

## **Peace on Earth – good will toward men.**

### Luke 2: 10-14

“The angel said to them, Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. This shall be a sign to you; you shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth Peace, good will toward men.”

### Philippians 4:1-9

“Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. Rejoice in the Lord always: and again, I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.”

This is the season of Peace. Peace on earth, good will toward men.

Peace is the most sought-after ‘commodity’ in our hectic lives.

Mankind will go to great lengths to compromise for the sake of peace.

Governments have spent countless hours in negotiations with neighboring nations to ensure that they will remain at peace.

Fortune 500 Board of Directors will give up a little more of their profits for the sake of peace.

In our individual homes, parents have been known to compromise with their children for the sake of peace.

Yet, try as we might, peace often eludes us.

That’s because peace has a great price. You can’t demand it; you can’t purchase it; you can’t invent it, or concoct it.

If I told you that there is a way to guarantee that you will always be satisfied with your present circumstances...that you will always be guaranteed peace...would you be interested in hearing about it? Of course you would.

Philippians contains the secret –six steps to peace.

According to Philippians 4, there are six steps that a believer must take to maintain the peace of God within his/her heart and life.

If we fail to take these steps, we grieve both the Lord and fellow believers.

**When a believer loses his peace with God, several things happen:**

- He becomes self-conscious, and guilty, discouraged and defeated.
- becomes cantankerous, critical, and divisive.
- He begins to slip into sin.
- The peace he/she once had with God and man becomes disturbed.
- Restlessness grips the soul.
- Restlessness stirs him/her into being a troublemaker, plummeting him/her into despair and defeat.
- She/he has failed; therefore, they feel unworthy and unable to walk victoriously with God.

When an unbeliever surrenders his life and accepts God, peace is made between him and God. Peace rules both within and between the person and God.

Isaiah 26:3 “I will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Me, because he trusts in me.”

The question is this: Once we have the peace of God flooding our lives, how do we maintain that peace?

- How do we keep the peace of God ruling and reigning within our souls?
- How do we stay aware that God’s very own presence is within us—stay aware that the God of peace lives within our very being?
- We have to follow the pathway to peace.

1. **The first step to peace is standing fast.**

Paul has stated that there are enemies of the cross of Christ...that the believer's citizenship is in heaven...that the Lord is going to return and take us out of this world and transform our bodies;

Paul says, 'therefore, **stand fast in the Lord.**' The word "stand fast" means simply to **stand firm, persist, and persevere.**

- Imagine a soldier standing fast against the enemy.
- He refuses to give ground no matter the pressure and strength of attack.
- He does not flinch; he is not unstable and he is never defeated.
- As Christian's, we must stand fast, no matter how great the trial, no matter how strong the pressure of the temptation, no matter how great the influence and allure of the world.

**The strength to stand fast comes from one source – in the Lord.**

- We must be living and moving and having our being in the Lord; praying, talking, and sharing with Him daily, keeping our thoughts focused upon His glorious salvation, hope, and mission; serving and ministering for the Lord, bearing testimony of Him and meeting the needs of those who hurt and need help.

2. **The second step to peace for the believer is agreement and unity.**

- There is no peace if people are arguing, bickering, grumbling and criticizing.
- Our flesh often encourages us to ignore this truth.
- Paul knew about the nature of man, and he knew that there were some in the Philippian Church who were being critical, arguing, grumbling, and quarreling.
- Paul pleads for all quarrelers to agree in the Lord. If we cannot agree in the flesh, we ought always to agree in the Lord.

**There is no time for arguing and divisiveness. In fact, the very opposite is true. We should make time to join hands with others and seek to fulfill the Lord's mission upon earth.**

3. **The third step to peace is to rejoice in the Lord.**...not just on special occasions, but **always**...that means **continually, repeatedly, again and again.**

If Paul, who is in prison, can rejoice in the Lord, then he can rightly expect the church to rejoice, even in the midst of their problems...no matter what the circumstances.

4. The fourth step to peace is a strong gentleness.

The word “moderation” is translated to mean gentleness, forbearance, reasonableness, consideration, agreeableness, courtesy, patience, and softness.

We can quickly imagine the peace that would permeate every one of our relationships if we were more gentle and forbearing with each other.

Paul charges us to display this gentleness with “all men” – not just believers.

Consider the story of the woman caught in adultery. When she was brought before Jesus, He could have applied the letter of the Law, and she should have been stoned;

He went beyond justice.

As far as justice goes, there is not one of us who deserves anything but the condemnation of God, but God goes far beyond justice.

Paul lays it down that the mark of a Christian in his personal relationships with his fellow-men must be that he knows when, and when not, to insist on justice, and that he always remembers that there is something which is beyond justice, and which makes a man like God.

Once we possess the peace of God, how do we maintain it?

By following the last two steps to peace – the maintenance steps. These are the two most important steps, and if we follow them, the peace of God will rule and reign in our hearts. We will never lose our peace or be without peace.

5. The fifth step is the peace that comes through prayer.

We are charged to be anxious for nothing. That means no worrying or fretting about a single thing.

- The word “nothing” means not even one thing.

Humanly speaking, the Philippians had every reason to worry and be anxious.

- They were suffering severe persecution; they were facing disunity and quarreling in the church;
- they had some carnal members within their fellowship who were prideful, super-spiritual, and self-centered;

- they were facing some false teachers who had joined their fellowship, and the teachers were fierce in attacking the cross of Christ.
- Add to that the fact that some believers were having to struggle for the necessities of life: food, clothing, and shelter. There was little else that could confront these devoted saints of God. They were facing every trial, every temptation imaginable, the kind of trouble that arouses anxiety and worry. The human reaction would be to fret, worry and suffer anxiety.

Paul knew that the only way they could keep from worrying was to receive an injection of supernatural power.

- The supernatural power of God can conquer ANY worry.
- Paul charges them to “Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” Philippians 4:6-7.

### **The remedy, then, for anxiety is PRAYER!**

- Special time set aside for devotion and worship. The word “supplication” refers to prayers that focuses upon special needs.
- We’re talking about a deep, intense prayer that pours out our soul before God.

### **6. Peace comes through Biblical thinking.**

Not the kind of positive thinking that L. Ron Hubbard sells, but the kind that focuses our thoughts until they shape our behavior.

- We are wherever we store our minds, and we become what we think.
- A person who centers his thoughts upon the world and its things will live for the world and its things:
  - money, wealth, lands, property, houses, possessions, position, power, recognition, honor, social standing, fame, and a host of other worldly pursuits.
- A mind set upon the world and the flesh can only lead to anxiety and worry, emptiness and restlessness.
- There can be no peace. God will not permit the worldly man to have peace, because it is the restlessness of the human soul that He uses to reach men with the gift of salvation.

Biblical thinking blocks out the fleshly, worldly, selfish, sinful or evil thoughts that attempt to enter our mind.

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

**“WHATEVER CAPTURES YOUR ATTENTION –  
SHAPES YOUR BELIEF SYSTEM.”**

**“CHOOSE THE HARD RIGHT INSTEAD OF THE EASIER WRONG”**

The old saints used to put it this way – “I woke up this morning with my mind stayed on Jesus!”

All around us, they’re singing of Peace.

Silent Night, Holy Night, all is calm, all is bright ...PEACE.

O Little Town of Bethlehem, how STILL we see thee lie.....PEACE.

God REST ye merry Gentlemen...PEACE.

Are you searching for peace? Take the first step! Accept Christ, and stand fast at the Cross of Calvary.

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