

True Peace - Sunday, August 17th 2014

"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."

John 14:27

Beloved in The Lord,

If there is one thing that this World of ours so desperately needs, it is peace. All around us there is unrest. There is unrest, instability and war in so many regions of the World. There is a general unrest in the hearts of so many people and that is why there is a widespread lack of peace.

We need not only look at the global situation, but closer to home, on a national level, on a family level, on an individual level. So many lack true peace and stability in their lives.

I believe that the root problem is, that not many people have faith in the one true God. The further we drift away from God as a society and as individuals, the less peace there is, and will be. Where faith in God diminishes, there the humanistic tendencies take over, and that leads to selfish behaviour, man oriented behaviour that results in arguments, unfaithfulness, lack of trust and respect, hatred, wars and so forth.

True peace can only be found where Jesus reigns as Lord. Where Jesus is Lord, there peace abounds.

Shortly before leaving, Jesus said these beautiful words to His disciples:

"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" (John 14:27)

Jesus promised to leave His peace with us. His peace is true peace. His peace is the peace that comes when a heart is surrendered to Him in faith.

Jesus had peace in every circumstance and situation He found Himself in, because His earthly, human life was totally surrendered to His Heavenly Father in faith and trust. He had totally surrendered His life to the Father and so lived in perfect peace.

A great illustration is the time Jesus was in a boat with His disciples and a great storm arose.

We read: " Now on one of those days Jesus and His disciples got into a boat, and He said to them, "Let us go over to the other side of the lake." So they launched out. But as they were sailing along He fell asleep; and a fierce gale of wind descended on the lake, and they began to be swamped and to be in danger. They came to Jesus and woke Him up, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And He got up and rebuked the wind and the surging waves, and they stopped, and it became calm. And He said to them, "Where is

your faith?" They were fearful and amazed, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?" (Luke 8:22-25)

From this event we see that Jesus clearly states that faith and peace are related. The first thing He asked His disciples was: "Where is your faith?" He was able to fall asleep peacefully in the boat, because He had no doubt that they were going to make it to the other side. He knew this by faith. He knew that The Father was in control, He knew His purpose, and He knew that nothing would stop Him from achieving His purpose. His knowing came from faith. He had surrendered all to The Father. Jesus knew that absolutely nothing happens outside the Father's knowledge.

God used this storm to teach Jesus' disciples a very powerful lesson in faith. Sometimes storms arise in our own lives. Life is by no means an easy walk in the park. At times, life is very challenging and difficult. At times, we like the disciples are afraid that our boat is about to sink and we are going to drown. The waters that are filling the boat, the storm that is raging and tossing our boat hither and dither, at times can seem too much.

At those times, it is of vital importance that we focus not upon our circumstances, but that we look to Jesus in faith. We need to trust in Him. We need to remind ourselves that He can, at any moment still the storm. He just has to speak the Word. But even if He chooses not to still the storm, we can still have peace, because we know that He is there, and He will never leave nor forsake us. There are so many promises in The Word of God - The Bible, that are there to strengthen our faith. I will share just a few with you today, with the recommendation that you commit them to memory, so that when things seem hopeless and desperate, you have a source of strength.

One that I go to more often than not to strengthen my faith and to gain reassurance is Isaiah 41:10:

"Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."

These words are so powerful, so true, and they are given to us, and we can claim them if we are children of God, through faith in Jesus Christ. If our life is surrendered to Jesus in faith, then these words are a promise that we can rely on. We need to learn these words and sink them deep into our hearts, so that when something fearful arises we have these words to fight our fears.

Fear is a natural thing, but we need not succumb to its power. We need to repel it, drive it away. The only real way to drive out fear is with God's Word. When we focus on God, He responds by saying "Fear not!"

Not only does God say "Fear not"; He goes on to tell us that He is with us. Paul wrote: "***If God is for us, who is against us?***" (***Romans 8:31***)

The answer is nobody and nothing. God is greater than anything that can arise against us. He is God. He is all-knowing; all-powerful; ever present everywhere. He knows everything about everything and can do anything. God says : "***Fear not for I am with you.***" When we really accept this, then we can, and will have true peace.

Sometimes we need to remind ourselves of this truth over and over again. Sometimes our circumstances are so bad that we allow them to shift our focus off God.

That day the disciples were in the boat with Jesus, they were so fearful, because they forgot who it was that was in the boat with them.

Another of my favourite texts is Psalm 121:

"I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; From where shall my help come? My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth. He will not allow your foot to slip; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel Will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper; The Lord is your shade on your right hand. The sun will not smite you by day, Nor the moon by night. The Lord will protect you from all evil; He will keep your soul. The Lord will guard your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forever. "

I love this Psalm and I read it regularly, and remind myself of it often. I love to recite it when something is threatening me. This Psalm, so simply, and beautifully, reminds us that God is always watching over us. He is never asleep on the job. He is our shade and refuge, our Helper, our rock, our mighty fortress. We can rely on Him, because He never ever fails.

I urge you all to learn to read God's Word and to let it take a hold of your heart. Learn to trust it, rely upon it, pray it, proclaim it. Allow God's Word to strengthen you, to comfort you, to encourage you. Allow it to help you shift your focus off yourself onto God.

When your focus is on God, then you can have true peace, no matter what your circumstances may be. This peace comes when you trust in Him. You know that God is God, and He is in control and He knows exactly what He is doing.

Back to our text: "***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. "***

Jesus gives us peace, but we need to receive it from Him. He said: "***Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.***"

We have to take control and not allow fear, anxiety, stress, and doubt to take root. When we feel these things coming against us we need to turn to Jesus immediately and say: "Lord,

I trust in You. I place this situation into Your Hands, and I receive Your peace that you offer to me."

We should never tarry nor be shy to come to Him in this way. In fact we honour and please Him when we do. He wants us to come. He wants us to have peace. Jesus invites us: "

"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

Clearly Jesus invites us to come. If we do not heed His invitation, then we are the ones who miss out. If we come, we are blessed. He loves us. He loves us so very much. He wants us to trust Him, rely upon Him.

No matter what it is that you have in your heart, come to Him today. Place your burden at His feet. Don't carry it alone any longer. Give it to Him. He is waiting for you. This message is for you to act upon today. He loves you. He loves you with an everlasting love. He has the answer for you, whatever the question or need may be. Paul wrote:

"And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

All your needs can and will be met, if you trust in Him.

Come to Him today and experience true peace.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.