

## TRUE PEACE

Whether on the television or radio, the talk show host Sean Hannity often partially quotes John 14:27, by saying, "...Let not your heart be troubled!..." When I hear him say this, I often say aloud, "Sean, give the whole verse!" The verse of Scripture in its entirety says, *"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."* Everyone wants peace, but the Giver of peace is often ignored. It is not enough to simply say, "let not your heart be troubled"; one must know the only One Who can still the troubled waters of life.

When we were in Israel we were greeted by Jew and Gentile alike with these words, "Sholem Aleichem", meaning "Peace be upon you." This expression was used as often as we say "hello" in the western world. There is probably not an area of the world where peace is so in jeopardy than the Middle East and yet the one thing they long for is peace. Psalm 122:6 teaches us to *"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem...."*

In my youth, the Cold War was looming. I remember so well when we were living in the Washington DC area the nuclear bomb drills, hearing the siren alarm and going to the basement of the school and wait for the siren to sound telling us it was okay to surface. When we moved to Florida, the siren would sound and we would go under our desks. We lived in Florida during the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. We did not realize how close we were to Soviet missiles being launched from Cuba aimed right at our home in Central Florida. Whereas our previous communist enemies feared reciprocal death and injury should they begin war, the unnerving thing about the world we live in today is there is an enemy dedicated to our demise that does not fear repercussions from free countries. The Islamic jihadists would consider themselves blessed by Allah if they should die in their "unholy" war. Sadly, the confused jihadist would not be in Hell for five seconds before finding out instead of peace and blessing, he shall be consigned to chaos and the curse from God forever. Never has man desired peace, true peace than the people in the world we live in today. *"For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace..."* (I Corinthians 14:33).

### **1. The unconverted have a longing for peace with God.**

The Bible says, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isaiah 57:21). "The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace" (Isaiah 59:8). Jeremiah lamented, "They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6:15).

Merely longing for peace will never give peace. Promising peace will never give peace. "Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man" (Psalm 60:11). How true the adage: "No God; no peace. Know God; know peace!" Without Christ, mankind is lost. Isaiah tells us, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way..." (Isaiah 53:6). Yet Solomon reminds us, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 16:25).

## **2. Only the believer in Christ has peace with God.**

In the previous point I quoted part of Isaiah 53:6; let me give you the whole verse: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Because we have gone astray we find ourselves so lost that we cannot find our way, so Christ took the penalty of our sin and the punishment our sins required on His own person, "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:6).

Paul said in Ephesians 2:12, "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Hopeless and helpless is the description of all of those outside the saving grace of God. The apostle went on to say, "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace" (Ephesians 2:14,15). The word "enmity" in the Greek language means actively hostile. Colossians 1:20 states, "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

## **3. The obedient believer possesses the peace of God.**

Every believer has peace with God, for the Bible says, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). However, not every believer is enjoying the peace of God. The Bible says, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6,7). The peace of God is sharing the nature of God. God never worries and is never out of control. We too will not worry or be out of control when we trust Him. Years ago a man was carrying a fifty-pound sack of potatoes from the market to his home. His friend was passing by in his wagon and said, "Let me give you a ride!" He gladly climbed aboard and sat next to the driver on the bucket seat, but kept his bag of potatoes draped over his shoulder. His friend said, "Why don't you drop your potatoes in the back of the wagon?" The man

replied, "It is enough that you carry me; I'm not going to let you carry my potatoes also." How foolish! If the man is in the wagon, the driver is already carrying the potatoes too! Are we not often like this man -- we are full of worry when the Bible tells us to, "Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee..." (Psalm 55:22). If Christ can take care of our sins (and He does), He is more than able to take care of our worries (and He will) as well!

Isaiah 26:3 says, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." The same verse in the New International Version reads, "You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you." This modern attempt at translation of Holy Scripture has missed the whole point; they left out the phrase, "...whose mind is stayed on thee..." Peace does not come simply because you have a steadfast mind, but through a Person and that Person is Jesus! We must stay our minds on Him. The result is peace.

#### **4. The Christian is to propagate this peace.**

Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9). The Old Testament tells us, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation..." (Isaiah 52:7). Paul re-affirmed this truth in the New Testament when he said, "And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10:15). Jeremiah said to those in captivity in a heathen land, "And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace." (Jeremiah 29:7). In so many ways, our country has been led into captivity by the rampant sin we have embraced. If our leadership would come to Jesus we would enjoy peace like overflowing and refreshing waters, "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea" (Isaiah 48:18). It might do all of us well if when we put on our shoes in the morning that we would also pray that God would help us to put on our "evangelism shoes" and look for every opportunity God gives us to be a witness, "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace" (Ephesians 6:15).

-Pastor Pope-