

RELEASE DATE: 29th February 2024

God's precious promises. Peace

In John Chapter 14 verse 27 we read of Jesus' conversation with His disciples *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."*

Here Jesus promised peace for his disciples, despite the activity of Satan. Peace is not the absence of external conflict. It is the power of internal security. By going to the Father by way of the cross and resurrection, Jesus established salvation from sin and all its consequences. He sent the Holy Spirit to bring comfort and peace in our lives. If your life is fragmented and insecure, God is not at fault. He offers peace even for the sufferer.



Jesus faced the cross with concern for his disciples' needs. Their greatest need – and ours – is for peace, a life of wholesomeness, security, meaning, and hope. Through the power of the Spirit, Jesus' followers can have that peace. The world can offer only grandiose dreams that never materialize.

Paul, in his letter to the Philippians and Chapter 4 verse 4 sends encouragement to the church at Philippi *"Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness (gentleness) be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication (petition) with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

This entire letter of Paul's is a call to rejoicing. Here we are specifically commanded to rejoice, a vital part of our worship of the Lord. Rejoice in God; be full of thanksgiving towards Him. Such attitudes bring the sense of fulfilment and joy in God that affects all of our relationships. This is God's peace, a peace so wonderful the human mind cannot fully understand it. This peace can be a present reality for the person who gently and kindly lives life by letting God take care of our anxieties. Prayer is the lifeline to peace, when we pour out our problems to our Lord and Saviour, the One who knows and can deal with them in His way and in His time.

If you turn back in your Bible to the book of the prophet Isaiah, Chapter 26 and verses 3 & 4 we find God's prophet underlining what we have just been looking at in the new Testament. *"You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast because he trusts in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock eternal."*

This song of praise is for all who put their faith and trust in the only One who can give the peace that we all need. Perfect peace is one of God's gifts to those who trust Him. Confidence in God rules out fear and anxiety over lesser things. The prophet looked to peace in the last days.

The mark of peace is ultimately individual rather than national. Peace is based on steadfast trust in God. Yet again we see here that with such trust, we can experience the internal, personal peace, the only basis for peace on a larger scale.

When we are struggling with the need of reassurance of God's presence in our dark times, in times like these, Peter's first letter to the sparsely populated areas of the Roman Empire, where several of the gatherings were based, brings that much appreciated confidence. Confidence that we are not on our own, lost or far from someone who really cares about us. In 1 Peter Chapter 5 verses 6 & 7 we read: *"Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on Him because he cares for you."*

Love is the most basic word we have concerning what God is like. Because He loves, we can trust him with anything that worries us. We are not alone. We matter to God, and he can bear our anxieties with more insight than we can. After all He knows the end from the beginning. Once our worries are deposited with God, we leave them there, they are in His safe hands and we can trust our Saviour to dispel our concerns.

Our next precious promise is found in Romans Chapter 5 verses 1-5 *"Therefore since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 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."*

The death of Christ on the cross of Calvary, made possible for the Christian; peace, grace, joy, hope amidst suffering, right relationships with God, salvation from judgement, reconciliation with God, and a life experiencing God's salvation daily. Christ's death for the ungodly sinners is certainly more than sufficiently proving just how much God loves us.

The Spirit provides the believer's guarantee. Paul wrote of **the past** (*"we have been justified"*), **the present** (*"we have peace"*), and **the future** (*"the hope of the glory of God"*) aspects of salvation. The gift of the spirit to Christians is an assurance that in the future our hopes will be fulfilled. Through the Spirit, God pours out His love into our hearts. God demonstrated His by the cross and so the pouring of His love into Christians hearts through the Spirit includes the Spirit's continuing witness to Christ.

Page 3

The Spirit by His presence gives us the assurance we are loved by God. Through the Spirit, God provides Christians with the love which they are to mediate to others, for the fruit of the spirit is love (Galatians Chapter 5 verses 22). This hope in love guaranteeing our future with God does not protect us from suffering. It provides courage to endure present problems in face of future reward.

God has consistently let His people see evidence of His glorious presence and power among them. One day we will see Him in all His glory. Until that day we live motivated by the hope of seeing that glory. Thus, even in suffering we can rejoice and praise God.

In Psalm 119 verse 165 we read; *“ Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble.”*

In other words, if we as Christians are grounded in, and faithful to God’s word, not deviating from it because of something we have been told or heard on radio or TV. If we stay anchored to our loving Saviour despite what circumstances we face, God, in love for us, will walk with us through difficulties, even carry us when things get really bad, then we come out the other end of the “valley” we will be aware of His continual presence and be able to praise Him all the more.

Finally, in John’s gospel we read Jesus’ own words, words that will give everlasting hope and comfort to all who believe on Him until He returns. John Chapter 3 verse 16 will give hope to the lost. Chapter 16 verse 33 must give reassurance to those who are found and perhaps struggling.

“I have said these things to you that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart I have overcome the world.”

One of the most beautiful benedictions is the one found in 2 Thessalonians chapter 3 verse 16. “Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all.”

Last Sunday morning (25th February 2024) Tim Shenton’s message from Psalm 46 entitled “War and Peace” underlined God’s ongoing fight to bring about His peace.

Rodney Burge – Deacon

Presentation given and discussed at the church home group on Tuesday 27th February 2024