

Peace with God

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the _____ of God.” Today, we’re looking at the _____ of peace with God. When people follow the _____ of God, they find their spiritual lives getting richer and fuller. When people ignore God or rebel against Him, they find what Solomon found in the book of Ecclesiastes: “Vanity of vanities! All is vanity.” To have peace with God, peace within, and peace with others is essential to true ____ in life. This explains our commitment to Christ and to His will.

On the evening of January 2, 2015, several in the family gathered around my mother’s room for the _____ time. She was suffering terribly from congestive heart failure and could not lie down. We tried to _____ her and prayed with her. After we expressed our love to her, she said she loved us. We asked her if there was anything she wanted or needed. Her last _____ were “peace, peace.” She passed away later that night and is with the Lord. At nearly 96 years of age, she had been a Christian for more than 80 years.

Few things in life are as precious as peace, the harmony of body, soul, and spirit, which is essential to a truly _____ life. First Peter 3:10-12 quotes from Psalm 34:12-16: “The one who _____ life, to love and see good days, must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit. He must _____ away from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and his ears attend to their _____, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.” Do you seek peace and pursue it? We need peace with God, peace within, and peace with others.

Our reading today comes from Romans 5:1-5, and emphasizes the value of peace.

You’ll never have _____ peace, until you have peace with God, the God of peace. The peace the Lord offers is a peace which brings us _____ from sin and guilt and provides that inner harmony that comes from knowing that we’re saved, redeemed, and reconciled to God. You can lie down at night and know that you’re living in the _____ of God. David, inspired by the Holy Spirit and speaking from personal experience, wrote, “Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose _____ is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit” (Psalm 32:1-2).

Isaiah 26:3 says about God, “You keep him in perfect peace whose _____ is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.” God keeps faithful Christians in perfect peace. Perfect peace doesn’t _____ that you don’t have struggles or worries. You may have some trouble in your life; but when you pray, you can find the peace of God. Philippians 4:6-7 promises this, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by _____ and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will _____ your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

In Christ, thinking right and living right matters. Devoting yourself to the _____ of the Lord will bring you joy and peace. Philippians 4:8-9 says, “Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there

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is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, _____ on these things. The things that you've learned and received and heard and seen in me, _____ these things, and the God of peace will be with you." Oh, we want the God of peace to be with all of us.

Please take this teaching seriously. What you set your _____ on today will determine what your whole disposition will be. If you dwell on the dishonorable, the wrong, the impure, the ugly, what is of disrepute, and that which has no virtue and nothing worthy of praise, then your day will be filled with complaints and criticism that will _____ you of any joy or peace. If you miss a day without the joy we have in Christ, the grace and love He brings us, and the hope of heaven, you've missed what really matters spiritually. There's no substitute for a joyful and peaceful relationship with Jesus Christ.

Set your heart on _____ the Lord. Learn the _____, focus on God's teaching, listen to the Lord, and stop thinking something is better out there than what you have in Christ. Nothing compares with the _____ and the ways of the Lord. Look to His _____ and follow it, if you want the God of peace to be with you. The Jewish king Asa, rather than trusting in the Lord God, relied on the king of Aram to _____ him from Egypt. Hanani the seer reminded Asa, "For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His" (2 Chronicles 16:9). Whatever your struggle in life, you have no better _____ than what God can give you. Listen to God and follow His way!

Jeremiah watched the Jewish people _____ the God of the Bible and compromise with the gods of other nations. They thought they could live as they pleased, worship other gods, and ignore the way of the Lord and then still enjoy the _____ of God. Jeremiah described the people, "'Be appalled, O heavens, at this, And shudder, be very desolate,' declares the LORD. For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns That can hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:12-13). You can't find a life better than the life _____ to the will of God. The way of God brings joy, peace, and prosperity to those who follow it.

Solomon admonished his son, "My son, do not forget my _____, But let your heart keep my commandments; For length of days and years of life And peace they will add to you. Do not let kindness and truth _____ you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good repute, In the sight of God and man. Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And do not _____ on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. Do not be _____ in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from _____. It will be healing to your body, And refreshment to your bones" (Proverbs 3:1-8). We all would do well to trust in the Lord and not lean on our own understanding. God knows what we don't know, and He can bless us with wisdom that will bless our lives. We must listen to God.

God _____ the Jews by allowing the Babylonians to conquer them. Sadly, the Jews thought God would never punish them for their sins. Jeremiah 6:13-14 explains, "For from the least of them even to the greatest of them, Everyone is greedy for _____, And from the prophet even to the priest, Everyone deals falsely. They have healed the brokenness of My people superficially, Saying, 'Peace, peace,' But there is _____ peace." Only the Lord can _____ the brokenness of sin; false prophets, and false teaching can only give us false _____. They cannot bring us closer to God.

They, that is, those Jewish leaders were presumptuous then, and I tell you some are being presumptuous now, thinking they can live in sin and slander the ways of God. You can't mock God, mock His ways, or mock His morals and expect God to _____ you. "'There is no peace for the wicked,' says the LORD" (Isaiah 48:22). When people choose to follow sin, their lives become much

_____. Perhaps you remember the words of the apostle Paul, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man _____, this he will also _____. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the _____ reap corruption, but the one who sows to the _____ will from the Spirit reap eternal life” (Galatians 6:7-8). The devil loves to deceive us with sin, and in time we’ll _____ to ourselves that something God calls sin isn’t really a sin. People still reap what they sow; and if you make sin your way of life, you’ll only reap corruption and miss out on eternal life.

Let’s determine to be peacemakers, making peace with God by coming to Him for forgiveness, making peace within ourselves, and making peace with others. The Lord Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Matthew 5:9). When we learn the _____ of peace in God’s forgiveness, it helps us to forgive and to be at peace with ourselves. The Lord Jesus said, “Salt is good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another” (Mark 9:50).

Let’s consider how we speak _____ each other and how we speak _____ each other. Ephesians 4:29 warns us, “Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is _____ for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.” I fear many never give a _____ thought about how crude and offensive their speech has become. Ephesians 5:4 says, “Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of _____, but instead let there be thanksgiving.” Some fail to speak kindly to others but must shout with _____. We mustn’t let anger cause us to _____ others with our words or with our actions. Colossians 4:6 says, “Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.” Some folks speak their _____ without any regard to how it may hurt or offend others.

Peacemakers know how to apologize when they _____. They also know how to _____ of their wrong and not repeat it. Peacemakers also know how to _____ another, when they have been offended. When a person repents and is forgiven by God, God no longer holds that sin against him. When we forgive those who sin against us, we must let the offense _____. Many are quick and willing to accuse and ruin another person, but hardly willing to forgive a penitent person. The Lord Jesus said, “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:14-15).

Peacemakers follow the words of the apostle Paul, “I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you’ve been called, with all humility and gentleness, with _____, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:1-3). If you worship God on the Lord’s day and then act like the devil the rest of the week, you aren’t _____ in a manner worthy of your calling. In fact, your behavior brings you shame. Instead let’s _____ with all humility and gentleness. An arrogant person will have few friends. Let’s _____ others with gentleness and kindness. Philippians 4:5 says, “Let your gentle spirit be made known to _____ men. The Lord is near.” Some people get upset over the smallest problem and take it out on others. Bear with one another in love, because the Lord is watching. We all face annoying situations that we can’t _____; let’s endure them with loving patience, just as the Lord is patient and loving with us.

James 1:2-4 encourages us: “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various _____, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” We can’t change many things, but we can decide how we will _____ to various trials. We can let our troubles _____ our

lives or we can grow spiritually by setting our minds on God's will and overcoming the spiritual challenge of that trial. Tough times produce _____, the ability to bear up under tough circumstances. We can endure because the Lord _____ us endure. Patience helps us become _____ Christians, and we can count on His help to bring this perfect result. Faithful Christians never walk alone!

Some offensive people are _____ to endure, because of their evil ways. Romans 12:18-21 says, "If possible, so far as it depends on _____, be at peace with all men. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it's written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. 'But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he's thirsty, give him drink; for in so doing you'll heap burning coals on his head.' Do not be overcome by _____, but overcome evil with _____."

When Paul faced hard times, he said, "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not _____ His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us _____ things?" Romans 8:31-32). Peace comes from knowing God's love.

Isaiah 9:6 calls Jesus the "Prince of Peace." That's why we go to the Lord for His _____. James 3:13-18 says, "Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his _____ in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from _____ is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the _____ whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace."

You can follow worldly ways with bitter jealousy and selfish ambition, or you can come to the Lord and find _____ for your souls. You can live with disorder and every evil thing, or you can live full of mercy and in peace. Let's remember that we reap what we sow. A righteous life brings joy and peace, but a worldly life is filled with strife and misery.

Romans 5:1 says, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." If you desire peace with God, you must realize that it comes only through our Lord Jesus Christ. There is salvation in no one else. So repent of your sins, confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Baptism is an immersion in water. When you're baptized, God washes away your sins, adds you to His church, and causes you to be born into His family. You'll never regret coming into the Lord and doing the right thing!