

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc. www.dtminc.org Today's Date: November 19, 2023

The Spirit of Peace

by Dan Trygg

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are out-from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world...⁵ They are out-from the world; therefore they speak out-from the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶ We are out-from God; the one who experientially-knows God listens to us; the one who is not out-from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”

1 John 4:1,5-6

“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 (stirred up, disturbed, thrown into confusion), nor let it be fearful.”

John 14:27

“For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace...”

Romans 8:6

“If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all people.”

Romans 12:18

“For the kingdom of God is... righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

Romans 14:17

“But the fruit of the Spirit is... peace...”

Galatians 5:22

The NT has a great deal to say about “peace”. The word itself occurs 96 times. We are to invoke the peace of God in people’s houses (Matt. 10:13), and upon individuals (Mk. 5:34; Lk. 7:50; 24:36). **Jesus expressly said that He left us His peace, a peace that the world is not able to give** (Jn. 14:27). **We are not to permit our hearts to be troubled, agitated, stirred up, or overcome with fear.** We are to abide in peace and be confident of God’s care. The peace that Jesus gives is “in Him”. He knew that we would have trouble and affliction in this world, but we are to be encouraged because He has overcome the world-system (Jn. 16:33). **Jesus’ coming was intended to lead us into the way of peace** (Lk. 1:79), and even the angels who heralded His birth declared not only glory to God, but peace to those who would experience His favor (Lk. 2:14).

It was God’s great purpose to reconcile all things to Himself, making peace through the blood of Jesus’ cross (Col. 1:20). As we accept the gift of His grace through faith, we are counted as righteous in His sight, and **we obtain peace with Him as one of the benefits of our salvation** (Rom. 3:24; 5:1). This is an important concept, rehearsed over and over again. Fourteen times it is expressed as a greeting to believers in the letters of the NT, “grace and peace to you from God”. This is nothing to take lightly. Others continue in unbelief, unreconciled and under the pall of sin, “without hope and without God in this world” (Eph. 2:12). **In Christ Jesus, we who were far away, have been brought near by His blood, and He has become our peace** (Eph. 2:14). God reconciled us to Himself through Christ, made us new creatures in Him. **He has now entrusted us with the ministry of reconciliation of others to Himself** (2 Cor. 5:14-20).

This is God’s heart, ...and this is our mission. **The peace of God is also to be a key part of our witness and our approach to others.** Just as *agapē*-love is a distinctive sign that we are disciples of Jesus, in a similar way **we ought to have an unusual peace about us, ...a peace that the world is not able to give, ...a peace that passes understanding** (Phil. 4:7). It is the nature of God’s presence and influence in our lives. It is manifested, or made visible, in us as we abide in His Spirit. **While the world system is characterized by trouble, disruption, anger, anxiety and fear, the kingdom of God is characterized by “righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit”** (Rom. 14:17). **This unusual peace is the outworking of the Spirit’s influence in our lives.** “The fruit of the Spirit is...peace” (Gal. 5:22).

Since this is a “fruit” or “outworking” of the Holy Spirit in our lives, **there can be a two-dimensional reality of God’s peace in our experience.** We can sometimes have a dramatic victory, where the peace of God will fill us and lift us above other emotions of agitation, and we have done nothing to bring this to pass. **It can be a momentary experience, ...like a gift from God.** It is like He “carries us” through a difficult circumstance. **Most of the time, however, He desires that we learn to cultivate a heart and mindset that regularly abides in Him and His peace.** He wants us to “partner” with Him. He desires that we *choose* to not be overcome by anxious, or agitated emotions, but *learn* to center our heart and minds in Him. **He wants peace not just to be an isolated episode here and there, but a consistent characteristic of our lives.**

Consistent peace comes from a consistent abiding in the Holy Spirit. As a “fruit”, this is the product of growing in a relationship with Christ, where we choose to turn from self-will and respond more and more to the leading of the Spirit. **Part of dealing with our emotions has to do with changing our perception and our view of things.** The apostle Paul said that **“the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace”** (Rom. 8:6). The word for “mind set” refers to “what a person has in their mind, their thoughts, aspirations, purposes, way or pattern of thinking, or outlook”. **In both of these scenarios, our minds are engaged. There are two very different orientations, however.** In Galatians 5:17, Paul wrote, “For the flesh desires what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit desires what is against the flesh; these are opposed to each other...”. **The “flesh” refers to what is the external, earthy**

side of life, ...what is of yourself, or appeals to your physical and natural self. The “Spirit” refers to the inner life that comes from the Spirit of God at work within you. He is the One who “makes alive” or “gives us life” (Jn. 6:63; 2 Cor. 3:6; Rom 8:11). This inner vitality is *super*-natural. It lifts us above and beyond what would come from our natural perception or ability. ***The life of the Spirit is God-focused and responds to life circumstances from an eternal perspective and from the inner life of the Spirit.*** It is “the mind of the flesh or self” versus “the mind of the Spirit”. The thoughts and aspirations of the flesh produce death, life-less-ness, ...while the thoughts and aspirations of the Spirit produce life and peace. So, what are *you* thinking about? ***What is the purpose and aspiration of your life?*** Is it your fleshly appetites, and your self-protection, ...or is it to know and serve God? ***If you are living for yourself, you are turning away from the true source of life and peace, which is God Himself. If you decide to pursue Him, you must be willing to focus your mind and thoughts on Him and His will for your life.*** You must learn to trust Him, and yield to His working in your life. Sometimes that goes against the grain of our natural preferences or self-comfort.

In Philippians 4:7, Paul tells us to “be anxious for nothing, but ***in everything, by prayer and entreaty with thanksgiving, let your requests be known to God, and the peace of God which far surpasses every perception will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.***” This is not a magic formula. ***This is describing a relationship of trust.*** We don’t need to worry. God invites us to share our needs and desires with Him, and trust Him. ***We can talk to Him, and ask Him “with thanksgiving”, because we trust He will do what is good and right.*** We are focusing our attention, thoughts and aspirations on Him, and we will experience the life and peace that comes from Him. Note that ***this inner peace coming from God is described as “being far better than”, “of much greater value than”, and “having power over” every thought or perception.*** No matter what is antagonizing the mind, ***the peace of God is greater, and will “guard”, “protect”, “keep in custody”, or even “rein in” your heart and mind in Christ Jesus.*** Paul also gave us a practical list of things to help redirect our thinking, when we are vulnerable to anxiety (Phil. 4:8,9). This was a discipline that he himself had taught them, and had exemplified before them. As they practiced Paul’s counsel, they would discover that the God of peace would be with them, as He was with Paul. ***There is a peace available to us in Jesus that will shut down our anxiety, ease our minds, and protect us from runaway thoughts. But, we need to redirect our thinking, humbly bring our concerns to God in prayer, and cast our cares upon Him, knowing that He cares for us*** (1 Pet. 5:6,7).

Another practical passage in this regard is 1 Peter 3:10,11: “Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil (bad, sick, unhealthy, harmful, injurious) and his lips from speaking deceit (bait, distortion, contrivance, trickery); let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it.” Again, this is specific counsel to us, to help us experience a life of blessing. ***We have the power to control what we say and do. What we say and do will either have a positive impact, or a negative result.*** We are to refrain from (stop) speaking anything that is negative or injurious to others. ***We are especially to stop creating or spreading things that are divisive, or contrived in any way.*** Often, such statements or innuendo can create conflict. ***These thoughts affect us first, and then we pass them on to others. It is like spreading a disease.*** Rumor, gossip, slander, tales, stories are breeding grounds for our own negative emotions, and they fuel the fires of division and argument. ***Instead of pursuing such things, we are to seek peace and pursue that. We are to find common ground, and speak of positive things, and choose to do beneficial things for others.*** The apostle Paul wrote, “If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all people” (Rom. 12:18). ***Instead of fueling fires of criticism and disagreement, we are to “Pursue peace with all people...”*** (Heb. 12:14).

Jesus said, “Blessed are the ***peace makers, for they shall be called the children of God***” (Matt. 5:9). Not only are we to possess the uncommon, notable peace of Jesus as part of our own character, we are to be people who will actively mediate peace to and between others. We are to be peace makers. ***In order to mediate peace between people who are in opposition to each other, we need to be calm and peaceful ourselves. We need to be able to exude peace in how we talk and interact with the offended parties.*** Again, it is the heart of God to bring about reconciliation and forgiveness. We are to be His representatives, helping others to put aside their differences and find the ability to forgive. ***We should become known as “the voice of reason”. And we should be fervent in prayer, because this kind of work is “kingdom work”.*** It is a work of God to remove hostility and bring people to a place where they can hear each other with openness and respect, and listen to understand. It is most effective if the parties both come to surrender to Jesus in humility and yieldedness. ***This is what we are to model. “Let your reasonableness be known to all people,” wrote Paul*** (Phil 4:5). The word for “reasonableness” also means “gentleness, kindness, moderation, graciousness, and willingness to yield.” ***God wants us to be known for our peaceful attitude and demeanor.***

James, the brother of Jesus, described the difference between the “wisdom” that comes from this world, versus the true “wisdom from above”. ***The wisdom that is from this world is divisive, selfish, full of envy, arrogance, and resisting the truth.*** Such “wisdom” is from below, ...earthly, natural, demonic. The wisdom from above is “pure, then peace-loving, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, without favoritism and hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace” (3:17,18). ***Any spirit that is divisive, angry, and attacking is not of God. Don’t let a spirit like that influence your mind and heart. Abide in the peace of Jesus, and be a peace maker.***