

Perfect Peace

Intro.

1. Peace is often misunderstood, which can cause a false sense of security.

Jeremiah 6:13-15 13 "For from the least of them even to the greatest of them, Everyone is greedy for gain, And from the prophet even to the priest Everyone deals falsely. 14 "And they have healed the brokenness of My people superficially, Saying, 'Peace, peace,' But there is no peace. 15 "Were they ashamed because of the abomination they have done? They were not even ashamed at all; They did not even know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; At the time that I punish them, They shall be cast down," says the LORD.

2. Because Judah was not at peace with God (sin), did not have genuine peace at all!
 - a. Peace with God must exist for peace among God's people to be approved & flourish!
 - b. When one is not at peace with God, peace with God's people is adversely affected.
3. If we misunderstand peace we are more likely to mistake a counterfeit peace for the real thing!

I. DEFINING PEACE.

A. Dual Nature of Peace (difference between "cease fire" & peace).

1. Absence of conflict.

1 Corinthians 14:33 for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

2. Presence of tranquility, serenity, contentment.

Isaiah 32:16-19 Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, And righteousness will abide in the fertile field. 17 And the work of righteousness will be peace, And the service of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever. 18 Then my people will live in a peaceful habitation, And in secure dwellings and in undisturbed resting places; 19 And it will hail when the forest comes down, And the city will be utterly laid low.

- a. Product of righteousness: Quietness, confidence, & safety.

- 1) **Hebrews (shalom):** "Everything that makes for a man's highest good," wholeness; "completeness, soundness, welfare, peace."

- 2) **Greeks (eirene):** Harmonious relationships (with men, nations, & God) - Heb. 12:14.

- b. God's people are securely at peace in midst of conflict- Isa 32:18-19.

B. The Gospel's Relationship to Peace.

1. *Jesus is our peace.*

Ephesians 2:14 NASB 14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,

Isaiah 9:6-7 NASB 6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. 7 There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

- a. The gospel is a message of peace.

Acts 10:36 NASB 36 "The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)--

Ephesians 2:17 NASB 17 AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR;

- b. Yet, Christ & His gospel often brings conflict!

Matthew 10:34-36 "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 "For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW; 36 and A MAN'S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD.

1) Those unprepared for the conflict the gospel brings are likely to misinterpret that conflict & accuse Christians of not being "peace-lovers" because they "contend earnestly for the faith."

2) Fact: Those who reject truth are rejecting peace!

Matthew 10:21-22 NASB 21 "And brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death. 22 "And you will be hated by all on account of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.

Psalms 119:165 NASB 165 Those who love Thy law have great peace, And nothing causes them to stumble.

II. PURSUING PEACE IN OUR LIVES.

A. Must Pursue Peace With God.

Colossians 1:19-22 NASB 19 For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, 20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. 21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, 22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.

1. Peace with God is obtained "in" Jesus - Jno. 16:33 (Gal. 3:27).
2. Blood of Christ brings reconciliation (harmony & peace between sinners & God) - (Rom. 6:3-4; Acts 22:16).
3. Our faith is necessary - cf. Isa. 26:3, 12; Rom. 5:1; 8:6-8.
4. When one is alienated from God (by his sins) he cannot expect to have a peaceful relationship (unity/fellowship) with God's people! - Eph. 5:11 (2 Ths. 3:6, 14-15)

B. Must Pursue Peace with Brethren.

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 heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

1. The condition of Christ's kingdom .

Isaiah 2:4 And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war.

2. Peace is possible among those who are calling on the Lord with a pure heart .

2 Timothy 2:22 Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

C. Must Pursue Peace with Everyone.

Hebrews 12:14 NASB 14 Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.

Romans 12:18 NASB 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

1. Christians are in conflict with the world's values, goals, etc.
2. Yet, we are to strive for peace with men whenever possible.
3. But we are tempted to think like the world (Jas. 3:13-16):

a. *"I'll never make peace with him; he wronged me!"*

Matthew 5:9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

b. *"I'll get even with him!"*

Matthew 5:38-42 "You have heard that it was said, 'AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.' 39 "But I say to you, do not resist him who is evil; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 "And if anyone wants to sue you, and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. 41 "And whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two. 42 "Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

c. *"He wronged me once, I'll never trust him again!"*

Ephesians 4:31-32 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

5. True wisdom makes peace - Jas. 3:17-18.

III. THE BOND OF PEACE AMONG BRETHREN (*Maintaining peace among us*) - Matt. 5:9.

A. Peace is Preserved by having Right Hearts & Basis - Eph. 4:1-6. GoTo

1. Hearts: Hearts ruled by the peace of God - Col. 3:15 (decide, direct, control, cf. Phil. 4:6-7).

Colossians 3:15 NASB 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.

2. Truth: Peace at the expense of truth is not Bible peace!

a. *Forfeit peace with God when we abandon truth.*

b. *Peace cannot rule where truth does not abide. Col. 3:16*

3. Walk by the same rule (truth) with good hearts & there is peace.

C. Peace is Preserved by Humility.

Mark 9:33-37 NASB 33 And they came to Capernaum; and when He was in the house, He began to question them, "What were you discussing on the way?" 34 But they kept silent, for on the way they had discussed with one another which of them was the greatest. 35 And sitting down, He called the twelve and *said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all." 36 And taking a child, He set him before them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them, 37 "Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me."

1. Disputes are caused by pride, selfishness, lack of faith, etc.
2. Humility needed to keep peace.
 - a. Our peace toward brethren is toward Christ & Father.
 - b. Maintain our influence of righteousness by maintaining peace (through humble service, not arrogant demands!)

D. By Properly Viewing & Using Our Liberties - Rom. 14:19.

Romans 14:19 So then let us pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.

1. **Stop disputing over things indifferent to God (14:1-5).**
2. **Strong in conscience:** Don't despise the weak & use liberty in a way that presses him to violate his conscience - 14:14-23; 15:1-2.
3. **Weak in conscience:** Don't condemn strong & disrupt peace (14:1, 10, 13).

Conclusion

1. Peace must be the object of our endeavors, the substance that we crave (seek) & pursue –

1 Peter 3:11 NASB 11 "AND LET HIM TURN AWAY FROM EVIL AND DO GOOD; LET HIM SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT.

2. Be a peacemaker by making peace with God - Matt. 5:9 (son of God, Gal. 3:26-27).
3. Diligently guard the bond of peace between us (Eph. 4:3).

--Modified from Joe R. Price