

Text: Gal. 5:22; John 14:27

Title: "The fruit of the Spirit in the life of Christ – peace"

Time: 8/18/2019 am

Place: NBBC

Introduction: The Hobi home is experiencing a bit of calm today after a wonderful storm. This Lord's Day is the Sunday after my daughter Kara was married to my new son-in-law, Matt. Months of planning and anticipation are now in the past, and after our glorious celebration, there is a quiet calm and peace in knowing that the blowing winds and crashing waves of wedding planning have changed into a calm sea of precious memories and a thankfulness for such a blessing.

Jesus tells His disciples about a coming calm after a storm in our text this morning. He knew that the pressures of Gethsemane and the cruel suffering of Calvary were going to bring a very stormy night, not only to Himself, but also to His disciples. To prepare them for that storm, Jesus promises them that He would leave them His peace.

We have been in a study of Galatians 5 together in which we have learned the wonderfully emphatic promise, "Walk in the Spirit, and you shall in no way fulfill the lusts of the flesh." I read a similar passage in my devotions Wednesday morning in the life of David. David finally just has been recognized as king by the entire nation of Israel, and after conquering Jerusalem as his new capital, David ask the Lord whether God wanted him to fight against the Philistines. The Lord's response in 2 Sam. 4: 19 was "Go up; for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand." That "I will doubtless deliver" emphasis parallels Paul's emphasis in Galatians when he says, "You shall in no way fulfill the lusts of the flesh." Both promises are certainties the Lord emphasizes.

The Philistines of Galatians 5 are the works of the flesh. When we ask the Lord whether we could ever have victory over

these things, He tells us, “Walk in the Spirit, and you shall in no way fulfill the lust of the flesh.” We have said that this walking in the Spirit means being controlled by God’s truth, His Word, confession of sin, and taking the time to inspect the fruit our life is bearing.

One by one, we are looking at the fruit of the tree of the Holy Spirit as it was produced in the life of Jesus, who is the Christ, the Spirit-Anointed One whose life bore this fruit flawlessly. It is the goal of these studies that we learn to have what Jesus had as One who walked in the Spirit – His love, His joy, and now this morning, His peace.

Interestingly, the verse we read as our beginning text (John 14:47) is the only place in Scripture in which Jesus speaks of His peace. We are told throughout the new Testament about how our peace is in Christ, with Christ, from Christ, and through Christ. But here Jesus mentions that this peace we have in, with, from, and through Him was also His during His life on earth. I want us to notice three things about Jesus’ peace from this verse and other passages of Scripture this morning.

I. The peace of Christ calms every kind of storm (“Let not your heart be troubled or fearful”).

Illustration: “Sleeping like a baby” is one of those phrases that seems to mean the opposite of what it says. We all know that babies are up at night and allow their parents very little uninterrupted sleep. But we use the phrase to speak of a good night’s sleep, and I think we do that because we think of what a baby looks like when it is soundly asleep. A baby’s sleep is a peaceful-looking sleep.

Application: Jesus slept like a baby in the boat that was tossed by winds and the waves (Mark 4:36-41). He slept in peace, and having been awakened by His fearful disciples, He put the

winds and the waves at peace. His sleep was the opposite of not only the winds and the waves, but also of the terror of the apostles. It brought calm to both.

It turns out that peace is the opposite of many things in Scripture. It is the opposite of war (Luke 14:32, Rev. 6:4), bondage (1 Cor. 7:15), confusion (1 Cor. 14:33), fear (John 14:27, 20:19), division (Matt. 10:34, Luke 12:51), a lack of hospitality (Matt. 10:13, Luke 10:5-6), the affliction of sickness (Mark 5:34, Luke 7:50, 8:48), tribulation (John 16:33), and anxiety (Phil. 4:6) to name a few.

If your question this morning is, “Lord, carest thou not that we perish?” because of one of these or other pressures in your life, the simple answer from Him is, “Peace, be still. Yes, I do care. No, you will not perish. Let not your heart be troubled or fearful. Where is your faith?” Tell Him of your storm and trust Him to handle it in great care and love for you. His peace can bring a calm to any storm.

II. The peace of Christ is different from the world’s peace (“not as the world gives, do I give unto you”).

Illustration: I read a moving account in *The New Yorker* magazine (April 8, 2019; accessed online at <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/04/08/the-challenge-of-going-off-psychiatric-drugs>; 8/15/2019) about the personal experience of Laura Delano with psychiatric medication. The article was entitled “The Challenge of Going Off Psychiatric Drugs.”

Laura’s story was that of a young girl from a well-to-do family in Greenwich, CT who graduated from Harvard, but who could never find peace. Beginning in eighth grade, Laura came under the medical care of a string of psychiatrists who diagnosed Laura first with bi-polar disorder and then with boarder-line personality disorder, and who prescribed a treat-

ment cascade of a dozen or more drugs to help Laura find peace. She finally mounted the courage and strength years later to go through the difficulty of withdrawing from these treatments, having found no peace with them.

The article said in part: "Antidepressants are now taken by roughly one in eight adults and adolescents in the U.S., and a quarter of them have been doing so for more than ten years. Industry money often determines the questions posed by pharmacological studies, and research about stopping drugs has never been a priority."

Application: Jesus told His disciples that He gives them peace in a way that is different from how the world tries to give peace. I think the Scriptures emphasize two ways in which Jesus's peace is unique.

1. It is a peace that comes from a relationship, not from brain chemistry or other circumstances. Isa. 26:3, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee"; John 16:33, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace"; Eph. 2:14, "For He is our peace"; Phil. 2:7, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

The author of Hebrews explains the way peace is found in a relationship with Jesus Christ in his comparison of Christ to Melchizedek. Melchizedek's name means *King of Righteousness*, so Jesus is the King of righteousness; and Melchizedek was the King of Salem, which means *peace*, so Jesus is the King of peace. Peace has a King, and He must be your King for you to have a life of peace. This peace-giving relationship is the relationship of a monarch to His subject. This peace-giving relationship is also a relationship of righteousness. Only the righteous can have the King of righteousness and the King of peace as their King.

The King of righteousness and peace is the King who became a babe in a manger under the angelic praise, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." His name was *Jesus*, *Jehovah saves*, because He would save His people from their sins. The King of peace and righteousness took your sin and God's storm against your sin, bore that on Calvary's cross, and now offers you forgiveness and peace with God. Jesus's peace is different than the world's peace. He did not write a prescription for you and earn a commission. He died in your place because He made you and loves you. He cares that you are perishing. He can save you today if you call upon Him to do so.

2. It is a peace that depends on a willingness to be at war. Jesus's peace is not only different from the world's peace; it has overcome the world's tribulation. John 16:33, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Matt 10:34-39, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

The gospel of peace is body armor (Eph. 6:15). We have to fight a spiritual battle with the world and those dominated by the seducing spirits of the world as we proclaim the good news of Jesus's peace. But this is how Jesus's peace works. It is at war with a soul-destroying world.

Illustration: *The New Yorker* article told of a time when Laura attempted suicide. She had swallowed handfuls of her pills with wine and fallen asleep on at the ocean's shore when the tide was out. Her father found her and she was medivacked to Mass General where she revived after days in a medically induced coma. When she woke up, she began sobbing and asking, "Why am I still here?"

Application: Why are you and I still here? We are here to answer Laura's question for people. There is an answer. They just do not believe it. "How shall they believe if they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher, as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things" (Rom. 10:14-15). The preparation of the gospel of peace is why we are here. We have a mission to help people like Laura. Jesus said, "Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21). Are we accomplishing that mission?

III. The peace of Christ is a free gift we receive by faith ("My peace I leave with you . . . My peace I give you").

Illustration: It has been an overwhelming experience to watch my son-in-law and my daughter receive wedding gifts and shower gifts. One issue that had to be planned for was simply how to get so many gifts from New Hampshire to Maryland after the wedding is over.

Application: The abundance of the gifts of grace that are ours in Christ is like that. Paul described them well when he spoke of them as "every spiritual blessing in heavenly things" (Eph. 1:3). Peace is one of those gracious gifts. Because it is a gift of grace, peace is not something we have to search for or earn.

Illustration: Martin Luther became an Augustinian monk in search of peace. Part of his search included a pilgrimage to Rome, which he hoped would provide the calm he longed for

in the storm of his soul. On arrival in Rome, Luther came to the Scala Sancta (the Holy Steps), which Roman Catholicism believes were the stairs Jesus ascended to endure his trial before Pontius Pilate. They purport that the stairs were brought to Rome in the fourth century by Saint Helena, Constantine's mother. Like every Catholic pilgrim to Rome in those days, Luther ascended the steps on his knees hoping peace would come on the way up. At the top, Luther stood up as asked aloud, "Who knows whether this is true?" The corruption of Rome undermined many of her claims in the eyes of Luther on that trip, who still had no peace. News reports today still speak of Rome's many vile corruptions.

So how does one come into possession of this peace, a gift of grace? More specifically, how can we have Jesus's gift of His peace? I will mention only two things briefly as we close this morning.

1. Receive the gift of relational peace with God through saving faith (Rom. 5:1). Do you have peace with God through Christ? Have you asked Him to save you from your sins and become your King of righteousness and peace? If so, you are justified by faith. Your legal problem with God's law has been wiped out. In this sense, you have peace with God.

2. Maintain the gift of fellowshiping peace in your heart through obedient faith (Col. 3:15, "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful"). That verse is in a passage that tells believers how to be good church members. It is like Phil. 4:6-7, which tells a local church how to have peace through prayer together ("Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through

Christ Jesus"). Obedient faith trusts God that His way is best and that His commands are our path of joy and blessing.

Conclusion: Jesus has no peace over those who do not know the things that make for peace (Luke 19:41-42). He weeps. Are the things that make for peace hidden from your eyes? Does Jesus weep over you this morning? He calls to sinners, "Come unto Me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I shall give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). He will give us His peace.

"A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, 'Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.' That is the distinction – the sermon, and the 'lightning and the thunder.' To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters."

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*