

Peace to You

Introduction

The risen Christ spent forty days with His disciples. He showed them His resurrected body, spent time together, ate together and taught them as well. This morning, we will consider one of the words He spoke to His disciples: peace be with you. *Shalom*. *Peace to you* (literal translation).

Content

In the evening of the first Easter, 2000 years ago in Jerusalem, the Ten disciples (without Thomas) were gathered in one place. The doors were shut because they were afraid of the Jewish authorities coming after them (v. 19). In their midst, the risen Christ, out of nowhere, appeared greeting, “Peace to you.” Once again, I am intrigued here with His greetings: the word that He had spoken to His disciples—*Peace (Shalom) to you all*.

Let’s ponder the word ‘peace’ and discuss the ways we can obtain it in our lives.

Let me ask the following four questions: *What is peace? Why do we need it? Who can give it? And how do we get it?* I’ve found all the answers from the Word of God—the Scripture.

What Is Peace?

A little bit of groundwork here. The word ‘peace’ appears 352 times in the Bible (NASB): 260 times in the Old Testament and 92 times in the New Testament. ‘Peace’ in the Bible can mean anything from a simple greeting to peace in the heart, good health, prosperity, blessing, and success in a person’s life.

Oxford Learners Dictionaries define peace as 1) *the state of being calm or quiet*. 2) *a situation or a period of time in which there is no war or violence in a country or an area*. 3) *the state of living in friendship with somebody without arguing*.

This morning, we will use the first definition only: *the state of quiet and tranquility in our soul*. When a person has peace in his or her life, the same peace will trickle down to the family, friends, neighborhood, city, nation, and the world.

Please note here that there are two kinds of peace: human peace and divine peace. Human peace is conditional. It depends on our circumstances. For instance, if everything goes well, then, we have peace in our heart. However, if everything is in turmoil, then we lose our peace. Such human peace never lasts forever.

Divine peace is different. It is not conditional. It transcends all circumstances. It surpasses all human understanding. It lasts forever. We cannot explain how it works, but it does. When we have this peace, even in the middle of turmoil, no one or nothing can take away the quiet and calmness from our soul and spirit. E.g., You might have heard about a hymn called, “It is well with my soul.” Its lyrics were not written in peaceful times. Rather, they were penned during one of the most difficult times of the author’s life. In 1873, Horatio Gates Spafford, a businessman in Chicago, sent his wife and four daughters by ship to Europe for a family vacation. The ship they were aboard collided with another ship and sank in the Atlantic Ocean. His wife survived but not his daughters. Spafford took the next boat to meet his wife in Wales. As his ship was sailing past the spot where his daughters perished, he wrote the poem “It is well with my soul.” *“When peace, like a river, attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea-billows roll, whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, It is well, It is well with my soul.”* That’s the kind of peace the Bible talks about. That’s the peace that surpasses all human understanding. That’s the peace only God can give. That’s the peace that we all want.

Why Do We Need It?

Who doesn’t need it? But let me tell you why I believe everyone needs divine peace.

First of all, *it is good for the troubled souls, especially those who are fearful.* E.g., It was the night before Jesus was crucified. By then, His disciples were fearful with the prospect of losing their Master to death. To them, Jesus said, **“Peace 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”** (John 14:27, NASB 1995). Notice here? Christ promises the troubled and fearful souls His peace, that the world cannot give nor take away from them. If you know someone who is troubled or fearful, pray for Christ’s peace on their behalf.

Next, *divine peace is especially beneficial to those who are confused, weary, tired, and discouraged.* Are you weary and discouraged right now? Then, you need Christ’s peace that will bring order, rest, and even courage. E.g., God wanted to tell Daniel the Prophet not to lose his heart, so one day He sent His angel to him. Let’s listen to what the angel of the LORD said to him: **“You who are treasured, do not be afraid. Peace be to you; take courage and be courageous!”** Now as soon as he spoke to me, I felt strengthened and said, **“May my lord speak, for you have strengthened me”** (Daniel 10:19). Note, here, the order: God grants you **peace first before** He expects you to be **courageous**. With God’s peace in you, you get strengthened. Do you need courage? Seek God’s peace.

Finally, *peace is a must for good health.* Peace in our heart refreshes, renews, regenerates, and restores us to full health: *A heart at peace gives life to the body* (Proverbs 14:30, NIV).

Next question: **Who can give such peace to us?** Only God can. Not money, nothing in the world, nobody but the Lord can. Peace is a God-thing. He is the only one who can give us

an everlasting peace. All others fail. The Scripture reminds us over and over again that peace is from God (1 Timothy 1:2: *Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord*). He is the author, source, and giver of peace. He is the God of peace.

Scripture tells us that peace is a Triune God-thing. E.g., **God the Father** is the Lord of peace Himself (1 Corinthians 14:33). **Christ the Son** is the Prince of peace, too (Isaiah 9:6). He is our peace (Ephesians 2:14). **God the Spirit** grants us peace as one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23): Love, joy, peace, ... So, the God of Trinity, that is, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit surely know what we need and can give us their peace.

Please remember that it is **the will of our heavenly Father** for us to have peace, experience it, and live in it. He blesses us with peace (Psalm 29:11). In today's text, for instance, Christ said, "Peace be to you" twice. Jesus gives us His peace as a gift. Therefore, when we need peace, it is a no brainer to whom we should turn for peace. To God. May our prayer be like Paul's: **Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance** (2 Thessalonians 3:16, NIV).

How Do We Get Peace?

How do we receive divine peace in our heart?

First and foremost, **by making peace with the God of peace** before we expect peace from Him. How do we make peace with God? Simply put, by receiving forgiveness through our repentance. When we repent of our sins in the name of Jesus, we receive God's forgiveness in the same name of Jesus (Acts 10:43). There's no other way (being 'morally good' isn't going to work). By accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior by faith, we make peace with God through Jesus Christ (Acts 10:36). As we start living according to God's will, God's peace will dwell in our heart.

Next, we get God's peace **when we pray with thanksgiving**: ⁶ *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and pleading with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.* ⁷ *And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus*" (Philippians 4:6-7, NIV).

Thirdly, we get divine peace **when we submit ourselves to God's will**. E.g., On the night before He was crucified, Jesus was very much troubled in His soul. In the Garden of Gethsemane, He restored God's peace in His heart by submitting Himself to God saying, "Not my will but Thine." E.g.2, More than once, whenever I was troubled with what was going on in life, and each time I had to make a major decision, I received Christ's peace only after I submitted to God's will saying, "Your will be done, not mine." The promise in Colossians came true: *When you submit yourself to God, the peace of Christ will rule in your heart* (Colossians 3:15).

Lastly, we can have peace by **walking in the Spirit** day in day out. Peace is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). *Love, joy, **peace**, ...* Set your mind not on your fleshly desires but on the Spirit: *“For the mind set on the flesh is death, but **the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace**”* (Romans 8:6, NASB 1995).

Conclusion

The Lord promises great peace to those who love and walk in His law (Psalm 119:165). Fix your eyes on Jesus. Have a steadfast heart for the LORD, then, He will keep you in His perfect peace (Isaiah 26:3). Claim God's promise for peace today!

Amen.