

“Peace”

Pastor Grant Williams April 22, 2015

Fruit of the Spirit Week #5

Galatians 5:7-26 (Amplified Bible)

7 You were running the race nobly. Who has interfered in (hindered and stopped you from) your heeding and following the Truth?

8 This [evil] persuasion is not from Him Who called you [Who invited you to freedom in Christ].

9 A little leaven (a slight inclination to error, or a few false teachers) leavens the whole lump [it perverts the whole conception of faith or misleads the whole church].

10 [For my part] I have confidence [toward you] in the Lord that you will take no contrary view of the matter but will come to think with me. But he who is unsettling you, whoever he is, will have to bear the penalty.

11 But, brethren, if I still preach circumcision [as some accuse me of doing, as necessary to salvation], why am I still suffering persecution? In that case the cross has ceased to be a stumbling block and is made meaningless (done away).

12 I wish those who unsettle and confuse you would [go all the way and] cut themselves off!

13 For you, brethren, were [indeed] called to freedom; only [do not let your] freedom be an incentive to your flesh and an opportunity or excuse [for selfishness], but through love you should serve one another.

14 For the whole Law [concerning human relationships] is complied with in the one precept, You shall love your neighbor as [you do] yourself.

15 But if you bite and devour one another [in partisan strife], be careful that you [and your whole fellowship] are not consumed by one another.

16 But I say, walk and live [habitually] in the [Holy] Spirit [responsive to and controlled and guided by the Spirit]; then you will certainly not gratify the cravings and desires of the flesh (of human nature without God).

17 For the desires of the flesh are opposed to the [Holy] Spirit, and the [desires of the] Spirit are opposed to the flesh (godless human nature); for these are antagonistic to each other [continually withstanding and in conflict with each other], so that you are not free but are prevented from doing what you desire to do.

18 But if you are guided (led) by the [Holy] Spirit, you are not subject to the Law.

19 Now **the doings (practices) of the flesh are clear (obvious):** they are immorality, impurity, indecency,

20 Idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger (ill temper), selfishness, divisions (dissensions), party spirit (factions, sects with peculiar opinions, heresies),

21 Envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you beforehand, just as I did previously, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [**the work which His presence within accomplishes**] is love, joy (gladness), **peace**, patience (an even temper, forbearance), kindness, goodness (benevolence), faithfulness,

23 Gentleness (meekness, humility), self-control (self-restraint, continence). Against such things there is no law [that can bring a charge].

24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus (the Messiah) **have crucified the flesh** (the godless human nature) with its passions and appetites and desires.

25 If we live by the [Holy] Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. [If by the Holy Spirit we have our life in God, let us go forward walking in line, our conduct controlled by the Spirit.]

26 Let us not become vainglorious and self-conceited, competitive and challenging and provoking and irritating to one another, envying and being jealous of one another.

Definition of Peace:

1. the normal, nonwarring condition of a nation, group of nations, or the world.
2. an agreement or treaty between warring or antagonistic nations, groups, etc., to end hostilities and abstain from further fighting or antagonism: the Peace of Ryswick.
3. a state of mutual harmony between people or groups, esp. in personal relations: ex: Try to live in peace with your neighbors.
4. the normal freedom from civil commotion and violence of a community; public order and security: He was arrested for being drunk and disturbing the peace.
5. cessation of or freedom from any strife or dissension.
6. freedom of the mind from annoyance, distraction, anxiety, an obsession, etc.; tranquillity; serenity.
7. a state of tranquillity or serenity: May he rest in peace.
8. a state or condition conducive to, proceeding from, or characterized by tranquillity: the peace of a mountain resort.
9. silence; stillness: The cawing of a crow broke the afternoon's peace.

Someone once said: “Peace is the brief glorious moment in history when everybody stands around reloading.”

Isn't that true whether we're talking about world peace or inner peace? It seems like it never lasts, and when we have it, we tend to expect that it will only be a matter of time before its disrupted.

Tonight, we continue our exploration of the Fruit of the Spirit as we talk about the third fruit mentioned by Paul here in Galatians 5 – PEACE. What does the word peace mean here? Is it inner peace, peace between people, peace with God, all of these, or something else?

Let's begin with the...

I. Peace of God

This Greek word for peace is Eirene and so if your name is Irene it means peace. This word is really a translation of the well known Hebrew word Shalom which literally means “safe” with other off shoots being “well” and “prosperous”. In other words this peace refers to doing well and being safe and provided for. One might think of how a well cared for baby might feel, completely worry free. That's what we're getting at here.

Now let's think about that for a minute. Do you think the omnipotent, all knowing God worries about anything?

Look at what Jesus says in **John 14:27** – “*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you, not as the world gives do I give to you. Let your hearts not be troubled, neither let them be afraid.*” Is he not saying “don’t worry because I have given you my Shalom?”

John 14:27 (Amplified Bible)

*27Peace I leave with you; My [own] peace I now give and bequeath to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. (in other words it’s not a false sense of security) Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. [**Stop allowing yourselves** to be agitated and disturbed; and do not permit yourselves to be **fearful and intimidated and cowardly and unsettled.**]*

Galatians 5:10 “who is unsettling you” ?

So this peace is:

A. A Characteristic Of God And His Kingdom

Romans 14:17 (Amplified Bible)

17[After all] the kingdom of God is not a matter of [getting the] food and drink [one likes], but instead it is righteousness (that state which makes a person acceptable to God) and [heart] peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Notice the mention of two elements of the Fruit of the Spirit there, peace and joy.

We say in the Lord's prayer "your Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven", well we're asking for righteousness, peace and joy that are already in heaven and we are to cultivate it here on earth.

B. This Peace Is The Opposite Of Confusion

Often our worries or stress comes from confusion, not being sure why something is happening, what to do or think. This is something that God never experiences, and through the Holy Spirit this peace is available to eliminate our confusion as well.

1 Corinthians 14:33 (King James Version)

33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace,

Have you ever been confused over a situation?

Romans 7:15-20 Amplified Bible (AMP)

15 For I do not understand my own actions [I am baffled, bewildered]. I do not practice or accomplish what I wish, but I do the very thing that I loathe [which my moral instinct condemns].

When I'm confused I make the wrong decision -

James 3:13-18 (Amplified Bible)

13 Who is there among you who is wise and intelligent? Then let him by his noble living show forth his [good] works with the [unobtrusive] humility [which is the proper attribute] of true wisdom.

14 But if you have bitter jealousy (envy) and contention (rivalry, selfish ambition) in your hearts, do not pride yourselves on it and thus be in defiance of and false to the Truth.

15 This [superficial] wisdom is not such as comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual (animal), even devilish (demoniacal).

16 For wherever there is jealousy (envy) and contention (rivalry and selfish ambition), there will also be confusion (unrest, disharmony, rebellion) and all sorts of evil and vile practices.

17 But the wisdom from above is first of all pure (undefiled); then it is peace-loving, courteous (considerate, gentle). [It is willing to] yield to reason, full of compassion and good fruits; it is wholehearted and straightforward, impartial and unfeigned (free from doubts, wavering, and insincerity).

18 And the harvest of righteousness (of conformity to God's will in thought and deed) is [the fruit of the seed] sown in peace by those who work for and make peace [in themselves and in others, that peace which means concord, agreement, and harmony between individuals, with undisturbedness, in a peaceful mind free from fears and agitating passions and moral conflicts].

God's wisdom and peace result in perfect harmony inside our hearts and among others.

C. His Peace will Prevail at the Final Conflict

Because peace is God's nature, He cannot co-exist with the opposite of peace and neither can we, at least not effectively.

In **Romans 16:20** we hear, “*The God of Peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.*” Interesting how He says under your feet, meaning the undivided church, not His feet, remembering that the church is now Jesus body in the world.

It does sound like a bit of a contradiction from the last point here though doesn't it? **But remember we are not here talking about Him giving peace in the physical way. This is the well-being type of peace that requires the destruction of evil.**

This is confirmed by Jesus own words in Matthew 10...

Matthew 10:34 (Amplified Bible)

34 Do not think that I have come to bring peace upon the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

How can He say he has not come to bring peace, yet earlier He says my peace I give to you? We must look at the context to understand this.

When He says I give you my peace, He is speaking to His disciples as He is telling them about His leaving to fulfill His mission on the cross. This is inner peace. Here in Matthew, He is saying He does not bring peace to the world, no, He has come to bring the sword of judgment upon the world if they do not trust in Him and His return. Those who believe and trust in Him will receive peace, while others will receive judgment and destruction.

You will hear and are hearing men and women clothed with veil of godliness but twisting the truth and trying to bring peace to this earth in their own way.

Anything but peace cannot coexist with God, so He has to eradicate it if He is to be with us. This is the gospel of Jesus in its un-watered down version. *“Believe in me, trust in me, obey me, and I will give you safety and well-being for eternity. Refuse me, and you will be subject to war, destruction and judgment when I return.”* It’s that simple.

Our world needs desperately to return to a belief in heaven and hell. Even the church has eased up on these clear doctrines of a literal hell and heaven. If these are true, as the Word of God says, there are enormous ramifications and I for one do not want to take the chance that my stubbornness or fear or desire to build a church that is based on half truths (not the whole truth - which is a lie) that lands me in hell for eternity. Eternal peace or eternal suffering, that’s the choice Jesus gives us with a very small but crucial requirement, believe in Him. Seems like a no brainer to me.

Not only is there the peace of God, but also:

II. Peace with God

Jesus brought us His peace to hold in our hearts, and He also brought us literal peace with God and with other people.

This peace is received by:

A. Faith in the Sacrifice of Christ on our Behalf

Ephesians 2:11-22 (Amplified Bible)

11 Therefore, remember that at one time you were Gentiles (heathens) in the flesh, called Uncircumcision by those who called themselves Circumcision, [itself a mere mark] in the flesh made by human hands.

12 [Remember] that you were at that time separated (living apart) from Christ [excluded from all part in Him], utterly estranged and outlawed from the rights of Israel as a nation, and strangers with no share in the sacred compacts of the [Messianic] promise [with no knowledge of or right in God's agreements, His covenants]. And you had no hope (no promise); you were in the world without God.

13 But now in Christ Jesus, you who once were [so] far away, through (by, in) the blood of Christ have been brought near.

14 For He is [Himself] our peace (our bond of unity and harmony). He has made us both [Jew and Gentile] one [body], and has broken down (destroyed, abolished) the hostile dividing wall between us,

15 By abolishing in His [own crucified] flesh the enmity [caused by] the Law with its decrees and ordinances [which He annulled]; that He from the two might create in Himself one new man [one new quality of humanity out of the two], so making peace.

16 And [He designed] to reconcile to God both [Jew and Gentile, united] in a single body by means of His cross, thereby killing the mutual enmity and bringing the feud to an end.

17 And He came and preached the glad tidings of peace to you who were afar off and [peace] to those who were near.

18 For it is through Him that we both [whether far off or near] now have an introduction (access) by one [Holy] Spirit to the Father [so that we are able to approach Him].

19 Therefore you are no longer outsiders (exiles, migrants, and aliens, excluded from the rights of citizens), but you now share citizenship with the saints (God's own people, consecrated and set apart for Himself); and you belong to God's [own] household.

20 You are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus Himself the chief Cornerstone.

21 In Him the whole structure is joined (bound, welded) together harmoniously, and it continues to rise (grow, increase) into a holy temple in the Lord [a sanctuary dedicated, consecrated, and sacred to the presence of the Lord].

22 In Him [and in fellowship with one another] you yourselves also are being built up [into this structure] with the rest, to form a fixed abode (dwelling place) of God in (by, through) the Spirit.

Colossians 1:19-20 (Amplified Bible)

19 For it has pleased [the Father] that all the divine fullness (the sum total of the divine perfection, powers, and attributes) should dwell in Him permanently. -

20 And God purposed that through (by the service, the intervention of) Him [the Son] all things should be completely reconciled back to Himself, whether on earth or in heaven, as through Him, [the Father] made peace by means of the blood of His cross.

Do you see that peace with God is only available through Jesus Christ? Because we are sinful by nature we could never dwell with God, but through Jesus sacrifice for us we have peace with God by believing in Christ. There is nothing we can do, go to church, be good people, nothing besides putting our faith in Jesus that can bring us into a peaceful relationship with the Father. **Jesus is our peace, and there is no peace without him.**

B. Peace Also Removes The Fear Of God's Judgment Upon Sin

Listen to what Paul says about believers in Romans 5:1 –

Romans 5:1 (King James Version)

1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Romans 5:1 (Amplified Bible)

1 THEREFORE, SINCE we are justified (acquitted, declared righteous, and given a right standing with God) through faith, let us [grasp the fact that we] have [the peace of reconciliation to hold and to enjoy] peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One).

If we have faith, which means believing in and obeying, trusting Jesus Christ, we do not have to fall under the sword of judgment that is coming to the world. Again, faith removes worry from our hearts and gives us peace. We are now safe from God's righteous and holy wrath because we have the opportunity to have faith in Jesus.

All our disobedience and wrong choices have been forgiven without merit, without doing anything but believing, through the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

Now, we know the peace of God, that we can have peace with God, and finally there is the:

III. Peace from God

A. That is to be Apparent in our Relationships with Others

Colossians 3:12-15 (Amplified Bible)

12 Clothe yourselves therefore, as God's own chosen ones (His own picked representatives), [who are] purified and holy and well-beloved [by God Himself, by putting on behavior marked by] tenderhearted pity and mercy, kind feeling, a lowly opinion of yourselves, gentle ways, [and] patience [which is tireless and long-suffering, and has the power to endure whatever comes, with good temper].

13 Be gentle and forbearing with one another and, if one has a difference (a grievance or complaint) against another, readily pardoning each other; even as the Lord has [freely] forgiven you, so must you also [forgive].

14 And above all these [put on] love and enfold yourselves with the bond of perfectness [which binds everything together completely in ideal harmony].

15 And let the peace (soul harmony which comes) from Christ rule (act as umpire continually) in your hearts [deciding and settling with finality all questions that arise in your minds, in that peaceful state] to which as [members of Christ's] one body you were also called [to live]. And be thankful (appreciative), [giving praise to God always].

There should be peace in the church and with unbelievers. Christians should not be a problem people anywhere.

Yes we should stand up for the truth, but we should always do so clothed in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and love - more fruit of the Spirit. Let the peace of Christ rule in all of our actions and relationships.

B. Peace Is Available To Us In All Life Circumstances

Back to *John 14:27*, “*peace I leave with you.*” Jesus left his peace to be with us always. **When we are not experiencing it, it’s not because it isn’t there, it’s because we are not claiming it.** Remember these are the chapters in John of abiding in Jesus. The fruit is available only if we abide in the vine.

We have all been through many difficult circumstances in life. I can remember times when I felt the peace of God in those circumstances, and when I did not.

I know that it was me that determined whether I had it or not. If I focused on Christ in the situation, I had it, if I didn't, the peace wasn't there.

C. Peace is Achieved As We Submit Every Situation To The Lord

Philippians 4:4-7 (Amplified Bible)

1 THEREFORE, MY brethren, whom I love and yearn to see, my delight and crown (wreath of victory), thus stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.

2 I entreat and advise Euodia and I entreat and advise Syntyche to agree and to work in harmony in the Lord.

3 And I exhort you too, [my] genuine yokefellow, help these [two women to keep on cooperating], for they have toiled along with me in [the spreading of] the good news (the Gospel), as have Clement and the rest of my fellow workers whose names are in the Book of Life.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always [delight, gladden yourselves in Him]; again I say, Rejoice!

5 Let all men know and perceive and recognize your unselfishness (your considerateness, your forbearing spirit). The Lord is near [He is coming soon].

6 Do not fret or have any anxiety about anything, but in every circumstance and in everything, by prayer and petition (definite requests), with thanksgiving, continue to make your wants known to God.

7 And God's peace [shall be yours, that tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and being content with its earthly lot of whatever sort that is, that peace] which transcends all understanding shall garrison and mount guard over your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Obedience to the commands of Jesus is a key to receiving this peace as we read a couple verses later, verse 9 – Paul says,

9 Practice what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and model your way of living on it, and the God of peace (of untroubled, undisturbed well-being) will be with you.

Then Isaiah sang in the Old Testament – “You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.”

Isaiah 26:3 (Amplified Bible)

3 You will guard him and keep him in perfect and constant peace whose mind [both its inclination and its character] is stayed on You, because he commits himself to You, leans on You, and hopes confidently in You.

Keep your mind on Him, obey Him. I hear myself and other people say, “But how can I constantly keep Him (His Word, Obedience To His Commands) in the front of my mind in all situations all the time.”

Well, my experience is that we choose to focus on the difficulty, the worry, trying to find our own solutions. What if we used that mental energy focusing on Jesus and seeing our situation from His perspective in the moment?

We can also wake up every morning and pray that He would be at the center of every situation we are in for that day. That we would be constantly aware of His presence. Ask Him to be the first thing we see when situations arise, that we would have His mind throughout the day.

Our problem is that we want to be in control, to do things our way, to feel good about ourselves, we want to figure everything out, so we hesitate out of habit to submit everything to Him. That is one of the key differences between us and Jesus. Jesus constantly chose to surrender his pride and have the mind of his Father rather than his own. We are to have the mind of Jesus rather than our own.

I don't know anyone who does not want inner peace, peace of mind, and most of us also want peace between people, and churches, and nations. I think the Bible is telling us very clearly here that nothing we can do as humans is going to bring that about in our world. We have proof that this is true, just look at our horrendous history. **Only God can bring it through complete submission to Him and allowing His Spirit to have His way with us, manifesting this fruit through us.**

We can seek peace in the world, we can have all the peace talks we want, but until every knee bows in heaven and on earth, and every tongue confesses that Jesus is Lord, will this world have peace.

Romans 15:13 (Amplified Bible)

13 May the God of your hope so fill you with all joy and peace in believing [through the experience of your faith] that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound and be overflowing (bubbling over) with hope.