

Lesson Three

Peace

Introduction

There has not been a generation in the life of our nation that has not been touched by conflict. But every generation has yearned for lasting peace. No gift of prophecy is required to predict that no matter how far beyond the publication date of this Bible study, peace-shattering conflict will fill the front pages of our newspapers.

Jesus came to provide humans with peace. But his peace extends beyond an absence of war and its horrors. “Peace I leave with you,” Jesus promised his Maundy Thursday apostles. “My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid” (John 14:27).

This lesson provides us with a look at what makes Jesus’ peace superior to the peace many in the world want to give and what impact Jesus’ peace has on our lives.

1. How would you define “peace”?
2. What robs you of peace?

Studying God’s Word

The Source of Peace

The peace we inherited from Jesus provides us with constant tranquility. But Jesus’ peace is not simply a pleasant sense of well-being. It is an objective reality that exists no matter what our feelings are telling us and no matter what danger surrounds us.

Read Romans 5:1,2: *“Therefore, since we have been justified through 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.”*

Examine this passage phrase by phrase.

1. What does it mean to “have been justified through faith”?
2. Faith in Jesus has also provided us with “grace in which we now stand.” What does it mean to stand in grace?
3. The result of our justification by grace is that “we have peace with God.” Explain how peace with God is the outcome of justification by grace.

4. Identify the basis for peace with God according to these passages:

- *Luke 2:29-32: “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”*
- *John 20:19,20: “On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you!’ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.”*
- *Colossians 1:18-22: “He [Jesus] is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.”*

His Word in My Life

Postwar peace is only as reliable as the integrity of the nations that signed the treaty that ended the hostilities. God’s peace treaty with the human race was signed in his Son’s blood on Calvary and guaranteed in his Son’s empty Easter tomb. This treaty cannot be broken. Peace has come to earth.

1. The Christmas angels shouted that with the birth of the Christ Child there now is peace on earth. Describe the peace Jesus was born to provide for our planet. For a “Peace on Earth” Christmas card to portray this definition of *peace*, what would it look like?
2. Evaluate: Because of Jesus I perpetually have peace, even when my life is in upheaval.
3. Explain how a peace that is based on our forgiveness in Jesus is the ideal starting point for peace between people.

Studying God’s Word

The Power of Peace

Read Philippians 4:7-9

⁷ *And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

⁸ *Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.*

1. In Philippians 4:7-9 Paul describes the impact of God's peace on the personal lives of Christians. What does he say about how God's peace will impact our lives and about how we continue to draw on that peace?

Read Ephesians 2:11-22

¹¹ Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (which is done in the body by human hands)—¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

2. In Ephesians 2:11-22, Paul helps the Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians in Ephesus understand how they were all part of the body of Christ. The apostle reminds them that the peace Jesus has won for us with God is the foundation for peace between all believers (2:11-18). In verses 19-22 discover how, when based on that truth, we are empowered to live in harmony with one another. Note which verses make the following points:

- Christ's peace allows every believer the same access to the Father.
- God's peace guarantees that every Christian is a fellow citizen with all the rest of the saints.
- God made every believer a member of the family of God.
- God has built every Christian into a single temple dedicated to the Lord and the place where he lives.

His Word in My Life

The peace that Jesus has won for us with God has also transformed the way that Christians relate to one another and to all other people. Our peace with God motivates us to live at peace with everyone.

1. Evaluate: Since the Bible says that life on earth will be filled with troubles (John 16:33, Acts 14:22), Christians should not expect to experience any lasting peace.

2. Determine whether the passages below are referring to peace with God or peace with man.

Romans 12:18

¹⁸ *If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*

Isaiah 53:5

⁵ *But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.*

Matthew 5:9

⁹ *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*

Matthew 10:34

³⁴ *“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.*

1 Corinthians 7:15

¹⁵ *But if the unbeliever leaves, let it be so. The brother or the sister is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace.*

3. How does the Spirit’s Fruit of Peace help you deal with the following situations:

- Your presidential candidate lost the election.
- Your best friend is upset with you because of who you voted for.

Summary

The hostilities are over between God and us. Jesus has brokered that peace by his death at Calvary. The Spirit, who brought us to faith in Jesus, also brought us his peace to live within us. We strive to live out that peace in all our relationships.