

The Peace of Christ

March 9, 2025

In, **John 14:27**, Jesus said *“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.”* The NLT reads, *“I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.”*

As Jesus left this world, He GAVE His covenant people, the gift of HIS PEACE. And that’s radically different than what the fleshy world, considers peace.

Colossians 3:15, *“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.”*

The ONE body we’re called to be thankful in, is the body of Christ, the church. Jesus invites each of us, to cultivate a spirit of thankfulness, that is DRIVEN by HIS peace. We experience this when we allow our hearts to be ruled, led, and guided by the very peace of Jesus Himself.

And He knew that we would struggle to find peace, as well as to never cease craving it. Peace is the one thing EVERYBODY wants, yet few know how to find it and be ruled by it.

Psalms 119:165, *“Those who love your instructions have great peace and do not stumble.”*

When we love the ways of God found in Scripture, our sense of inner peace, increases. Putting our trust in the Lord and trusting in how He teaches us to treat Him, and others, sets us on a course of life, where NOTHING, causes us to stumble.

Isaiah 26:3, *“You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!”*

We’ll find perfect peace, when our thoughts are fixed and laser focused, on the Lord and His kingdom ways. And if you really think about it, nearly every command and desire of the Lord, is connected to treating Him good, as well as treating other people good.

What are the two greatest commands? Love God and love people. Neither of those come easy, and one thing that’s for sure, is that peace is not always found in the absence of conflict. The peace of Christ that HE GIVES, is found in the middle of ANY conflict.

Psalms 112, on the cover of the bulletin, describes the person who trusts God as being unperturbed, ever blessed, unphased by rumor and gossip, and relaxed among their enemies. They do not take offence, nor do they develop, hurt feelings.

The ever blessed of Psalms 112, are those who have CHOSEN, to become UN-OFFENDABLE. And YES, not taking offence at what others say or do, is a choice to be made. You can choose to develop the capacity, to be unshakeable and unoffendable. And when you do, your love and grace for others will increase, as your anxiety becomes much lower.

Those who are easily offended have three common types of responses. Number one is **The Venter:** They think they just need to blow a little steam out! So they look for someone who will listen to their complaints, then reject any solution offered, even when it could help them.

Number two is **The Sympathy Seeker:** They come crying to you, and try to one-up your misery, because they have it just a little worse than you do. By the time they stop talking, you just might be crying with them, because of how they've been done SO wrong.

Number three is **The Chronic Complainer:** You really got to watch out for these guys. 99% of their content is obsessively complaining about their helpless, hopeless, circumstances.

Anybody here remember Hee Haw? On one episode, there were some sad and depressed men who sang about venting, sympathy seeking, and a lot of chronic complaining. It went like this, *"Gloom, despair and agony on me. Deep dark depression, excessive misery. If it weren't for bad luck, I'd have no luck at all. Gloom, despair and agony on me."*

They sang the chorus together, but they all broke out in solos, to complain even further. The whole thing is hilarious, & you can see how ridiculous and immature their complaining really is.

Now God doesn't tell us that painful things in life are easy to deal with, but He does instruct us to grow beyond childish ways, as He provides us with the strength and capacity to make a different choice.

It reminds me of the day when pitch black thunderous clouds rolled over an elementary school in Columbus, OH. Out of nowhere, winds began to blow so hard, that trees bent to the ground, as dust filled the air and you could barely see what was happening through the windows.

Tornado sirens blared, teachers and children alike began to panic. Everyone quickly went to the basement, where children huddled together in small groups, with teachers surrounding them.

It was terrifying, so to try and ease the tension, someone sang a song and tried to get others to sing along, but it didn't work, and child after child began to cry, and no one could calm them.

But one teacher was focused on her faith, in the midst of the storm. She whispered to the child closest to her, *"Aren't you forgetting something Jenny? There's a power greater than the storm that can protect us. Just say to yourself that, 'God is with us.' Then whisper that to the person next to you."*

As the words were quietly and calmly whispered from child to child, a sense of peace gradually settled over the entire group. You could still hear the raging storm outside, there was still an element of fear, but somehow it didn't seem to matter anymore. That day, fear was lessened enough, to become manageable. That's what acknowledging and practicing the presence of God can accomplish.

The pathway to inner peace is found IN Christ Jesus, as we examine and reevaluate, our possible responses to pain and trouble. The apostle Paul has several great examples of godly responses.

Philippians 4:6-9, *“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. ⁷ Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. ⁸ And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. ⁹ Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.”*

Paul didn’t voice his worries or complaints to people, He took his concerns to the feet of God and emptied himself out. He told it ALL, to the Lord. That’s why he had no need to tell it to others. That choice moved him in the direction to experience the peace of God, that guarded his heart and mind, as he actively lived IN Christ Jesus.

The secret to life for Paul, is found in **Philippians 4:11-13**, *“I have learned how to be content with whatever circumstances I have. ¹² I have learned the secret of living in every situation. ¹³ I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.”*

If you miss the secret of being content in all things, you miss the power of Christ. If you wear your feelings on your sleeve, you miss the strength and blessing, Christ provides.

Paul wrote the Philippian letter while incarcerated in chains. And because he was satisfied in Christ, he was quite content and focused on Jesus, who supplied him the strength to write 4 of the N.T. letters while in prison. He didn’t complain, He praised God and offered life giving words to those he spoke with and in front of. Paul intentionally built relationships, rather than hindering them with his content, and he led at least two of the guards to faith in Christ.

Let’s take a look at Jesus’ response to people saying and doing things He didn’t like.

Hebrews 12:1-3, *“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross. Consider Jesus who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”*

Paul learned how to respond with love and influence, by watching how Jesus ENDURED, hostility. He was made fun of, spit on, hit right in the face, and was beaten nearly beyond recognition, just before He was murdered in absolute injustice.

Jesus didn’t go around saying, *“Yeah, but you don’t know what they did to me.”* Jesus CHOSE to be UN-offendable, and unhooked Himself, from that kind of sin. Jesus did not make excuses, to justify and say things in anger. He demonstrated the holiness of God, in His RESPONSES! Paul did the same thing, and we are called by Jesus Himself, to make the same adjustment.

Hebrews 12:10-13, *“God disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. ¹¹ All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. ¹² Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, ¹³ and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.”*

Responding in godliness, is not always a joyful experience. It can be hard to swallow, but when you're trained to SHARE GOD'S HOLINESS, and respond from a position of strength, rather than weakness, you WILL experience peace, that only comes from the righteous use of language. The Hebrew writer says this promotes healing.

Hebrews 12:14-15, *“Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵ See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled.”*

The only way I can find in Scripture to seek and pursue peace with all men, is to be filled with the grace of God, and give people love, mercy, and pardon, when they absolutely do not deserve it. Giving people what they do not deserve, IS the pathway to peace IN Christ! That is spiritual stability!

Hebrews 12:25,28, *“²⁵ See to it that you do not refuse God who is speaking. ²⁸ Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe.”*

When we do not refuse God who speaks clearly through His word, the proper response is confession, repentance, and commitment, to change our ungodly responses, to godly responses saturated in grace. And God's response to this? Renewal of the mind, heart, and soul. That's how we become active kingdom citizens, in a life that is UNSHAKEABLE!

Giving people grace when they don't ask for it and when they don't deserve it, is an acceptable offering to God, that demonstrates reverence and awe for the Lord, and love for other people.

We'll end with, **1 Peter 2:21-25**, *“Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example to follow in His steps, ²² no deceit was found in His mouth; ²³ while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to God who judges righteously; ²⁴ and Jesus Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. ²⁵ For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.”*

Jesus did not complain, seek revenge, or take offence. He made the difficult, painful choice, to respond with words of dignity, that reflected love for God and others. Jesus refused to threaten those who hurt Him, rather, He CONTINUED, to trust God who judges righteously.

To live in the peace of Christ, is to KEEP trusting the outcome to God who judges righteously. The peace of Jesus Himself is there for the taking, when we study and adapt ourselves, to the UNOFFENDABLE nature, of Jesus and Paul.