

The Fruit of the Spirit – Peace (Galatians 5:22-23)

Let this MIND be in you! - Philippians 2:5-11

INTRODUCTION

1. Another grace experienced by those whose lives are in tune with the Spirit of God is that of "peace" - Ga 5:22
2. That the Spirit of God should induce peace in the children of God should be understandable in light of the fact that...
 - a. Their heavenly Father is "the God of peace" - 1 Th 5:23
 - b. Their Lord Jesus Christ is called "Prince of peace" - Isa 9:6
3. But one might ask...
 - a. What is this "peace" enjoyed by those who walk in the Spirit?
 - b. How does one come to have this peace?
 - c. How we can be sure to preserve this peace, and enjoy it to its fullest extent?

[As we continue our study of "The Flesh And The Spirit", and especially as we focus on "the fruit of the Spirit" (Ga 5:22-23), we now turn our attention to the subject of peace...]

I. DEFINING "PEACE"

A. PEACE IS SOMETIMES DEFINED IN NEGATIVE TERMS...

1. As though peace were simply the absence of conflict
2. For example...
 - a. "The only condition of peace in this world is to have no ideas, or, at least, not to express them." (OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES)
 - b. "He knows peace who has forgotten desire" (THE BHAGAVAD GITA)

B. A BIBLICAL DEFINITION OF PEACE INCLUDES POSITIVE ELEMENTS...

1. The Greek word is eirene, which is defined as:
 - a. "peace between individuals, i.e., harmony, concord" (THAYER)
 - b. "acc. to a conception distinctly peculiar to the N.T., the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that is" (THAYER)
2. So rather than simply an absence of conflict, the peace God provides is...
 - a. A condition positive in nature
 - a. In which there is active fellowship, harmony and concord between individuals

[Having defined peace as a blessing that ought to be desired and enjoyed by all, let's consider what the Bible has to say about...]

II. THE SOURCE OF THIS PEACE

A. IT COMES FROM JESUS, WHO CAME TO BRING PEACE...

1. It was prophesied He would be the "Prince of peace" - Isa 9:6-7
2. When He came, He came preaching peace - Ac 10:36
3. Indeed, He offers peace...
 - a. That the world is not able to give - Jn 14:27
 - b. That one can possess even in the midst of tribulation - Jn 16:33

B. THE PEACE JESUS BRINGS INVOLVES...

1. Peace with God - Ro 5:1-11
 - a. Which comes when we are "justified by faith" - Ro 5:1
 - b. Which is accompanied with rejoicing and love, even in tribulation - Ro 5:2-5
 - c. Which is made possible by the loving sacrifice of Jesus' blood - Ro 5:6-9
 - d. And continues by virtue of His resurrected life - Ro 5:10-11; e.g., He 7:25
2. Peace with man - Ep 2:11-22
 - a. Jew and Gentile, once alienated from one another, can be at peace in Jesus Christ - Ep 2:11-14
 - b. Made possible through the same act which makes peace with God: the death of Jesus Christ! - Ep 2:15-16
 - c. Thus Jesus has come preaching peace to all mankind - Ep 2:17
 - d. The wonders of this peace are described as Paul continues...
 - 1) A peace that allows access by one Spirit to the Father - Ep 2:18
 - 2) A peace where all can be fellow-citizens with the saints - Ep 2:19a
 - 3) A peace where all can be members of the family of God - Ep 2:19b
 - 4) A peace where all can be a temple in the Lord, a habitation of God in the Spirit - Ep 2:20-22
3. Peace with self
 - a. Peace within one's own self is mostly a by-product...
 - 1) Of being at peace with God
 - 2) Of being at peace with those around us -- So when Jesus brings us peace with God and man (see above), peace within naturally follows!
 - b. But there is a peace, one that blesses the soul from within...
 - 1) It comes from God
 - 2) It surpasses all understanding
 - 3) It serves as a fortress to guard our hearts and minds and it comes through Christ Jesus! - Ph 4:7

[When one is in Christ Jesus, enjoying the blessings of justification, along with reconciliation with both God and man, peace is a natural by-product. But is there anything we can and should be doing to preserve the peace we have from God in Christ Jesus? Indeed there is...]

III. PRESERVING OUR PEACE

A. MAINTAINING PEACE WITH GOD AND SELF REQUIRES...

1. Keeping our minds set on God - cf. Isa 26:3
2. Loving God's word, and heeding His commandments - Psa 119:165;

Isa 48:18; cf. Jn 14:23

3. Being diligent in prayer - Ph 4:6-7

4. Filling our mind with spiritual thoughts - Ph 4:8-9; cf. Ro 8:5-8

B. MAINTAINING PEACE WITH ONE ANOTHER REQUIRES...

1. Being at peace with God first - cf. Pr 16:7

a. How can we hope to make peace with others when we are not at peace within?

b. Making peace with God gives us the peace within whereby we are in a better position to make peace with others!

2. A concentrated effort to "pursue" peace - cf. 1 Pe 3:8-12

a. Peace must be sought and pursued - 1 Pe 3:11

b. Peter mentions some of the qualities necessary - 1 Pe 3:8-9

1) Being of one mind

2) Having compassion for one another

3) Love as brothers, tenderhearted, and courteous

4) Not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but responding with a blessing, only then can we expect to "love life and see good days"! - 1 Pe 3:10

3. Please note that the pursuit of peace does not require compromise of truth

a. For the wisdom that is from above is "first pure, then peaceable..." - Ja 4:17

b. But if we wish to bear the fruit of righteousness, it must be "sown in peace by those who make peace"! - Ja 4:18

CONCLUSION

1. Let us never forget that Jesus, as the Prince of peace...

a. Came preaching peace

b. Died on the cross to make peace possible with God, man, and self

c. Is the conduit through which God now grants peace to man, as pronounced the night He was born - cf. Lk 2:11-14

2. Indeed, the element of peace is a key feature of His kingdom - cf. Ro 14:17-19

a. We should therefore "let the peace of God rule in our hearts" - Co 3:15

b. And allow Jesus to give us His peace as expressed in this prayer:

"Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all." (2 Th 3:16)

Do you wish to ensure that the Lord is always with you, that you might experience that "peace which surpasses all understanding"? Then heed what Jesus Himself said to His disciples shortly before ascending into heaven... - cf. Mt 28:18-20