

Greater Peace (John 14:25–31)

By Pastor Jeff Alexander (5/22/2022)

Introduction

1. The Lord's upper room address (13:31–14:31) began by informing the disciples that He was going away and that they could not follow Him then but would do so afterward (vv. 32–36). Peter protested, arguing that he was ready to follow, even to lay down his life for Christ. His confidence was misjudged. He did not understand his own sinful heart but would soon deny that he even knew Jesus out of fear and self-preservation. This troubling news compounded with the present uncertainty prompted the Lord to declare, "*Let not your hearts be troubled*" (14:1). He commanded them to trust Him, the Truth personified. He proceeded to give them three reasons to ease their anxious hearts.
 - a. First, Jesus informed them that He was the heavenly Bridegroom, and that in His going away, He would prepare a place for them in the Father's house. This leaving would involve their *redemption* and future *glorification*.
 - b. In the meantime, He was leaving them a *Helper* (a *Paraclete*). The world could not receive Him because it did not see Him or know Him. As believers, they did know Him, though imperfectly. Their ability to love Christ and keep His commandments (v. 15) was both the qualification and the evidence that they would receive Him. Jesus was not "orphaning," that is, deserting them. He promised to come to them in the person of the Spirit of truth. The Spirit who would teach all things and remind them of all that Jesus taught them. The Spirit would also enable their continued love and obedience.
 - c. Third, He was bequeathing His peace to them (v. 27). It is this glorious promise that we want to investigate today. Before we get into this, I want to identify what peace is.
2. In this passage, Jesus carefully contrasted the believers and the world. A very great issue is the believer's place in the world. Believers, though *in* the world, are not *of* the world (15:19).
 - a. *World* (*kosmos*, an apt and harmonious arrangement or constitution) is defined in Scripture as the moral order in rebellion against God. Thus, because of sin, there is only enmity and perversity in the world, and, thus, no peace.
 - b. The peace that Jesus gives is transcendent. By His death, Jesus bought for people peace with God and, thus, the peace of God that transcends understanding (Philippians 4:7). His peace is bequeathed via the presence and power of the Holy Spirit (v. 26). Connecting verse 27 with the previous verse reveals the *means* of conferring peace—trust, producing in peace and assurance in the believer.
3. Peace is the *Shalom* of God. The Greek term (*eirênê*) in the text corresponds to the Hebrew term, *shalôm* (peace). *Shalom* is the customary Jewish greeting or word of farewell. It is a constant reminder to God's people that a right relationship with God brings peace (16:33; 20:19).

I. The Peace of God

1. Verse 27 is the Lord's declaration, bequeathing His *peace* to them. The peace that He would give them was not the peace that the world promises but cannot give. Worldly peace is unable to deal with the fundamental cause of all strife—*selfishness* producing hatred, bitterness, malice, anxiety, and fear (Jeremiah 6:13-15).
 - a. Jesus' peace, which answers to the Hebrew *shalom*, is more than inward tranquility (freedom from anxiety and fear, although that is the fruit of it). Rather, peace is the state of one who is in a "blessed" condition, being in a right relationship with God and others, especially with those who could put one in great danger or do him great harm.

- b. Religion, even the Jewish religion of Jesus's day, offered peace, but "*They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace*" (Jeremiah 6:14).
 - c. However Lord's peace promised to His disciples would to be the joyful tranquility of soul, but only when the disciples learned to trust Him fully.
2. His *Peace* has considerable Messianic implications, being the fundamental characteristic of the promised Messianic Kingdom. Observe what was promised in the Old Testament (Numbers 6:26; Psalm 29:11; Isaiah 9:6-7; 52:7; 54:13; 57:19 Ezekiel 37:26, 27; Haggai 2:9).
 3. Peace is the mark of the New Covenant (Acts 10:34–36; Romans 1:7).
 - a. It is a clear promise of the gospel, dissolving fear and securing tranquility in the face of trouble and guarding the hearts and minds of God's people against anxiety (Philippians 4:7).
 - b. It promotes harmony among God's people (Romans 14:17, 19).
 - c. Therefore, peace ought to be a present reality for all New Testament saints (Romans 5:1).

II. The Need for Peace

1. What Jesus told the disciples ("*I am going away, and I will come to you*") should have been the cause of rejoicing and celebration, not fear and despair.
 - a. Jesus was going to the Father, implying that He was going to take them there to be with Him forever. According to verse 2, He was going there to prepare a place for them. He would return for them and bring them also to the Father's house.
 - b. Jesus declared that the Father was greater than He. Some have taken this statement wrongfully to suggest that Jesus was denying His equality with God. (That error was resolved in John 1:1-3.) In His state of incarnation, Jesus was inferior to the Father (Hebrews 2:7). The implication is that the disciples should rejoice because Jesus was going back to the place where He belonged (John 17:5).
2. The disciples' emotional grief was the index of the depth of their *self-centeredness*. If they had loved Jesus, they would have realized that His departure was His and their gain, thus, they should have rejoiced with Him in it.
3. Information was the means of their (and our) correction. What He could tell them would result in their believing: "*And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe*" (v. 29).
 - a. The prince of darkness, the ruler of this peaceless world, was about to come, but would be defeated at the cross.
 - b. The bottom line and example to the disciples was evident: Jesus loved the Father. He obeyed His Father's commandment. His disciples will soon proclaim this truth in all the world.

Lesson

1. If peace is the promised portion of the people of God, why do so few believers experience the continual peace of God (Philippians 4:7; Romans 14:17)?
2. Conflict that produces anxiety and fear is the product of a selfish and carnal nature that is foreign to Christ's purpose for His own.
3. The church needs to model righteous behavior before the world that is strikingly different from the world. That is why Jesus bequeathed His peace to His own.

How does your life emulate the promise of our text?