

Peace- Can I leave this Here?

2000 years ago Jesus left the Mount of Olives. He said that He would return. But He promised a gift...well two gifts really....1) was a guide, a Spirit of God...a Spirit that is God. God would be with us at all times and teach us all things. Jesus was keeping His promise. God would be with us always. Jesus in human form would be replaced with the Holy Spirit in another form.

The second thing Jesus gave to us is essentially a Spiritual Fruit Basket. Not only would we be receiving God but we would be receiving certain gifts from God. Gifts that Paul called the fruit of the Spirit. Heavenly things brought to earth for us to have until Jesus returns.

But Jesus didn't give us real fruit....we didn't do so well with that in the Garden of Eden...Instead he gave us the fruit...the benefit...the blessing of the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-24 (ESV) 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

That is what we have been studying in this series. We have learned that these fruits are available to but only to those who develop and invest their time in a relationship with the Holy Spirit.

These have nothing to do with your salvation they are icing on the cake, but they do define the quality of the cake. More time with the Holy Spirit....more obvious and more juicy fruit.

Today we are going to look at the Spiritual fruit of Peace....my favorite....because this is the one God used to bring me back home

I saw it in someone and knew I would do whatever it takes to live in that kind of peace. I had lived years in the torment that was worry and anxiety. Calm on the outside but raging emotions and concern on the inside,

I was trying to be God and failing miserably. I was under so much pressure to keep everything under control....A control that I actually never had.

Have you felt the pressure of life? **IMAGE 1**

Have you been there? Maybe you are there right now.. The weight of what you are going through... Is too much for you to bear. You can't stand up underneath it... You don't have the strength and it feels like.... It will crush you. When you see people going through pressure you can almost see it in their eyes can't you?

It seems to me that there are two types of pressures... The first time comes all at once and just seems to get dumped on you A situation hits and you immediately know it is heavy

You are fired from your job....you spouse wants a divorce....some one you love dies... The bank claims your home...someone is abused...the doctor's report is not good These instant weights...hit and they hit hard and quick...you know they are bearing down on you.

But the second kind of pressure is more subtle... It comes from circumstances that seem to have less weight... Any one of them would not be too much to bear...but they all start to add up

Maybe the initial weight of a circumstance wasn't so bad...but you are carrying it for a long time. Psychologists call this "Stress Contamination"

There is not one anxiety or one source of pressure... But together these smaller things become overwhelming. Overdue bills....constantly overbearing boss....fussy child...car repairs... plumbing issues...the stock market falls...

These little things...ok by themselves...begin to add up... And rob us of the peace God had planned for us. We feel ourselves struggling under the weight of life... At times it seems like it is more than we can endure At the gym I occasionally see someone struggling with too much weight. They yell for a spotter...someone who comes and takes some of the weight for them. The weight is still there...but they are no longer carrying it alone.

Take a moment... Think about the weights that are on your bar right now. What are the things that are causing pressure...stress...and anxiety in your life..

My guess is that you have been wrestling with a situation You want to experience peace...but you can't find it. You have likely done what we all do with the spiritual fruit.. We try to make it happen ourselves. We see the spiritual fruit as a to do list... We think we can achieve love...joy..peace...etc If we are just self empowered with determination We see it as the fruit of self...

So rather than turning to God for help...we look to ourselves.

Amazon has over 100,000 books about peace Almost all of them take the "self help" approach.. They define peace as... A state of mutual harmony between people or groups, especially in personal relations:

They teach us to find peace within ourselves... But peace is illusive...that is why there are over 100,000 books about it. When peace becomes illusive in the book store....

We head next door to the Pharmacy

Peace found through chemicals. It seems everyone has a new ideas about how to find internal peace. and few it seems ever find it. We have an insatiable appetite for medications. It is the fastest growing religion in America The use of chemicals to try to find peace....

Antidepressants...Anti-anxiety meds.... Drugs that speed you up....drugs that slow you down... Meds that wake you up....Meds that put you to sleep Chemicals that numb the pain....

If the pharmacy doesn't have it.... Go to the nutrition store and try herbs, vitamins, or teas.

If the Nutrition Store doesn't work... There are bars and liquor stores.... Or chemical street vendors.

Joseph Califano Jr... Former US Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare... Former Chairman of the National Center for Addiction and Substance Abuse. In his book...High Society: How Substance Abuse Ravages America...says...

Chemistry is chasing Christianity as the nation's largest religion. Indeed millions of Americans in times of personal crisis and emotional and mental anguish who once turned to priests, ministers and rabbis, looking for keys to the heavenly kingdom. Now go to the physicians and psychiatrists who hold the keys to the kingdom of pharmaceutical relief, or to drug dealers, bars or liquor stores"

I am a Medical Doctor and I am not saying that there is not a role... For the medical treatment of depression and anxiety For many those medications are gifts from God But my concern is that when the pressure in our life amps up We are looking less and less toward God... And more and more horizontally toward ourselves. books, people, medications, and drugs.

We put our trust in the latest guru....the latest book.... We are trying to find peace in a pill OR maybe peace in a drink... Or peace and escape through pornography Or maybe it is food... There are innumerable options...but none seem to work.

You desperately need peace and the weight and pressure is building. You are just trying to get something or someone to spot you... To help take some of the weight...

Maybe you barely got here today. Maybe you are just barely holding the bar up and it feels like it is crushing you... If that is you I have good news for you.... Jesus has a message for you...

Matthew 11:28-30 (ESV) 28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

I don't know what weight you are carrying....how much it is crushing you.....but I know that Jesus is your spotter. We need to cry out to Him before the weight crushes us

We look for peace in our circumstances..... We look horizontally at our relationships.. We think we will finally have peace... When we get along with everyone... When there is no war....no conflict.. We dream about peace on earth.. We dream about that day.... When all of our circumstances align And there is no friction. We strive to create peace with others...

We have to dream about peace...because we really have never seen it

In the over 3100 years of recorded world history, the world has only been at peace 8% of the time or a total of 286 years, and over 8000 treaties have been made and broken. During this period there have been 14,531 wars, large and small, in which 3,640,000,000 people have been killed.

Have you noticed that there is something wrong with us...? We generally don't play well with others. In 3100 years of recorded world history.... We have almost never been a peace with each other.

We become the most selfish... We become intoxicated with our success We focus on ourselves at the advantage of others It is almost as if we were not designed To live in peace. Like this world was never designed for world peace.

As a nation....the US has essentially never been a peace with anyone. Let me refresh our memory.... In order....The Revolutionary War...The Franco-American War...The War of 181... Then the Seminole Wars (right here in FL)....The Mexican American War (Yeah Texas)...The Slave Owners War....The Civil War... WWI (to end all wars)....WWII (Our first nuclear effort)....Korean....Bay of Pigs Cuba....Vietnam...First Gulf War....Panama...Second Gulf War...War on Terror... The the Indian Wars- Sioux, Comanche, Cheyene, Apache Cherokee....The Spanish American War... Then we have the less obvious wars...The Cold War....The Civil Rights War....The War against the Unborn Fetus....The Drug Wars...The Mob Wars...Gang Wars...Political Terrorism

We call ourselves One Nation Under God... But peace.... not so common.Listen to one of our Presidents...

"We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us."

Do you know who said this? **Abraham Lincoln**.... The year the Civil War started.

In the next 5 years... Estimates are that as many as 850,000 people died... Almost twice as many as WWII and 10X as many as the Vietnam War

Lets just say...peace has not been our forte. We don't seem to have it in us. We don't seem wired for peace. Do you know what our problem is? Why we never find peace?

We believe that Peace is found on Earth. We think peace is something that man creates...that man makes happen. We look for peace horizontally and that is not where peace comes from

You see our problem is not horizontal with other people.... Our primary problem is vertical with God. We are born into a sin state...at war with God.

In Ephesians God says that we were dead in our sins... That prior to knowing Jesus we were sons of disobedience... Let by Satan... At war with God... And by nature Children of Wrath... Just like all of mankind.

We struggle with peace horizontally (peace with each other) because we are not a peace vertically (Peace with God)

Our sin has separated us from God... We are in conflict with God...and have no ability to restore that relationship

Jesus was sent on a mission to bring to us peace....He didn't come as a peacekeeper to tell everyone to simmer down. He never intended to try to bring world peace. He came to bring the Peace of God from the Throne of God....not as a peacekeeper but as a peace maker. He brought the Peace we lost in the garden. His first mission to earth was to fix and restore our relationship with God. To give us an opportunity to be at peace WITH GOD. By paying the price for the sins that separated us. The peace that Jesus speaks of...is a vertical peace... Restoring our relationship with God Dealing with the sin issue.
PEACE WITH GOD

Let me highlight his mission..

The Prophets spoke of One....

Isaiah 9:6-7 (ESV) 6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end,

The Angels announced His Birth

Luke 2:14 (ESV) 14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

On Palm Sunday...

Luke 19:38 (ESV) 38 saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

Peace in Heaven.... Finally peace with God. Then at the cross

Colossians 1:19-20 (ESV) 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Reconcile all things... Earth and Heaven.. Peace by His blood

Jesus was on a mission to restore our relationship with God So that we could live in peace with our creator... On Jesus' first trip to earth... Jesus promised His Peace... Not world peace.

His peace is supernatural and internal within His followers. He specifically said He was not here to establish world peace..

Matthew 10:34 (ESV) 34 "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

Do you see the key words..."to the earth" The message of Jesus will divide us On His first trip...the only peace Jesus cared about... Was restoring our peace with the Father.

It is critical that we all understand...that the message of Jesus.... Was first and foremost Vertical Peace with God... Once we restore our relationship with God.... Then only through the Holy Spirit...we can experience the peace of God.

Peace on earth will only come when everyone has restored their relationship with God through Christ's blood and received the Spirit of God. Believers can establish Peace with God and experience the spiritual fruit of peace of God. But as long as there is sin on earth.....there will not be peace on earth.

Lets look at John 14 John 14-16 Jesus is soon to be going away.. Jesus is talking to His closest followers the Disciples. It is one of the last conversations they will have before His crucifixion. Jesus does all that He can do to prepare them for what is about to happen.

He wants to help them with the pressure... The stress of what will soon be coming their way. He doesn't want them to be caught off guard. So Jesus warns them in John 14-16 That they are about to suffer because of their faith... They will be hated...they will be persecuted... ..in other words...HUGE weights are about to fall on you. Bigger weights than you have ever imagined or seen.

It is in that context that Jesus makes two huge promises... Jesus tells them that He is going to be leaving.. Imagine their anxiety and stress.. When they hear that Jesus is leaving... Immanuel...God with us..is not going to be with us.

Who is going to calm the storm? Who is going to heal the sick? Who is going to take care of us? Jesus says He is leaving and they start to stress out...so Jesus reassures them....

John 14:18 (ESV) 18 "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

Then He explains in verse 26 John 14:26 (ESV) 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 that I have said to you.

The helper...the counselor...the Holy Spirit is coming to care for you I am going away but it is better because.. The Father will send the Spirit in my name. He will teach you all things..

You will know that He is in you... Because your life will be filled with supernatural fruit.

Galatians 5:22-24 (ESV) 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Look specifically at the peace that Jesus offers to those who believe. He tells them that He has come from Heaven with Heavenly things. He is going to leave a few things with us. Things we did not have before. Things from Heaven that could only get to us if someone from heaven brought them down.

John 14:27 (ESV) 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.

Jesus says... "Don't let your hearts be troubled" You are going to have a LOT of trouble.... But don't be troubled. About three times he repeats this message... There is going to be trouble.... But don't be troubled.... How do you do that? Jesus tells them... your life is about to be miserable. I am out of here..... but don't be troubled... The Holy Spirit will show up..... And I have something else for you...

Jesus makes it clear.... Jesus promises peace but He does not promise peacefulness

He promises us peace... but that does not mean there will not be pressure We get disappointed and disillusioned with God Because we don't understand this truth.

We hear Jesus say He promises us His peace... we think Jesus promised..... A good doctors report A smooth and great marriage Great financial blessings We translate Jesus saying I give you my peace... Into Jesus saying... "I fix your problems" "I take away all of your pressure"

We think that now that we are Christians... Jesus will work out all the details. When we hear Jesus promise peace.... we immediately think of circumstances. that Jesus will arrange our circumstances so that we are peaceful.

But Jesus makes it very clear that He promises us trouble. Each day has plenty of trouble of its own.... but Jesus says... Don't be troubled. Jesus promises us pressure and persecution... but Jesus says... I give you my peace How does that work? How do we find peace... when the pressure is on?

Let's define peace from a Biblical Perspective.

There are clearly times in the Bible when peace means to not be at war... Those passages are easy to understand in context. When God promises to establish peace with other nations. this is what I call horizontal peace Humans at peace with one another.

But often Scriptures teach us of Peace in the context of our relationship with God.

This type of vertical peace is defined as.... Total well-being, prosperity, and security associated with God's presence among his people.

The Supernatural Spiritual Fruit of Peace.... Is an internal awareness from the Holy Spirit...

That despite your sins and shortcomings... You are no longer at war with God. You are no longer in a Spiritual Battle against Him

Jesus came to restore our relationship... to bring peace with God. Our relationship with God that was broken by our sin Paul said it this way.

Romans 5:1 (ESV) 5 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Through our relationship with Jesus...we can have peace with God. Biblical Peace is the awareness through the Holy Spirit... That your sins have been paid for....

Romans 8:1 (ESV) 8 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

No Condemnation....Peace WITH God...Because of Jesus.... We can be at total peace with God. We can know in the depths of our souls that there is no condemnation for us. That God is not trying to hurt us, punish us, or is disappointed in us. We have total and absolute Peace WITH God.

Some believers not only have Peace with God but they experience the Peace of God in their lives every day.

It is not that they are special, or that they are extra blessed, or they have impressed God more than other believers. It is not that God gave them an extra measure of Peace With Him. They don't have special knowledge, intellectual genius, or incredible human insight.... They not only experience Peace with God but they have the Peace of God in their lives....for one reason and one reason only.....they chose to abide.

And God promised that all who abide in Him will experience the Fruit of the Spirit. They called Jesus Immanuel...God with us.. God being with man was a common theme in the Old Testament. God was with Adam and Eve....God was with Abraham....God was with Joseph God was with Moses...God was with Man.

But once you leave the Gospels....from Acts through Revelation... You just don't see it anymore.. You don't find mention of God with us again... From Genesis through Matthew, Mark, Luke and John... We hear of God with us..

There is a prepositional change that occurs at the end of the Gospels. It is subtle but changes everything... God WITH us....changes to....God IN us... That might not seem like a big deal....but it is a big deal.

Jesus said we would not be orphans... I don't know of any worse feeling that to be alone. I spend much of my day with people who are hurting..... Suffering and in pain... But to me...no one suffers...like the one who is alone. It is a deep ache...deep feeling..it is physical and overbearing... It is a weight all in its own category. Jesus wants us to make sure that we know....we are not alone...ever.

Many need to be reminded of this... Because many of us are Christians....we have received the gift of the Holy Spirit.... And yet we live as if He is not in us.. We try to go through things alone. But the Greek word here literally means..."The one who comes up alongside"

We need to keep that in our mind... When The Doctor says there is nothing left to do... He draws up alongside. When the cramping is a miscarriage... He draws up alongside. When your office is now packed into a box...and you are unemployed. He draws up alongside... When the divorce papers are delivered... He draws up alongside.

The Holy Spirit comes alongside. You don't understand it...you just experience it.

Philippians 4:6-7 (ESV) 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

God's peace surpasses all understanding.... You can experience it...but you can't explain it... The Holy Spirit will give you peace.... You can experience it....but you will never understand it. A peace that is so clearly supernatural....

Jesus says.... The Holy Spirit will come...He will empower you...He will fill you with His fruit.... He will live in you and you will know it. But good luck trying to explain it.. When you try to explain it to someone who hasn't experienced it... They are going to think you are nuts...

The Holy Spirit is our Guide I think one of the greatest weights we carry Is not knowing what to do in our circumstances. We struggle with anxiety over making the right decisions... Here is what Jesus says....

John 14:26 (ESV) 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 that I have said to you.

The Holy Spirit is our guide. He teaches us of what God wants in our lives... He reminds us of what God has said in His Word. He leads us through our circumstances...

Unless....well...unless you don't ever develop a relationship with your guide...The Holy Spirit...

But too many Christians try to manage everything on their own.... They haven't prioritized their time with Jesus.. Their roots are not deep Weeds have been dealt with but only on the surface.. Jesus said it was better to have the Holy Spirit in you... Than to have Jesus walk next to you... But you must yield to the Spirit... Juicy Fruit...including peace...requires surrender.

Isaiah 48:18-22 (ESV) 18 Oh that you had paid attention to my commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea; 1.....22 "There is no peace," says the Lord, "for the wicked."

Could you imagine...climbing Mt Everest.... With a guide...that you never talk to? This guide has all the answers...but you never ask? He can reassure you...encourage you...empower you.... But you are not interested.... How crazy would that be?

Jesus had a critical message for all of us... I don't know what circumstance threatens to steal your peace I don't know what weight you are under... I don't know how much pressure is on you... What I do know...is that Jesus died....so you could have peace.

What I do know if that Jesus died...so that we could have peace....So that your relationship with God could be restored....So the Spirit of God would be in you and not just with you....So you could face your trouble and not be troubled. If you know Jesus....no matter how heavy the weight... He is your spotter. He shares the weight of what you are going through.. His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

Jesus was original Peace Out. He left His peace and went to heaven. He was called the Prince of Peace. He came into the world with a promise of peace. He left the world with a legacy of peace. His first visit to earth brings Peace from God but leaves wars with men. His next return to earth will bring war with God and peace to Men. He prayed for peace and then He paid for peace. He offers the Peace of God because he offers Peace with God. He brings a Peace that the world has never seen to reveal a God that the World needs to see. My Peace I give to you...let not your hearts be troubled. Le'ts Pray