

## Live Peaceably

### Introduction:

1. As you read the Bible, it is very clear – God has called us to live a life of peace. Romans 12:18, 14:19
2. Did you know that God is deeply interested in peace? We see this truth evident from Genesis to Revelation. Let's consider a few biblical facts:
  - Peace is part of God's very character (Romans 15:33; 1 Corinthians 14:33; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Philippians 4:9). Jesus is referred to as the Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6
  - Peace is one of the great blessings that God gives to those who follow Him. Psalm 29:11, 119:165; Proverbs 16:7; Galatians 6:16; Philippians 4:6-7
  - God repeatedly commands His people to seek and pursue peace. Psalm 34:14; Romans 12:18, 14:19; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Colossians 3:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:13; Hebrews 12:14
  - Nearly all of the New Testament epistles either begin or end with a prayer for peace. Example: Romans 1:7, 15:13
3. God taught His people to use the word "peace" as a standard form of greeting, and also of wishing one another well when parting. In *Walk Through Bethlehem* we say, "Shalom."
4. Nothing reveals God's concern for peace more vividly than His decision to send His beloved Son to earth. As the supreme peacemaker, Jesus sacrificed His life on the cross so we could experience peace both now and forever.
5. There are three dimensions to the peace that God offers to us through Christ:
  - Peace with God
  - Peace with one another
  - Peace within ourselves
6. Many people are longing for peace internally, but care very little about peace with God, or peace with others. As we will see, this is impossible.

### Peace With God

1. Peace with God does not come automatically, since we have all sinned and alienated ourselves from God. Romans 3:10-12, 23
2. As a result, we deserve to be eternally separated from God (Romans 6:23), and are by nature the children of wrath. Ephesians 2:3
3. But the good news is, by His sacrifice on the cross, Jesus has made it possible for the enemies of God to be made at peace with God. Colossians 1:19-20; Romans 5:1
4. Peace with God comes through faith in Jesus Christ. When we believe that Christ paid the full penalty for our sins when He died on the cross, and we trust Him to save us from our sins, we are instantaneously made at peace with God. Ephesians 2:12-14

## **Peace With Others**

1. God's plan is not for the Christian life to be marked by strife, contention, and discord. Through Christ's sacrifice, the way has been opened to enjoy peace with other people. Ephesians 2:14-18
2. This peace is sometimes referred to as "unity." Unity is not simply the absence of conflict and strife. Unity is the presence of genuine harmony, understanding, and goodwill.
3. God commands us to do all that we possibly can to be at peace with others, and dwell in unity with them. Romans 12:18; Ephesians 4:3
  - We are to be proactive in seeking peace, not just waiting for it to come to us. Psalm 34:14
4. This kind of peace will only come as we obey the second great commandment, "*Love thy neighbor as thyself.*"

## **Peace Within Yourself**

1. Through Christ, we can also experience genuine peace within ourselves. Internal peace is a sense of wholeness, contentment, tranquility, order, rest, and security.
2. Although nearly everyone longs for this kind of peace, it eludes most people.
3. Why is this? Because in order for us to enjoy internal peace in our hearts, it is predicated on you being at peace with God and being at peace with others. We see this demonstrated in Philippians 4.
  - There was some contention in the local assembly. Paul said to "Get it right!" vs. 1-3
  - They were saints in Christ Jesus who had placed their faith in Christ (1:1), so Paul encouraged them to commune with the Lord. vs. 4-6
  - As they communed in unity with each other, and communed with the Lord in their hearts, what is the promise in verse 7? The peace of God! This is internal peace.
4. In other words, it is impossible to experience internal peace if we fail to pursue peace with God and peace with others. The three dimensions of peace are inseparably joined by God's design.
5. If we want to experience internal peace, we must seek harmonious relationships with God, and with those around us. Again, notice in Colossians 3:10-15 how all three are linked together.
  - Their position in Christ (vs. 10-12a)
  - Their Christ-like partnership with others (vs. 12b-14)
  - The peace of God ruling their hearts (vs. 15)
6. All three aspects of peace are linked together. If we are at enmity with God, or at enmity with those around us, we will forfeit internal peace in our hearts. The peace of God will elude and escape us.