

The Peace of Christ John 14:23-27

In the newspaper cartoons of Calvin and Hobbes, the two come marching into the living room early one morning. His mother is seated there in her favorite chair. She is sipping her morning coffee. She looks up at young Calvin. She is amused and amazed at how he is dressed. Calvin's head is encased in a large space helmet. A cape is draped around his neck, across his shoulders, down his back and is dragging on the floor. One hand is holding a flashlight and the other a baseball bat. "What's up today?" asks his mom. "Nothing, so far," answers Calvin. "So far?" she questions. "Well, you never know," Calvin says, "Something could happen today." Then Calvin marches off, "And if anything does, by golly, I'm going to be ready for it!" Calvin's mom looks out at the reading audience and she says, "I need a suit like that!" Wouldn't you like a suit like that? A suit like that would help, so we can say with Calvin, "Whatever may come my way, I'm going to be ready for it! Bring it on!"

Better than a suit like Calvin's to give Jesus offers these words, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. The defining phrase is: "Not as the world gives." The world promises peace through the rule of law. Law and order is the only way for a society and a people to experience peace and law and order must be kept by the aggressive use of force. That is the only way that the world can bring about peace. But here is how Jesus will give you peace. If you obey His Word then He and the Father will come to you and make a home with you. Right in your heart. Not by force but by choice. They will abide in your heart bringing peace. The world's peace is peace through strength. The Lord's peace is peace through surrender. Peace is important. Jesus makes a point to tell his disciples that he is going to leave them with peace. Peace is part a vital part of our faith.

"Peace," Jesus said, "I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." You can then read between the lines of Jesus' words: This new covenant is not a covenant of land; it is a covenant of my blood. It is not a covenant of nation building; it is a covenant of relation building. He is telling his disciples: You no longer live on land; you live on love. You no longer work for nation; you work for neighbor. You no longer are under the Law; you are under grace. You no longer act out of fear; you serve out of joy.

To leave them with anything else would doom them to repeating the mistakes of the past. The Nation can no longer be the model for their peace. It is caught in this trap, as is every other nation, of trying to find national political peace. So, Jesus has to do something different. He has to change their relationship to God. He has to reshape their lives into something other than countrymen. He has to make them Christian! Their theology no longer tied to the nation but tied to Christ, through Christ to the Father.

A little girl was taking her first long distance overnight train ride with her parents. As night descended on the train, the mother took the girl, who was clearly quite anxious, and placed her on the upper bunk of the sleeper. She told her little one that up there she would be nearer to God and that God would watch over her. As silence enveloped the young lady she became afraid and called softly, "Mommy, are you there?" "Yes dear," came the response. A little later, in a louder voice, the child called, "Daddy, are you there, too?" "Yes dear," was the reply. After this had been repeated several times one of the passengers sharing their sleeper car finally lost his patience and shouted loudly, "Yes, we're all here, your father, your mother, your brother, and all your aunts and cousins; now settle down and go to sleep!" There was a moment of silence and then, in hushed tones a little voice asked, "Mommy, was that God?"

You may be someone who has had little doubt about God's presence in your life. You may be someone who has felt comfort from God. You may be well acquainted with peace. If you are one of these people you are one of few, for most people fear. They fear the darkness, they fear the day, they fear people, the law, family, friends, enemies, life, and death. You name it. Fear is all around us. So, Jesus made it clear to his disciples that he wanted them to have peace and that he would leave that peace with them. Jesus is straightforward. It Is Through Obedience! Those who obey His Word will receive his Peace. Obedience is what we give in order that we might receive the peace that Jesus gives. Peace of Christ comes through our acts of obedience, especially obedience in times of suffering. If you obey His Word then He and the Father will come to you and make a home with you. Right in your heart. Not by force but by choice. Christ will abide in your heart bringing peace. The world's peace is peace through strength and does not last! The Lord's peace is peace through surrender, and it is Eternal! We will do well if we remember that true peace is the assurance that one day our Savior- Jesus will return to take us back, back to our Father's house. So, do not let your hearts be troubled neither let them be afraid. "'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus, Just to take Him at His Word; Just to rest upon His promise, Just to know, "Thus saith the Lord!" Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him! How I've proved Him o'er and o'er; Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus! Oh, for grace to trust Him more! Oh, for grace to trust You more!"