

2024: Peace Through Violence, But Not Like You'd Think

Intro: The normal Christian life is marked by peace with God because he who lives within us and is our life is himself our peace. But the normal Christian life is certainly not marked by peace with the world, the flesh and the devil. In 2024 we will either grow and mature in Christ and our faith in him, or we will "grow" in our trust in our "natural feelings" brought on by difficulties and troubles.

John 16:33 *I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.*

Romans 8:31b *If God is for us, who can be against us? (vs. 34a) Who is to condemn us? (vs 35a) Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? (vs. 37) No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*

Jesus: The One Whose Teachings Hold Water

Mark 1-Mark 4:34

Teachings with Authority---Multitudes healed---Apostles chosen-- Huge crowds gathering---Prophecies fulfilled—Hell "battle-stationed"

Mark 1:22 *And they (the people) were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. (How did they know his teaching had authority?)*

Sermons from the Surf:

- **The parable of the sower/the four soils (Mark 4:1-20)**
- **The parable of the lamp under a basket (Mark 4:21-25)**
- **The parable of the growing seed (Mark 4:26-29)**
- **The parable of the Mustard Seed (Mark 4:30-34)**

Mark 4:23-25 *If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."* ²⁴ *And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you."* ²⁵ *For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away."*

We may have Jesus' teaching, but does Jesus' teaching have us! How do we know?

First: Receive Jesus: (John 6:29) *This is the work of God: Believe on the one that God has sent.*

Second: (James 1:22-25) *But **be doers of the word, and not hearers only deceiving yourselves**, For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.*

Third: (Philippians 2:12b-13) *Work out your salvation in fear in trembling because it is God who is at work in you both the will and to do of his good pleasure.*

Fourth: Acts 1:8 *You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you shall be my witnesses. (My doers!)*

Jesus put on flesh to attack and destroy the god of this world and his minions. That battle didn't end, though, with his resurrection, ascension, and the sending of the Holy Spirit. It just intensified!!! Jesus put his Holy Spirit into his church to make us an army of fighters to the end, not once a week gatherers on the week-end.

1 Corinthians 4:20 *For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power.*

1 Timothy 6:12 *Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made the good confession before many witnesses.*

1 Corinthians 15:58 *Therefore my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.*

The Peace of God and a Violent Kingdom

Matthew 11-12 *From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force.*

Violence, violent: only time used in the NT: *biazō: To force, to crowd oneself (into), to press.*

First then, LET US LOOK AT THESE VIOLENT MEN. Understand that what they are, they have been made by divine grace. They are not so naturally of themselves. But there has been a secret work of grace in them, and then they have become violent men. Look at these violent men, who are violently in earnest to be saved. You will observe them when they come up to the house of God; there is no yawning with them, no listlessness or inattention, no imagination that if they do but sit in the place the hour-and-a-half which is regularly allotted to divine worship, they will have done enough. No; they hear with both their ears, and they look with both their eyes, and all through the service they have an intense desire that they may find Christ.
Charles Spurgeon, May 15, 1859 New Park Street Pulpit Volume 5

Psalm 46:10 states *“be still and know that I am God.”* It doesn’t say, *“Sit still and hope that I am God.”* It’s a statement of total dependence on the strength of God so that in the midst of the battles for our hearts, we are “still” (hemmed in by peace) though our bodies may be moving.

How “still” does Isaiah 40 sound?

Isaiah 40:28-31 *Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.²⁹ He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength.³⁰ Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted;³¹ but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.*

Philippians 3:1 ¹³ *Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 3-14*

Don’t Throw the Savior Out With the Boat Water

From the Classroom to the Front lines...OJT has begun!

Mark 4:35-41 *See Screen*

It all started with following Jesus’ decision: “Let us go across to the other side.” Next: And THEY took him with them in the boat, just as he was...(Did they now think they were in control?)

The Garden, the Wilderness, and the Sea.

The challenges of the World, the flesh and the devil

1. **The Physical Storm:** Mt. Hermon (9,200 feet above sea level at its peak), 30 miles from the Sea of Galilee (700 feet below sea level). The boat was about 27 feet long, 7.5 feet wide, max height 4.3 ft.
Vs. 37 *And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat so that it was already filling.*

2. **The Emotional Storm:** The fear and anger of the Disciples:

Vs. 38 *Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing!?*

3. **The Spiritual Storm:** The Murderous intentions of Satan: Drown them all!

Vs. 39 *And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace, be still".*

Mark 1:25 *But Jesus rebuked him saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!"*

- Finally, dry ground! And a Gerasene Welcoming Committee. And then back to the other side.

What violent storms (or even demonic struggles) are we taking with us into 2024? Will we be more than conquerors through Christ in those storms or will we passively pass on Jesus' promises to his redeemed? Well, it depends on who's going to be more violent and forceful. Will it be us in our pursuit of God, or will it be our adversary in his violent pursuits to destroy us and the name of God in our church. At the end of 2024, will there be more fear or faith? Let's not waste a moment. Let us work the works of God in his power while we still can. For night is coming when no man will work.

God's Battle Plan for 2024 (and beyond!) ...Live a Violently Peaceful Life

John 10:10 *The thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy, but I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.*

He came to give us L.I.F.E. Here's how we violently peacefully succeed!

L _____
I _____
F _____
E _____

Wondering how your L.I.F.E. could look specifically in 2024 for you and your family? How about scheduling a time with one of the pastors to help get a violent start into the New Year?