

“Untroubled Peace through Obedient Love”

[Part 3]

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

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I. Introduction

A different peace, from a different place, with a different purpose. Two weeks ago, we examined how different is this peace Jesus gives us. We looked at fifteen characteristics of His peace and found them very different from the peace the world would press upon us. We also looked at three ways the conferral of this peace is very different from the way the world would command peace.

Then last week we examined how different is the *place* from which this peace comes. Heaven—a place of love and the place where Christ’s glory shines unveiled in all its fullness—is very different from this world. While the disciples loved Jesus, their want of full and complete love illustrated how very different is the place where Christ’s peace comes from. The love out of which Christ’s peace is born cares fully and completely for God’s glory, for the Church’s glory, and for *your* glory.

We come finally to the different *purpose* of this peace that Christ gives to us and leaves with us. We find His peace has a very different purpose from any peace the world tries to offer. We already hinted that the peace the world seeks carries self-centered and political goals. A people or a nation tries to secure peace for its own benefit. A powerful nation will impose peace upon less powerful nations at their cost, so that it might enjoy its convenient life. Less powerful nations will submit to terms of peace so that they might enjoy mere continuation of life.

Jesus gives peace with a very different purpose, and that purpose is threefold. The purpose of the peace Jesus gives is that we might gain *hope*, grow in *holiness*, and give *honor*.

II. Hope

Hope. Jesus gives us peace in order that we might gain hope. ²⁹“Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe.” This does not come as a surprise. Regarding our peace and regarding our hope, God stated through the prophet, ^{Jer29:11}“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of *peace* and not of evil, *to give you a future and a hope.*”

Thoughts of peace, to give you hope. Hope in the Bible means confident expectation. It means you expect something to happen based on solid evidence and sound reasoning. But hope is more than confident expectation; it is also eager anticipation. If you have hope, not only do you confidently expect something based upon sure evidence and clear reasoning... but you also eagerly look forward to it happening. You know it is going to happen, and you are very eager for it to happen.

There is *no* evidence that something will happen so solid as God *saying* it will happen. There may be a ring in the sky around the midnight moon and ten weather experts forecasting that before morning it will snow. But we are quite sure from experience that all this is not solid evidence. Now if *God* says it will snow before morning, then we *know* it will snow before morning. Alas, God has said no such thing... not in our hearing anyhow.

But think of this! When by their sin Adam and Eve plunged the world into darkness, deceit, and despair, what evidence was there that the serpent had not gained eternal victory over the souls of mankind? What evidence when, after a few centuries, it was clear for all to see that ^{Gen6.5}“the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”? There was no evidence you could see, touch, taste, or smell that the serpent had not gained complete victory. This place was no jolly paradise! This world was polluted and it was putrid. This world *stunk*! This planet needed a good, complete washing with water! There was *no visible evidence* that the devil had not secured total dominion. I

suspect Tolkein’s Mordor looks not half bad compared to what it looked and smelled like in this world. Nor, through spiritual eyes, do things in the world look much better today.

But there *was* evidence. God had spoken. And God had put it into the heart of one remaining man Noah and his family to believe—to base their confident expectation—upon what God had said long before in the presence of Adam and Eve. God first spoke this promise to the serpent for Man’s benefit: ^{Gen3.15}“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise Him on the heel.” In the days of the Flood, Noah and his family based their hope on the evidence: God said the devil would be crushed and man would live—though for man to live, one Seed, one Descendent of Adam and Eve must die.

Here is the fulfillment of what believers have confidently expected and eagerly anticipated ever since. The Seed—namely Christ—would die... but in so doing, He would crush not only Satan but also all the fallen angels and all the wicked men and women who would persist in their commitment to Satan’s dominion.

²⁹“Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe.” When what happens? When Jesus leaves to go to the Father. When Jesus dies on the cross, is buried in the tomb, arises from the dead, ascends into heaven, and pours out His Spirit. When all that happens, the transition from the Old Administration to the New will be complete. The overlap of the OT church and the NT church will be over.

When Jesus leaves to go to the Father, the church will no longer be looking forward to the great justifying act of the promised Seed, by which He destroys the power of the devil and secures eternal life for the Church. Now, the Church will look forward to the great sanctifying work of the Triune God, to be made complete upon the *return* of the Redeemer who purchased us with His blood.

“Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe.” What does He want them to believe? ²⁸“I go away, and I will come to you.” Is this not the great question of your faith and hope? Does not everything now hinge on this—“I will come to you”? Not, ‘Sorry, I won’t be coming back.’ Not, ‘You’re on your own.’ Not, ‘I’ll come to others but not to you.’ Not, ‘I will come back *against* you.’ But, “I will come *to* you.” As in v3, “I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.”

Paul blesses the believers in Rome: ^{Ro15:13}“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, *so that you will abound in hope* by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Peace that Jesus gives... so that you will abound in *hope*. Earlier Paul explained that blessing:

^{Ro5.1}“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. ³And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; ⁴and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; ⁵and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

As we said two weeks ago, the peace Jesus gives us flourishes most noticeably amidst war and tribulation. The peace Jesus gives encourages and sustains our hope—our confident expectation and our eager anticipation of His return *to* and *for* us. If you believe in Jesus, that He lived, suffered, and died for *you*, that He has borne your sins and given you His obedience, you are justified by faith. You *have* peace with God. You have *very solid* evidence—God’s

Word—and you may reasonably conclude that since God is faithful and true, Jesus is coming for you.

Peace... to give you hope. Now listen. Objectively, you *have* peace with God... So now... subjectively, does peace with God have *you*? Or put it this way: Objectively, you have hope that Jesus will return to you. Subjectively, does hope that Jesus will return have *you*?

Or do the things that you have in this world have you? If they do, you are neither very peaceful nor very hopeful. You know they could vanish at any moment. Rolled up and changed like a garment. Your team may win one year, but maybe not the next. Your wooden creation completed today may be kindling for your house tomorrow. Is there peace in the hopes you hold? Or do your hopes actually fuel your fears that they may be burned like wood, hay, and stubble one day soon?

Hope in Jesus Christ's return has been given over to you. Are you given over to hope in Jesus Christ's return?

III. Holiness

Holiness. Jesus gives us peace in order that we might gain hope... and grow in *holiness*.³⁰ I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.” Urgency! “You have had three years of words from Me, but only a few short hours remain and not many more words. I am your Prophet, that you may know Him who is true. I am your Priest, that I may sanctify you with My own blood. I am your King, that I may slay your enmity to God and subdue you to Myself. This is the only way you may have peace with God. And the purpose of such peace is that you might be *holy* as I am holy.”

Are peace and holiness such necessary companions? Oh, yes! Listen to the psalmist: Ps119:165 “Those who love Your law have great peace, and nothing causes them to stumble.” Listen to the prophet: Isa48:22 “There is no peace for the wicked,” says the LORD.” Listen to the Apostle: 1Th5:23 “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Why do you have peace? *So that you might be holy*. Thus Paul says, Eph4.1 “Walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called...³being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

Jesus Christ gives you peace. How? By coming in the form of man, by taking to Himself human nature. Human, yet perfectly holy. Why human? Why holy? So that He can take your human corruption and give to you His human holiness. He is doing that right now to all of you who through justification by faith have peace with God. How, then do you walk in a manner worthy of this? Here is how:

Col3.12 “So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.¹⁴ Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.¹⁶ Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.¹⁷ Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

That is ten sermons in itself. But you see, the ruler of the world has nothing in Jesus. No power over Him. Jesus’ divine nature never was subject to death... and Jesus laid down His own human life; no one took it from Him.^{Jn10.18} If you are united to Jesus by faith, then the ruler of this world has no power over you either. Power arrayed *against* you, yes; but no power *over* you. There is a colossal struggle going on in you who love Jesus. But the peace of Jesus Christ flourishes amidst tribulation. And tribulation is not just external discomforts. Tribulation includes this struggle between holiness and wickedness *inside* you.

No wonder. If you are united to Christ, your wickedness is dying. I said, your wickedness is dying. It cannot live, because Christ is being formed in you. I said, Christ is being formed in you. And there is nothing—not even our sometimes impetuous and dejected resistance—that will stop the Holy Spirit from completing this work.^{Php1.6}

Peace, to give you holiness. Objectively, you have peace with God. Now, subjectively, does peace with God have *you*? Or put it this way: objectively, you have holiness that the Spirit of Jesus is forming in you. Subjectively, does the holiness of the Spirit of Jesus have *you*? Are you letting the peace of Christ rule in your heart? You are *able* to put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. You are *able* to bear with and forgive each other. Why? Because there is a seed of these holinesses in you. Christ *is* being formed in you. You are *able* to love, now that the holy human nature of Christ is being formed in you.

IV. Honor

Honor. Jesus gives us peace in order that we might gain hope, grow in holiness... and give *honor*. Honor unto the Lord, that is.³¹“But 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.” Did you hear that? Everything Jesus does, He does because the Father commanded Him. Don’t get Him wrong—Jesus *loves* to do His Father’s will; Jesus is never compelled against His own will. His Father’s will *is* His will. In doing His Father’s will, Jesus demonstrates His love for the Father. In doing His Father’s will, Jesus gives *honor* to His Father.

Jesus was about to go to the cross to show the world His love for the Father. Father had commanded Jesus to take on human nature, to live and to die in our place so that we might die and live in His. Father commanded Jesus to crush the head of the serpent at the cost of His own life. Do you see how devastatingly powerful the peace Jesus gives us is? Listen to Paul’s benediction to the Romans:^{Rom16:20}“The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.” The peace which Christ purchased with His death *crushes* Satan under our feet!

God is not pleased with Satan or his devoted followers—that is, all who reject the Lord Jesus. Why? Because they do not honor the God of love. They hate Him and show it by their rebellion. But listen to the angels of God heralding the incarnation of the One who would destroy the devil:^{Lk2.14}“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.” Glory. Peace. God is pleased.

Jesus arose from the dead at the command of His Father.^{Jn10.18}“No one has taken [my life] away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.” Does not the peace Jesus gives us bring a unique honor to God? How many mere humans have you known to have raised themselves up from the dead?

How many souls who died hating God arose up in peace with Him? Not a single one. But those who love God, demonstrate their love by obeying His commands.^{14.15}“If you love Me, you

will keep My commandments.” And they have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ who honored the Father by doing exactly as the Father commanded Him.

We do not earn peace with God by keeping His commands. *Jesus* earned our peace with God by keeping His commands. We *honor* God by keeping His commands, because it is peace with God that *enables* us to keep His commands. Peace that Jesus gave us so that we *can* honor God.

Peace, to give God honor. Objectively, you have peace with God. Subjectively, does peace with God have *you*? Or put it this way: objectively, you have the chief purpose of honoring God. Subjectively, does the chief purpose of honoring God have *you*? Are you letting the peace of Christ rule in your heart? When it does, you honor God. Is that your desire? Hearty obedience indicates hearty love.

V. Conclusion

Does the peace Christ has left you with serve as arbiter; does it direct the decision between two impulses—one honoring God and one honoring self? Does the peace Christ gives you move you to discern between two motives in your plans—one holy and one unholy? Does the peace you have in Christ inform you which of two affections you will favor—one showing you eagerly anticipate Jesus’ return and one showing you’d be happier for Him to wait awhile before coming to you? Do your decisions indicate that God has crushed Satan’s power, or do they look like you’re hedging your bets, as if you might have to give account to Satan someday for opposing him?

To honor God is to fear Him—to follow His precepts with great delight in His commands. That requires a bold move against the devil, against the world, and against our flesh. But Jesus has already made that bold move! If you are united to Jesus—if He has given peace to you, not as the world gives—then you are at liberty to be bold in your love for Him and bold in your hatred for the devil, the world, and the flesh. You have peace with God, so have peace with God. You have war with the devil, the world, and your remaining corruption, so have war with them.

His peace will flourish in this present tribulation. Honor God by letting His peace rule in your heart, and you *will* enjoy Him. Forever.