

Today we ask the question, “**Can There Really Be Peace on Earth?**” We want to think about Christ purpose for coming to earth.

1. **Think of Christ’s Purpose**

If you were one of the disciples there listening to Jesus and him sharing this this would have been one of those moments where you would probably ask to yourself – “What are you talking about Jesus?” How many times throughout Jesus ministry did people want to worship Jesus right then and there and anoint him as their King? The time that Jesus had everyone sit on a hillside and by the time they were all counted up Jesus had taken 12 loaves of bread in a few small fish fed over 5000. “Jesus, you did this wonderful and miraculous thing we want to make you our bread King.” You can only imagine that this line of thought was something that continued to come up for Jesus throughout his life and ministry. And Jesus message and point to his disciples is being a Christ follower being a Christian being a disciple of mine is difficult. “I’m not the bread King. I’m not the one to come to restore Israel and get rid of Roman rule that you were hoping for...” Because peace on this earth is so very very difficult.

You and I know about that too don’t we? Jesus said – “**Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.** As Jesus’ purpose relates to peace on earth, he takes it one step further and applies it to families. Jesus says that a **son will turn against his father, and a daughter against her mother.** Jesus concludes by stating—“**A man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.**”

You think about God's word being that very sword that divides believer from unbeliever. Law and Gospel points out sin and points us to God’s grace – the undeserved gift of Jesus. It separates joints and marrow. (Hebrews 4:12) We want to follow after and chase after things that help us make a name for ourselves. We want to be number one. And Jesus tells us – “**I have not come to bring peace but a sword.**

It happens amongst family members. Jesus had said how it will pit even members of one's household against each other. What does he mean by that? Don't we see that at times amongst our family? When you have some that are going to church and some that consider themselves Christians. And then there are some that don't want to go

to church and don't want to follow or listen to the Savior? Jesus said that life as a Christian would be difficult and that life here on this earth would be difficult. That peace on earth that we dream of – peace among nations, peace among families – Jesus would rather us think of the peace only he can bring.

Christ's purpose for coming into this earth was not to bring peace on earth the way that we might imagine it, but to bring peace to our hearts. We are no longer separated in our relationship from God the Father in heaven. All of our sinfulness, all the times that we've tried to place ourselves number one, all of the times that we've tried to make a name for ourselves, Jesus came as his purpose here on earth was to take away all our sin. When you see Jesus hanging there on the cross of Calvary crying out it is finished. He took on all of God's wrath and the punishment that you and I deserve.

When we think about making a name for ourselves, we see how Jesus even lived the perfect life that we could not. What did he do when he was about to go to the cross to pay for the sins of the world? Just as he had given his disciples that new command to love one another, he showed what that Christ-like servant attitude ought to be when he got down and washed his disciples feet.

Can there be peace on earth? Think of Christ's purpose as coming to this earth was to take away your sins – not to necessarily give peace among the nations or even peace among households but to take away the sins of the world.

As much as we think about Christ's purpose we want to think about his promise and how it relates to us in our lives it comes out in the second half of our lesson, where Jesus says –

³⁷ “Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸ and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

When we think of that promise of Jesus he tells us that life here on earth will not always be easy. And when he says those words of finding ourselves and finding life it means by losing it. What does Jesus mean? He follows that up with when he talks about receiving a

prophet and a righteous man (welcoming them) will receive a reward. We do not get or receive anything because of how good we've been. It's not something that you or I have earned that it's not something that we deserve because of our good behavior. It's only what we receive out of God's grace it was free gifts that he's given to you and to me.

Why do we give of ourselves and our things freely to others? To Love one another? Or as Jesus says here – to lose our life? It's because of what Jesus has done for you and for me. It's because Jesus paid the ultimate price for sin We're blessed with the ability to go and show love to others. And when Jesus says here to lose our life he's talking about all that stuff that we have been blessed with in life – all of our physical blessings, even the blessings of relationships with family members. Jesus is encouraging us here today is really a first commandment issue – do not put any of these things above me. We will find life by placing Jesus above all these other things. And what better aspect of blessings do we find than Jesus gives us – forgiveness of sins, new life and salvation. Eternal life as a blessing to look forward to. As Jesus said through the apostle John in Revelation 2:10 – **Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.**

Staying faithful to him in his word. And letting the Holy Spirit plant that faith in our hearts and continue to plant it deep into our hearts. And believe in and trust in Jesus as our only savior from sin. When we go through difficulties here on this earth, when we face difficulties in our relationships and it happens as Jesus says in our gospel lesson today that families are pitted against each other. When we're searching for peace on earth – we need to be reminded of Christ's purpose and also of his promise. He never said that being a disciple of his was going to be easy. In fact he said at times it was going to be difficult. But aren't we thankful when we think about peace to know that God has given us peace in our hearts because of what Jesus has done for us?

It is so awesome to know that in the midst of everything that takes place in the world around us – even in our own lives – to have that powerful promise of Jesus that the peace that we have, we can go and share it with others. It might be as simple as a sign on Main Street that reads – Love One Another. But it also happens in your words and

in your actions. The message of Christ purpose and promise that you share with others.

Even though there might not be peace on earth the way that we imagine it or even the way that we want it – there's peace on our hearts because of Jesus.

Let's pray – Dear Lord Jesus, again we thank you for your grace and every blessing – for giving us the true peace that only you can give – the peace of knowing our sins are forgiven; and the peace of knowing that eternal life is ours in heaven. Concerning this wonderful message of peace – we ask you to give us the boldness and confidence to proclaim it to the world. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen. (Phil.4:7)