

“Untroubled Peace through Obedient Love”

[Part 2]

John 14.25–31

²⁵“These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. ²⁶But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. ²⁷Peace 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, nor let it be fearful. ²⁸You heard that I said to you, ‘I go away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. ²⁹Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe. ³⁰I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me; ³¹but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. Get up, let us go from here.”
[NASB]

HOPE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Rev. Chris Robinson

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I. Introduction

Jesus proclaims a *Different Peace*, from a *Different Place*, with a *Different Purpose*. Different I mean, from anything you will find in the world. Last week we saw how very different is the Peace that Jesus gives. I will refresh your memory. First, the fifteen differences in *character*. Unlike worldly peace, the peace Jesus gives is most noticeable in the midst of war. Two, the peace Jesus gives must be *established*; and three, it is *unshakable*. Four, the peace Jesus gives is *abundant*; and five, it *divides* as well as *unites*.

Six, the peace Jesus gives is declared rather than debated; preached rather than negotiated. Seven, this peace is spiritual not natural; and eight, it is of the very essence of the Kingdom of God. Nine, His peace is a powerful weapon of spiritual warfare. Ten, the peace Jesus gives is aggressive, not passive.

Eleven, the peace Jesus gives is *apolitical* and *other-centric*, not selfishly political. Twelve, His peace cannot be pretended or presumed; for thirteen, it comes by divine benediction, not by superficial salutation. Fourteen, you must be born again to know the peace Jesus gives. And fifteen, the peace Jesus gives does not hide trouble; it *removes* trouble.

Then second, this peace is as different in *conferral* as it is in *character*. Put simply, God the Father *sends* this peace to us by unilateral, non-negotiable grant. God the Son *secures* this peace at the cost of His own blood. He *leaves* His peace with His disciples though He Himself undergoes the infinite violence of the cross. And God the Spirit *seals* this peace. The Spirit who is at eternal peace in His divine union with Father and Son dwells within us and never leaves us. He causes us to remember, to recount, and to relax in the peace Father sent and Son secured.

II. A Different Place (28)

From these differences in character and conferral, we easily infer that the peace Jesus gives comes from a very different Place. In fact, Jesus explicitly *tells* His disciples that His peace comes from a different place.²⁸ “You heard that I said to you, ‘I go away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.”

The peace Jesus gives comes from heaven, from the place where His Father is. But He leads us to ask two important questions: what does it mean that the Father is greater than Jesus... and why would loving Him cause Jesus’ disciples to rejoice at His departure?

A. The Father Is Greater than I

1. What it does not mean

What does Jesus mean when He says, “the Father is greater than I”? Let me first clarify what He does *not* mean. Jesus does *not* mean that He is “a lesser God” than the Father; nor does He mean that He is “less” God than the Father. The Lord our God is *one*. There are no greater or lesser Gods; there is only one God. At the same time, there are three *Persons* in the triune Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That is, there are three Persons in the Godhead—these three are *one* God. These three are the *same in substance*, and these three are *equal* in power and glory.^{wsc5,6}

When Jesus says,^{10.30} “I and the Father are one,” He does not mean merely that He and the Father think alike. He means He is in the Father and the Father in Him. You cannot look at the star around which the earth revolves—namely the Sun—and say that part of the Sun is more stellar material than any other part. It is one star, even though, for example, the core of the star is doing something different than the outer layers are doing. God the Son and God the Spirit are not of any different, let alone “lesser” essence than God the Father. Jesus is not, therefore, any less powerful or glorious than the Father, any more than the fire in a wood stove on a cold winter night is less powerful or glorious than itself.

2. What it does mean

On the other hand, Jesus *does* mean that there *is* a distinction between the Persons of the One Most High God. This is a distinction in *office* and *economy* regarding God’s work of salvation. The Father *elects* whom He will save, and *sends* the Son to give us peace. The Son heartily and willingly *comes* into the world, taking on the form of man, and *secures* our peace with God by laying down His life and taking it up

again. The Holy Spirit *proceeds* from the Father and the Son, and *seals* the life and peace the Son has secured, upon those whom the Father elected. It is one fire, thought this lick glows blue and that one red.

This is the work of One Holy God saving sinful souls, a work in which the Three Persons of the Godhead accomplish distinctly different elements. Everywhere in Scripture, it is obvious that God the Son submits to the will of God the Father. ^{6.38}“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.” ^{Lk22.42}“Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done.”

At the same time, Jesus says, ^{Mt28.18}“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” *All authority: He must be God. Given to Me: He must be submitted to God.*

B. You would have rejoiced

Now the question, why would loving Jesus cause His disciples to rejoice at His departure? “I love you. I’m glad you’re going away.” That sounds strange to us because we think loving God means good things flowing from God to us. And that is true. Here it is, Reformation Day. Few evidences in the history of mankind have matched this one, of good things flowing from God to the Church and the Church loving God. Great riches of God’s grace flowed into the Church in the Reformation. The Church grew by leaps and bounds in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. And when the Church saw Him more as He is, the Church’s love for Father, Son, and Holy Spirit blossomed like flowers in the Spring. 500 years later the church today is alive, thanks to God loving us by giving us the Reformation.

“I love you. I’m glad you’re going away.” That sounds strange to us, because any good that flows to us *must* come through Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and man. ^{1Ti2.5} And now He’s going away! And yet as we saw in ch13, Jesus was not done yet with loving His disciples, and they could not love Him or one another until they had been fully loved by Him. As Martin Luther pictured it in *The Freedom of the Christian*, “From Christ the good things have flowed and are flowing into us. He has so ‘put on’ us and acted for us as if he had been what we are. From us they flow on to those who have need of them...”¹

These good things would flow from the disciples in three ways if they loved Jesus. They are care for His glory, care for the Church’s glory, and care for their own glory. Three things, by the way, that God cares most for.

1. Care for His Glory

a) More Concerned for His Happiness

First, if they loved Jesus they would have cared for His glory. While God needs nothing from us, and nothing “flows” from us to God in that all things including ourselves belong to Him, yet the disciples’ love for Him would have shown itself in these four ways. Firstly, if they loved Him and cared for His glory, they would have been more concerned for His happiness than for their own. That is the nature of love.

We shall soon hear Jesus say, ^{Jn15.13}“Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.” Death is not happy. Yes, happy is life in heaven after death. But death is not happy. If you lay down your life for your friend, you do it because you are more concerned for his or her happiness, his or her well-being, than your own. Jesus said in ch8, ^{8.14}“I know where I came from and where I am going.” Nothing grieved and *distressed* Jesus more than being distant from His Father—let alone cut off and cursed by Him. ^{Mt27.46}“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

And nothing *delighted* Jesus more than being with His Father. Nothing delighted Jesus more than doing His Father’s will. We smile at the scene in the movie *August Rush*, where his newfound friend named Hope doesn’t quite know what to make of August saying that he loves music more than food. Nor did the disciples know what to do with Jesus when at the well in Samaria He said, ^{Jn4.34}“My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.” Jesus loved His Father more than food. If His disciples loved Him and cared for His glory, they would rejoice that Jesus soon would have again the

¹Luther, M. (1999, c1957). *Vol. 31: Luther's Works, Career of the Reformer I* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). p.371. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

happiness of being with His Father. Imagine our vexation if Jesus’ thoughts of His Father were the wretched image of our disrespect for parents. This is the peace Jesus has given us—even the delight of *His* delight in His Father.

b) Overcoming Death

Secondly, He had told them He was going to die. His approaching death troubled them so. They knew, then, that for Jesus to go to the Father means He must rise up from the dead. That means He must overcome death and thus overcome separation from God’s favor, since death is God’s curse upon sin rather than His favor. ^{Jn10.17}“For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it up again.”

O happy day when came the death of death through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ! If they loved Him and cared for His glory, they would rejoice in the glorious victory that would vindicate Jesus of all malice laid to His account. He was “vindicated by the Spirit.”^{1Ti3.16} This is the peace Jesus has left with us—even His overcoming of the world and all its death.

c) Glory Unveiled

Thirdly, His disciples knew that Jesus was returning to the place where His glory again would be unveiled; where He would sit at the right hand of power. Jesus had already declared that the prophecy pointed straight to Himself when David in the Holy Spirit declared, “The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet.”^{Mk12.36}

And Jesus would soon pray, ^{Jn17.1}“Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You,² even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.” Jesus’ number one priority was giving honor and glory to His Father. We heard Him in ch12 say, ^{12.27}“My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour.²⁸ Father, glorify Your name.” You see, if His disciples loved Him as He loves His Father and if they cared for His glory, they would rejoice in Jesus’ return to His brilliantly unveiled glory at His Father’s right hand. This is the peace Jesus has given us—even the unveiling of His blessed glory.

d) His Inheritance

Fourthly, if they cared for His glory, His disciples would know that Jesus could only receive His inheritance by departing and going to the Father. Receiving an inheritance is a happy thing, is it not? Death, after which an inheritance comes, is not happy. But the benefactor who will leave an inheritance and the beneficiary who receives the inheritance both rejoice. Why? Because through this inheritance a compassionate connection remains even after the one’s death.

Said God the Father to God the Son, ^{Ps2.7}“You are My Son, today I have begotten You.⁸ Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession.” This inheritance—namely the Church of believers—could only come to the Son through His death. For it is through His death that the Son accomplished the will of the Father to send us peace.

If His disciples loved Him and cared for His glory, they would rejoice that Jesus would go away—even through death—in order that He might receive His cherished inheritance. And they would rejoice because they themselves are His inheritance.

This is the peace Jesus has left us with—even the assurance that He has secured His inheritance, and that His inheritance includes us. If they loved Him, they would rejoice in His happiness, His overcoming of death, His unveiled glory, and His gaining the inheritance.

2. Care for the Church’s glory

a) Greater Works than Jesus

Second, if they loved Jesus, they would have cared for the Church’s glory, and that in two ways. Firstly, you might say that they didn’t know enough about the Church yet, and in fact they were still Israel. But their own prophet Isaiah had revealed that Israel was not a big enough prize or inheritance for the Son of God; He must also be a light to the nations, to the Gentiles.^{Is49.6} “Israel” would become much, much larger, matured into what we now call the Church. Same Covenant of Grace; new administration.

Much work to be done! Much greater work to be done! Greater works even than those Jesus did.^{14.12} Greater works which would bring yet greater glory both to the Father and to the Son. If His disciples loved Him and cared for His Church’s glory, they would rejoice that Jesus would go away so that He might bring honor to Himself by doing greater works through them as His instruments. This is the peace Jesus has given us—even the blessed labor that bears great and heavenly fruit.

b) Greater Anticipation

Secondly, if they loved Jesus, they would have all the greater anticipation of Jesus’ impending return in the fullness of His glory to make all things new, to bring them to where He is, and to judge their oppressors (and save some).

“I go away and I will come to you.” If the Father is greater than He, then Jesus’ going away and coming back again must be part of a very, very great plan. And His going away is not the end of the plan. Happy day when Jesus returns from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God,^{1Th4.13} to receive His church in glory, made holy and blameless before Him,^{Eph1.4} having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads, following the Lamb of God wherever He goes.^{Rev14.1,4}

If His disciples loved Him and cared for His Church’s glory, they would rejoice that Jesus would go away so that He might return to bring His Church into the glorious marriage supper of the Lamb.^{Rev19.9} This is the peace that Jesus has left with us—even the promise of His return.

3. Care for their own glory

a) No Cross, No Peace

Third, if they loved Jesus, they would have cared not only for His glory and His Church’s glory, but also for their own glory. Our own glory redounds to His glory since we belong to Him and “We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”^{Eph2:10} They would care for their own glory in four ways.

And firstly, if His disciples love Jesus and listen to Him, they know that their peace and happiness is impossibly empty until Jesus departs... via the cross. No cross, no peace; and no peace, no glory. Are you troubled over your soul? Are you restless over your estate? What glory is there in such trepidation? What hero spends his life shaking and shuddering? If His disciples loved Him and cared for their glory, they would rejoice that Jesus would go away to make peace through His cross.

This is the peace Jesus has given us—even the truth that on the cross He suffered the righteous rage of God for our sins so that we would not. The Son became, as it were, the Father’s enemy, so that we might be the Father’s friends.

b) Something Better Coming

Secondly, if they cared for their glory, His disciples would know that something greater would come their way because Jesus was going to Someone greater than He. Thus He could do more for them than all He could do as long as He remained on earth. Jesus is now able to hold up before His Father’s eyes the wounds in His back, head, hands, feet and side inflicted by godless men with scourge, thorn, nail and spear.

By these very wounds, Jesus poured out His blood for us. By these very wounds, Jesus “has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified”—that is, us who are being made glorious.^{Heb10.14} With these very wounds Jesus continually makes intercession for us, upholding His Father’s favor toward us and conferring upon us the gifts Father delights to give us. If they loved Jesus and cared for their glory, they would rejoice that by going away through the cross, Jesus would make us more like Him—more holy as He is holy—so that we might reflect His glory and honor into the world.

This is the peace Jesus has left with us—even the increase of grace that continually comes from Father by the Holy Spirit through Jesus’ mediatory intercession.

c) Would Know His Love

Thirdly, if they cared for their glory they would know that if they loved Him, it would be because He loved them.^{1Jn4.19} “We love, because He first loved us.” As you see, they learned this later. Peter, James,

and John were still quibbling over who would get to sit next to Jesus. Peter was still confident he could love Jesus before Jesus loved him.² If they loved Jesus and cared for their glory, they would rejoice that their glory must come entirely from Jesus loving them and not from them loving themselves. HE—not they themselves—must lift them up in His time.^{1Pe5.6}

This is the peace Jesus has given us—even the resting in His love, knowing that as the gifts of His love flow to us, only then can they and will they flow out to others from a heart set apart for heavenly glory.

d) *Fullness of the Reality of Adoption*

Fourthly and finally, if they cared for their glory, His disciples would soon know the fullness and reality of their adoption by their loving Father who lives in a very different place from this world. “I go away and I come back to you. If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.” Why would they have rejoiced? Why did Jesus go?^{14.2} “In My Father's house are many dwelling places... I go to prepare a place for you.” Under what promise did Jesus go?¹⁸ “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”

What does the Father being greater than Jesus have to do with it? The Father from all eternity decreed our adoption as sons.^{Eph1.4} “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world... In love⁵ He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself.”^{Ro8.15} “You have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.”

This is the peace Jesus has left with us—even that we might “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God.”^{1Jn3.1} And yet... and yet... even with such a peace, there is a fullness still to come. We have the first fruits of the Spirit, yet “even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.”^{Ro8.23} Thus we eagerly await Jesus’ return.

III. **Another Temporary Conclusion**

Well it seems we have delayed once more the question: Is your peace a different peace, from a different place, with a different purpose? Once we hear the different purpose of this peace Jesus leaves with us, we will be able to examine the peace we *think* we have and the peace we *do* have. Until then, you may begin examining your own care for God’s glory, for His church’s glory, and for your own glory.

In these three consist the peace that Jesus has given us, the peace Jesus has left with us. In these three consist the reason and our very hope that He will return again. In these three consist our joy that He went to the cross, arose from the dead, and ascended into heaven... that He might return to us. In these three consist our assurance that the peace Jesus gives comes from a *very* different place.

Very happily, Jesus cared and cares perfectly for God’s glory, for the Church’s glory, and for *your* glory. Amen.

²http://www.hopeport.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/john13_12-20.pdf