

The Peace of Jesus
June 7, 2015

Our subject, this morning, is the peace of Jesus. There are two kinds of peace. And Jesus had them both. And He wants us to have both of them as well.

The first of these is peace with God. One kind of peace is an absence of conflict between persons. It is also an absence of conflict with God. I'll come back to that kind of peace later.

The other kind of peace is an absence of conflict within ourselves. We call this inner peace or peace of mind. Many Christians struggle to have this kind of peace. They find it hard to have peace within themselves. And it is no wonder. There are many things that can interfere with having inner peace.

Maybe you have too much conflict with others to be at peace. Trouble in family relationships especially can hinder us having inner peace. But so too can problem relationships at work, school, or with your neighbors. So relationship problems can hinder you having inner peace.

Maybe you are too hurried to be at peace. I was reading The Middletons comic strip this past week. Midge calls over the fence to her neighbor, "Hi Peg! Haven't seen you lately?" Peg answers that she has been busy but would like to get together. In the next frame Midge says, "Okay, Peg. Let's see your weekly calendar. Wow! A PTA meeting, the Seniors Home Supper, cleaning the church, and your daughter's play. That's a lot!" Peg answers, "Now read Tuesday."

Maybe you have days like that. Maybe all of your days are like that. Maybe you are just too hurried to be at peace. You have too much to do to be at peace.

Maybe you are too worried to be at peace. Before we had news available to us 24/7, it was easier to be at peace. We did not know all that was going on in the world, all the upheaval, all the wars, hunger, poverty, social strains, political intrigue, and crime. Now it is all laid out for us every moment of every day on TV, the internet, and the radio.

What we desperately need is peace. We need the kind of peace that is unaffected by the things going on around us.

Several years ago a submarine was being tested and had to remain submerged for over a day. When it returned to the harbor, the captain was asked, "How did the terrible storm last night affect you?" The officer looked at him in surprise and exclaimed, "Storm? We didn't even know there was one!" The submarine had been so far down that it was unaffected by the huge waves on the surface of the water.

This is a picture of the peace we need. We need a peace within that is not affected by the negative circumstances in and around our lives. Maybe you have long wished for that kind of peace and have given up the idea that you could have it. If that is true of you, I want to change your mind this morning. So does Jesus. Jesus wants you to have this peace. Look at what He said to His followers.

John 14:27 (NIV) Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.

What kind of peace did Jesus have? Jesus had the peace of living at ease.

If you ever take up golf, let me give you the beginner's secret to success. The failure that most beginner's make, me included, is to just stand up and swing the club hard. The beginner assumes that a hard swing is the secret to golf. But that's wrong.

When you try to hit the ball hard many things will go wrong with your swing. Your hands will twist the club into the wrong angle. Your head will come up too quickly. Your center of gravity shifts from foot to foot at the wrong time. All of these things twist and turn the club in your hands so that the club head hits the ball at the wrong angle.

Instead of trying to smack the ball hard, you must instead learn to swing the same way every single swing, no matter how far the ball is from the green. You must learn to develop a smooth swing, a consistent swing, an "at ease" swing. Except for putting on the green, every swing should be the same. Every swing should have the same form, same strength, and same speed. The heads of the clubs are different shapes and angles. It is this that changes the trajectory of the ball for differing height and distance. Concentrate on hitting the ball the same way for every shot, and count on the club head to hit the ball straight and true.

This is a picture of the kind of peace Jesus had. Jesus lived "at ease", all day, every day. Jesus approached each situation, each problem, each interruption, each task with the same faith, attitude, energy, and focus as He faced everything in His life.

As you read about Jesus in the Bible you never see Him pushed for time. He was never rushed. He lived at ease, at peace. Jesus knew there was enough time to do what God wanted Him to do. That is true of us as well. Each of us has time each day to do what God wants us to do that day. God never gives us more to do in one day than we can get done in one day.

If you accept that, you can live at ease too. You can have the peace of Jesus.

Jesus had the peace of living on task. Jesus knew each day what God wanted Him to do that day. If you knew the things God wanted you to do today, and ignored tomorrow's work, you could have more peace.

Jesus knew where he needed to be. He knew when He needed to be there. He knew what He needed to do there. And He left on time to get there. He was never late. That should be true of Christians as a whole. Christians should be known as the most dependable people. We should be known for showing up on time.

Jesus focused on doing what He needed to do. He did not get sidetracked by how much needed doing tomorrow. He did not do tomorrow's work today. Jesus always knew that one day He would face the cross. He never said, "Okay, let's do it today and get it over with. The sooner I die and get raised, the sooner I get my glory." He never said that. He never did that. Jesus accepted God's workload and God's timeline. He focused each day on THAT day's work. He did so in an at ease manner. We can too. By the Holy Spirit we can learn to do this and be empowered by the Holy Spirit to do this.

Jesus did not add things that He did not need to do. That is what we do. We cram our days with all kinds of needless. We do so for two reasons. One, we don't know what to leave out. And two, we want to include things we enjoy. We refuse to deny ourselves in order to focus on what God has for us to do.

You know, there were many things Jesus never did, never had, never experienced. There were places He never saw, never traveled to. He knew very little of the world. He did not see the 7 wonders of the ancient world, though He could have traveled to those places. He chose not to experience all the pleasures and comforts that we take for granted. His diet was rather limited by His income. His clothes were not the best. He often slept out in the open, with no air mattress, no sleeping bag, no RV. He lived a pretty primitive lifestyle compared to you and I, and not just because a lot of what we have weren't invented yet. He was smart enough to gain the riches and comforts of that day if He so chose.

But He was intent on living out God's will. And that will did not include getting sidetracked by all the wonders and comforts that the world could offer. This is a lesson you and I still need to learn.

Jesus lived a holy life. And that contributed greatly to His peace.

We lack peace because we are not holy. **Holy means committed fully to God.** We are committed to lots of things other than God. We are committed to ourselves. We want relaxation, every day. Jesus took vacation when He needed to and was supposed to. We don't see Him doing so everyday.

We want comfort. We want toys and gadgets and riches and experiences that we don't need. We rush around trying to get and use these things, distracting us from God's will.

We think that we can have it all. We think that we can have the peace and joy of Jesus and all the comforts of the modern world as well. **It may just be that most of us are not mature enough, spiritually, to handle both holiness and prosperity at the same time.**

Jesus said that it was hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. It is also why some who are in the kingdom of heaven never have the deep personal peace and joy of Jesus. There is too much of the world in their hearts. They are too distracted by what they want to settle for what God wants for them. So they grab for more and end up with less. They have more of the world offers and less of what God offers.

You have to choose between the riches of this world and the riches of the next world. You cannot be full of both at the same time. As long as you keep trying to be, you find that the peace of Jesus eludes you.

Jesus was focused on His task. We never see Jesus ignoring people's needs. Too often, we see people as interruptions to our day. People are not interruptions. Some of you do that when you call me on the phone during the week. You say, "Sorry to bother you" or "Sorry to take up your time". Listen, YOU are my work. Your need is my opportunity to make a difference in your life. You are NEVER an interruption to my work. You ARE my work. So don't apologize for calling and asking for what you need.

Jesus knew that people were the work. He never ignored people's needs. He always helped if He could. However, He knew the difference between people's needs and their wants. One man wanted Jesus to order the man's brother to split their father's estate with him. Jesus refused. Some people wanted to make Jesus a king. He refused. Others wanted to make Jesus their source of food. Jesus refused. He knew what His job was and He would not be distracted or diverted from it.

Jesus had the peace of living in touch with God. We would do well to spend as much time in prayer as Jesus did. When you start your day in prayer and worship, it affects your spirit for the rest of the day. Get in step with God's priorities for your life at the beginning of your day. This gives the Holy Spirit opportunity to transform your heart. This gives the Holy Spirit opportunity to fill you with the peace, and the joy, of Jesus. You will then not be shaken by whatever happens during your day.

You never see Jesus worried, panicked, at a loss at what to do or how to react to the events taking place around Him. You never see Jesus expressing a lack of peace of mind. Even when they came to arrest Him, He was at peace. All during the trials, He was at peace. All during the beatings and up to the cross, He was at peace.

How could Jesus know what God wanted Him to do each day? By asking Him. Jesus spent more time in prayer than anyone. It is no wonder that He knew things about God, and living that you and I don't know. We don't know the things God would tell us if we would only pray until He tells us.

Philippians 4:6 (NIV) Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

James 1:5 (NIV) If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God...and it will be given to him.

Some say that they do not have time to pray. I guess not, being so busy rushing around getting things and doing things God hasn't told them to get and do. We must take the time to pray so we can hear from God how to straighten out our lives. This is the secret of Jesus' day to day peace. Let me suggest that you carve out 15-30 minutes to start your day. Get up before everyone else if you have to. That's what worked for me. I set the alarm to wake up earlier than everyone else.

And as you pray, here is a verse to use to pray for this inner peace.

Isaiah 26:3 (NIV)

You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.

Make it a prayer in your own words. "You will keep ME in perfect peace as I rest myself in YOU." Seek God through His word and learn to pray. He will fill you with all the good things He has for you. Jesus knew how to pray. I urge you to learn how to pray too.

Jesus had the peace of living at peace with God.

I said in the beginning that the first kind of peace is the absence of conflict with others. If you want the inner peace of Jesus, you first need the peace with God that Jesus had. Jesus had this peace, this absence of conflict with God, because Jesus lived perfectly God's will. Jesus never sinned.

Sin is rebellion against God, which creates conflict with God. In order to have the inner peace of Jesus we first need to be at peace with God. We need to do something about our sin.

What we need to do about our sin is give it to Jesus. Jesus died for our sins. Not having any sin of His own, God accepted Jesus' death as a death for our sin.

By believing in Jesus, putting your faith in His death, and repenting of your sinful living against God, God will forgive your sin and you will be at peace with God. Then you can receive the inner peace of Jesus also.