors were discussing the results with one another. The Methodist minister said, "The revival worked great for us. We gained four families as new members of our congregation." The Baptist preacher said, "We did even better than that. We gained six new families as members of our congregation." The Presbyterian pastor said, "Well, we did even better than that! We got rid of ten of our biggest troublemakers!"

And I guess the point of the story is trouble makers are all over this sin cursed world we're living in but Christians should be pursuing another type of peace from what the world's idea of peace is. According to [Galatians 5:22](#) all Christians possess peace.

Now it should be of no surprise to us that Christians should possess the fruit of peace in their lives since the Christian's Father is a God of peace. [1 Thessalonians 5:23](#) "May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through". And how did Isaiah describe Jesus in [Isaiah 9:6](#)? "And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

You see when it comes to peace most of the world only thinks about it at Christmas time. Someone said that the phrase that best sums up the Christmas season is "Peace on earth, Good will to all and Batteries not included." Have you ever heard anyone praying for peace in the world? This is a common prayer especially at Christmas time. Now as Christians I believe we should pray for peace but I don't think the world understands what they are praying for. They think no more wars, no more murders, no more terrorism, everybody getting along with everybody else.

Let me tell you, the world seeks peace through positive thinking, tranquillisers and Electrotherapy, that's wrong. And so I guess the real questions of the night are what is this "peace" enjoyed by those who walk in the Spirit? How does a person come to have this peace? How can we be sure to preserve this peace, and enjoy it to its fullest extent?

You see like I said earlier peace is often defined in the negative terms as though peace were simply the absence of conflict. But when you look at the peace we find within the Scripture it also includes positives. The Greek word for peace is 'eirene', which is defined as "peace between individuals" In some parts of the New Testament it used in terms of, "the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that is"

In other words, rather than simply being an absence of conflict, the peace God provides is a condition that is positive in nature and an active fellowship, harmony and concord between individuals.

A man was walking home late one night when he came across a woman, who was standing under a streetlight, looking intently down the street; the man says to the woman "What are you looking for?" The woman replied "My keys" The man said, "Where did you lose them?" she said "Over there" The man said "Why are you looking over there?" The woman replied "The light is better."

You won't find peace in a lager bottle; you won't find peace by taking drugs. The point is this; if you are not in Christ you cannot enjoy God's peace. If you are looking for peace this morning, then you need to look in the right place; not where the world says you will find it. But where God says you will find it and the only place to find eternal peace is in Christ Jesus.

Don't be fooled my friends, there will never be peace in this world, because Satan is still around and Satan doesn't want peace. And so there will be no peace on earth until Jesus comes back. Biblical peace comes from Jesus who came to bring that very thing.

We already looked at Isaiah's prophecy; let's look at it again beginning in [Isaiah 9:6-7](#) "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this."

To have this peace which the Bible talks about you need to first at least understand where this peace comes from.

When Jesus began his ministry here on earth, He started preaching and **what did He preach?** When He came, He came preaching peace. **Acts 10:36** “You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.”

And like I said loved ones, it is Jesus who offers peace and you won't find it anywhere else because the world is not able to offer it. Jesus Himself said in **John 14:27** “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

And let me share with you something else about this peace that Jesus offers, you can possess it even though your life is in ruins and your going through all sorts of personal problems. **You know, try going to the doctors today and saying “my life is in a mess, my wife has walked out with another man, my kids are hooked on cannabis and I just can't handle it anymore”.** The doctor would say, “Here are some antidepressants and here is the number of a good counsellor”.

Well loved ones as **Isaiah** has already told us, Christians have the best counsellor there is and that's Jesus and **isn't that wonderful?** Jesus tells us in **John 16:33** that even in the midst of tribulation you can find peace. **“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”**

Now the peace which Jesus brought involves many things, one of which is the most important peace of all, **peace with God.** Now if you have your Bibles with you please turn to **Roman 5** where we will find some of the greatest texts within the Scriptures. **Romans 5:1** “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

You see peace with God comes when we are justified by faith. And look what happens when you have this peace with God. **Romans 5:2-5** “Through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us”.

When we have that peace with God it makes us happy, so happy all we want to do is rejoice. And when we rejoice it fills us with love, even in the midst of hard times and tribulation, but loved ones here comes the cruncher. **Romans 5:6-9** “You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!”

That peace and joy and love was only made possible by the loving sacrifice of Jesus' blood. And that peace and joy and love is still possible for us to enjoy today because Jesus rose from the dead. **Romans 5:10+11** “For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation”.

You see the tomb wasn't the end, Jesus being nailed naked to across and dying on it wasn't the end. **As Robert Lowry the Hymn writer wrote,** “Up from the grave he arose; with a mighty triumph o'er his foes; he arose a victor from the dark domain, and he lives forever, with his saints to reign. He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!”

Or in the words of the **Hebrew** writer in **Hebrews 7:25**, “Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them”. Peace with God is still on offer loved ones for those who aren't yet Christians and He longs to remind those who are Christians that you are still at peace with Him.

Another peace which God has to offer is **peace with man.** **People say that during his reign as head of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev said in an Italian newspaper interview that true socialism works for social justice, freedom, equality, and human values. He said, “In short, we promote the cause of Christ.” Gorbachev also toured Israel and referred to himself as a “lifelong socialist following in the footsteps of Jesus.” He said if peace and harmony arrive between Palestinians and Israelis it “would have to be founded on the Spirit of Jesus.”**

You see loved ones only when a person finds peace with God first they can go on to find peace with their fellow man.

Now it's no secret that the Jews and Gentiles couldn't stand one another, the Bible is full of examples of their hostility towards each other. **But isn't it wonderful that even the Jews and Gentiles could be at peace with one another.** The world cannot offer that peace but as **Gorbachev** said, "peace would have to be founded on the Spirit of Jesus."

Ephesians 2:11-14 "Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men) - remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility."

The Jews and Gentiles hated each other but when Jesus' peace is understood, all men can be at peace with each other. And notice something else; it was only made possible through the same act which makes peace with God, the death of Jesus Christ! **Ephesians 2:15-16** "By abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility".

But loved ones as I said that peace wasn't just for the people of Jesus' time, it was for you I and everyone here tonight. Jesus didn't just come to preach peace for the people in His day; He came to preach peace to all of mankind as Paul tells us in the next verse. **Ephesians 2:17** "He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near".

And loved ones, that peace is really amazing because it also offers three other wonderful things. **1st** of all Paul says in **Ephesians 2:18** "For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit". Jesus' peace gives us direct communication to God. No more going to the priests and asking them to pray to God for us, we can do that ourselves.

2nd Paul says in **Ephesians 2:19**, "Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household" Paul says that this peace which you can have is a peace where all can be fellow-citizens with the saints, a peace where all can be members of the family of God.

And then **number 3**, Paul says in **Ephesians 2:20-22**, "Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit". Paul says that Jesus' peace is a peace where all can be a temple in the Lord, a home where God will live in us in the form of His Spirit.

And then the **final** side of peace I would like us to look at is **peace with self**. You see loved ones, peace within our selves only comes when we possess being at peace with God through Jesus. Peace within ourselves only comes when we possess being at peace with God and being at peace with those around us through Jesus. In other words, when Jesus brings us peace with God and man, peace within naturally follows.

But Paul also describes this peace in another way in **Philippians 4:6+7** "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus".

This peace blesses the soul from within, now that's something else the world cannot do. Because Paul says this peace comes from God. Paul says this peace surpasses all understanding. That word **guard** there is a Roman military word and what Paul is saying is this peace protects and it serves as a fortress to guard our hearts and minds. But again, it only comes through Christ Jesus.

We get migraines and ulcers and high blood pressure and work ourselves into early graves and we're miserable and we snap at people, when our tempers are high. And we're like that because of all the stuff we're worrying about and we say, "Why does God let this happen to me"? Do you know what God who is up heaven is thinking? "Why are they letting this happening to them?" "Why don't they pray?"

Now Paul doesn't say, "Now if you pray about everything God will always give you everything you ask for". What Paul does say is, "when you start regularly praying to God you are going to get what you need most of all; you are going to get the experience of a supernatural touch in your life".

Paul says, “you are going to get a peace that will flood life, that you can’t even explain but you cannot explain away either.”

Now this is hard to talk about because some of you have perhaps never felt that peace and you think I’m sounding crazy. But there have been times in my life where I have just poured out my heart to God, that the peace that God sent was so present, I literally felt it. And I can’t explain it, the Bible says, “It’s beyond understanding” But its God’s gift of a supernatural visitation to you, to take away your worry.

You see Christians have something special. Our peace comes from the relationship we have with our God. Our peace comes from the assurance of heaven for those who are faithful. Our peace comes from the knowing that the blood of Christ is continuously washing our sins away. And our peace comes from knowing that our salvation is assured and already taken care of. That’s what the Christian peace is and the world cannot offer that.

Loves ones, we must never forget that Jesus, as the Prince of peace, even before He was born He had peace in mind. Even on the night of His birth, it was pronounced by an angel in Luke 2:11-14 “Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favour rests.”

When He started His ministry, He came preaching peace. He died on the cross to make peace possible with God, man, and self. And when you think about His kingdom which He established after His death and resurrection, peace was and still is the key feature with that kingdom. Romans 14:17-19 “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men. Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification”.

So let me ask you where are you searching for peace? Maybe you looking for peace in your local pub? Maybe you’re looking for peace when you read your star signs in the local newspaper? Maybe you’re thinking if I just divorce my spouse and find a new one then I will have peace. Or maybe you haven’t made peace with God yet and lie in bed at night worrying about your future in eternity?

You see loved ones, peace is only found in Christ and its Christ who replaces the world’s idea of peace in your hearts with His peace. Paul says in Colossians 3:15 “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful”. But for that to happen we first need to allow Jesus to give us His peace as Paul prayed for the Thessalonians. 2 Thessalonians 3:16 "Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all."

Wouldn’t you want to have that sort of peace in your lives to the very end of time? Do you want that peace with God, with your fellow man and within? Do you really want to experience that "peace which surpasses all understanding"? Too many times I hear people say at funerals, ‘atleast they are at peace now’. Let me be honest with you, if they are not Christians, being at peace is far from their condition.

Matthew 13:47-50 "Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth”.

Now I don’t know about you but that sounds to me more like torment than peace. Loved ones, you cannot be at peace with God after your dead, you need to accept now. All you have to do is obey what Jesus said to His disciples shortly before ascending into heaven. Matthew 28:18-20 "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

It’s very simple, if you want Jesus to be with you always, you need to be baptised in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Loved ones, the peace that Jesus offers is a different kind of peace from what the world has to offer. Let me encourage if you haven’t already done that to speak to someone before you leave today about what that peace which God offers through His Son Jesus means to them.