

# A biblical peace in a troubled world

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let's read together from God's Word this morning. We're reading in the Gospel according to John. And we're reading in John's Gospel chapter 14.

And reading from verse 15 to the end of the chapter. John's Gospel chapter 14, reading from verse 15. If you love me, keep my commands.

And I will ask the Father. And he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever. The Spirit of Truth.

The world cannot accept him. Because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him. For he lives with you and will be in you.

I will not leave you as orphans. Because I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore.

[ 1 : 07 ] But you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day, you will realize that I am in my Father.

And you are in me. And I am in you. Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me.

The one who loves me will be loved by my Father. And I too will love them and show myself to them. Then Judas, not Judas Iscariot, said, But Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?

Jesus replied, Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them. And we will come to them and make our home with them.

Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own. They belong to the Father who sent me.

[ 2 : 19 ] All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

You heard me say, I am going away and I am coming back to you. If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father for the Father is greater than I.

I have told you now before it happens so that when it does happen, you will believe. I will not say much more to you for the Prince of this world is coming.

He has no hold over me but he comes so that the world may learn that I love the Father and do exactly what my Father has commanded me.

[ 3 : 34 ] come now. Let us leave. Amen. May God bless this reading from His Word. Thank you.

Let's just pray for a moment. Father, we bow before you and we are deeply grateful for your Word. We have no desire this morning to listen to the thoughts or the meanderings of a mere man.

What a wonder it would be, Heavenly Father, if through that mere man the very Word of God would speak to us in transforming power.

That is our prayer this day as we open up your Word, Heavenly Father, that your Holy Spirit will renew and redirect from cowardice that dare not face new truth, from laziness that is content with half-truth and from arrogance that thinks it knows all truth.

So, may your Word speak to us, O Lord. Show us yourself, show us ourself, and show us the Savior. And may your Word speak to us, O Lord.

[ 4 : 46 ] Amen. Well, friends, it's a joy to be back. This is a wonderful clock to preach in front of. I can assure you that before that clock reaches 11 o'clock, I'll have finished.

Just to not get your enthusiasm up, the clock has actually stopped. So, there's very little chance.

And if it moves now to 11 o'clock, I'll know that God really doesn't want me to say any more than I've said up to that point. It really is a joy to be with you. I don't want to spend an awful lot of time today telling you what an awful state this world is in.

I really don't have to spend 10, 15 minutes outlining all the evidences of that. If you have any kind of discerning eye, that will be clear and that will be evident.

What I do want to share with you is a thought that has come to me over these last few weeks and months as I've engaged with congregations, as I've engaged with people, as I've listened to unbelievers and to believers alike talking about how they are feeling and how they are coping with these very strange days that we live in.

[ 6 : 18 ] And to cut a long story short, my assessment of that is that people are afraid and confused and have lost a proper sense of perspective.

Now, that manifests itself in many different and varied ways, but particularly for believers, it manifests itself in something that is entirely contrary to the way that the Lord Jesus Christ wants us to be operating and functioning as believers.

He wants us to have a biblical peace and a biblical perspective that replaces fear in a troubled world and a distorted perspective of that world.

And so, this morning, I want to talk about a biblical peace in a troubled world and to look this evening, God willing, at a biblical perspective in a distorted world.

Again, I don't want to spend an awful lot of time setting the context of John 14. It's very unusual for me just to be launching into the middle of something and you're going to just have to trust me that what I'm saying fits into the context of what John is talking about.

[ 8 : 05 ] If you know anything about John, the first twelve chapters are sometimes described as the book of signs and Jesus is revealing himself to a largely unbelieving world through signs and wonders that are recorded for us in these opening twelve chapters.

Chapter thirteen represents a change in scene in John's gospel and an atmosphere where he has essentially withdrawn into the company of believers in order to prepare them for their future Christian life and witness and in the specific context of that life and witness when he is no longer there.

And so we have a number of references to the fact that Jesus is leaving, he's about to depart from them, and that has instilled in those disciples something of a degree of anxiety and fear of them operating on their own without Jesus being there.

fear. And so for entirely different reasons than the reasons that we are facing today, but in exactly the same outcome, the disciples were afraid of what the future might hold, and many of us display a similar kind of fear.

fear. And therefore, the solution that Jesus offers is, you will notice, a biblical peace to alleviate that fear.

[ 9 : 56 ] One of the things you will notice if you have your Bibles open, and that's vitally important there, is that the context of what Jesus is offering is in Himself by means of the ministry of the Holy Spirit that He will send.

And it's couched, you will notice, in the language of a legacy. You can see that in verse 18, where Jesus says, I will not leave you as orphans.

And then in verse 27, peace I leave with you. So, this peace that is given to the disciples to alleviate their fear, and peace that is promised to us as we make our way in the Christian life, is intimately linked with the notion of a legacy.

Well, what is this peace? We're about to embark on the season of Christmas. Indeed, if you go into many of our stores, you would think that it is almost going to happen in the next couple of days.

peace. And certainly, the concept of peace is around at Christmas time. We'll see it in a couple of months' time in all our cards that come in through the door.

[ 11 : 47 ] And there is certainly a lot of wrong understandings of what this peace is. Let me deal with, just very briefly, some of the wrong understandings about the peace that Christ brings.

Some people, and many people within the liberal church, think that it's something to do with the ending of wars, something that would make you eligible for the Nobel Peace Prize, as we've just seen awarded in the last couple of days.

There is nothing wrong with that understanding of peace. It is arguably a biblical understanding of peace, but it is not the understanding of the peace that Jesus is leaving as a legacy to the disciples to alleviate fear.

peace. Jesus describes, as we've already seen in verse 27, this peace as a peace not as the world gives.

peace. And that gives us a clue that helps us discern what this peace is and what this peace isn't, because it's going to be something intimately linked with that Holy Spirit engaging us in a relationship between ourselves and the Godhead.

[ 13 : 33 ] peace. It's not something to do with the ending of world conflict. Neither is it something, very obviously, that we receive from each other.

If you were in a high Anglican church and you were taking part in communion, you would be invited in most of those occasions to exchange the peace.

And people would get up in what for Presbyterians is a rather disturbing way and they would start to shake hands with each other. Some people would hug you or kiss you, which I'm not averse to in the right circumstances.

I just find it very spooky when strangers do that to me. And many of them will take your hand and say, peace be with you. Well, this peace is a peace not as the world gives.

So, it's not something that I can give to you or that I can share with you. Jesus says, it is my peace I give to you.

[ 14 : 51 ] So, what then is this peace? Well, we've already seen and noted that it is intimately linked with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Paul picks that up in Ephesians 1.11 and in Ephesians 2.22, the indwelling into the life of the believer by God through the Holy Spirit of Christ.

Christ. So, this peace, whatever it is, is to be found nowhere else in the universe other than through a saving faith and the indwelling relationship that is given as the Holy Spirit comes into our life.

So, when the Buddhist talks about inner peace that we find in ourselves, that's not the peace of God.

When the secular stoic shrugs his shoulders and says, *que sera, sera*, whatever will be, will be, that's not a secular manifestation of the peace of Christ, not as the world gives.

[ 16 : 29 ] This peace that is found nowhere else in the universe has a supernatural quality to it.

So, that's what it's not. What is it? Well, verse 27 talks about it in very general terms.

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you, not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, let them not be afraid.

So, this peace has a transforming aspect to it. Not only does it come by supernatural means, but it brings an extraordinary transformation in our lives.

That faced with circumstances, faced with horror, trouble, or faced with trial, we find a supernatural indwelling that transforms our response to these human things.

[ 18 : 02 ] Listen to what Paul says in Romans 5. Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

So, when we want to begin to put a flesh on the bones of what we have talked about already, when we define this peace, when we look at the supernatural transforming work of the indwelling Spirit of God that brings this peace, the first and foremost thing that it does is it brings us into peace with God.

And that's what Paul is talking about, and identifying the problem that is there for all human beings. And that is, out with this relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, we are by nature sinners.

And God hates our sin, and God turns away from sin. Sin is not, as the world projects it, something that is funny, or the topic of amusement, but rather has the most dire of consequences in that it alienates us from God.

That's the part that many people fail to realize today, and it's the most awful part of sin, is that it impacts us in a way that God turns away from us and from our sin, that it actually draws down the wrath of God towards that sin.

[ 20 : 15 ] Ephesians 2 talks about this in the most extreme of languages. Verse 12, you are separated from Christ.

You are alienated. You are strangers, having no hope, and without God.

That's pretty dramatic language. It's pretty strong language. But, friends, if you are sitting here in church today listening to this, and you're not a born-again believer, that is a biblical description of you and of where you are and of where you stand in relation to God.

But, back to Romans 5, Paul goes on, because God gave Himself in the coming of Jesus to die a saving death on the cross, we are now part of the recipients of the legacy of Christ, and that that brings peace with God.

Galatians 3.28 talks about a second aspect of this legacy of peace.

[ 22 : 03 ] Galatians 3.28 tells us that we have a legacy of peace that brings peace with our fellow believers.

This is what that letter says. There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither slave nor free. There is neither male nor female.

You are all one in Christ. Again, we live in a world that in the last few weeks and months thinks it's come up with some wonderful idea that we should all try and get on with each other and we should all try and identify with each other.

And we've been bombarded with the Black Lives Matter stuff and every time we go to a football match or we watch a football match we see these players taking the knee against racism.

Are Christians against racism? Of course we are against racism. people. But you see what they are trying to do is they are trying to address a wrong in society that again cannot be addressed in anywhere else or by any other means other than by the gospel.

[ 23 : 32 ] people. And this notion of having no barriers between human beings, between male and female and black and white and Jew and Greek, this doing away with the barriers is not something new or novel that we've come up with in our enlightened 21st century, but something that you will notice has been at the very heart and core of the Christian gospel from the very first days of the church.

And if we were to take our 21st century man and woman and our political correct people who are now striving for what they believe is this new ideal, and we were to take them back to the first century church and take them into that building, they would be astonished at what they would see.

Indeed, because of their cultural lack of sensitivity to what was going on these days, they would not even understand the enormity of what they were seeing.

They would think it was remarkable, but they would not even understand just how remarkable it was. That an owner and a slave would be sitting together, would hand each other the bread and the wine as they shared communion, that men and women would sit together, men and children would be exposed to the common worship of the people, that we would be one with each other, that we would love each other, that we will have a care and concern for each other, that we will think well of each other, that we will rejoice in the prosperity of each other, that we will consider others better than ourselves.

The peace of God produces not only peace with God, but brings peace and harmony and oneness and unity with our fellow believers.

[ 25 : 49 ] peace with God, peace with our fellow believers, and thirdly, it brings peace with ourselves.

Ephesians, Philippians rather, 4, reading from verse 5, let your reasonableness be known to everyone, and the Lord is at hand. And then these words, do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

So the context of Philippians, and what is being talked about here, is that relationship with God. And there in verse 7 of chapter 4 of Philippians, and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your own heart and your own minds in Christ Jesus.

And so there is a peace that is talked about that relates not just to God and not just to our fellow believers, but we find a peace in ourselves.

peace in peace in God. A freedom from anxiety, an attitude of gratefulness, a perspective that we're going to think more of this evening, God willing, of a focus upon God and what God gives us in that gift of the Holy Spirit.

[ 27 : 46 ] A peace of God which surpasses all understanding, that in every circumstance that we find ourselves in, we praise His name.

A peace that enables us to sing that old hymn, Count Your blessings, name them one by one and be surprised at what the Lord has done.

Thou will keep Him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee.

As I was preparing this, I looked on one of the modern websites of some of these secular organizations.

I gathered a few quotes that displayed how tormented, how fearful our world is.

[ 29 : 03 ] Dear past, stop tapping me on the shoulder. I don't want to look back.

People keep telling me life goes on. That's the truth that I fear the most.

thought. Every thought is a battle. Every breath is a war.

And I don't think I'm winning. as I said at the start, I don't need to waste your time or mine offering proof that our world is in a terribly broken, fragile, fearful state.

and into that fear and into that trembling comes the power of the gospel in the saving power and indwelling power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 30 : 31 ] And in that offer of the gospel is, of course, ultimately an offer of salvation. that peace with God.

But in that peace with God, so there comes a legacy of that relationship, something that becomes ours by nature of that familial relationship.

and it is the means and the mechanism for the unity and peace of the church and is the only answer to the troubled soul.

there is a balm in Gilead that heals the sin sick soul.

people. So, what do you do? You go to the one person in the world who can make things right.

[ 31 : 55 ] Because he alone in the Lord Jesus Christ, by his identity, by the supremacy of his rule and authority, and through his saving death and the subsequent legacy that that death affords us.

He can and can alone bring you peace, perfect peace.

Let's pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Loving and eternal God, your God, and there is no one like you.

And the peace that you offer uniquely in your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is a peace such as the world cannot give.

That our world needs that peace is without question. It lies broken, tired, fearful.

[ 33 : 18 ] And we pray this day, Heavenly Father, that we might find that extraordinary perspective, that in our lives, whatever trouble may be before us, that we might count our blessings, name them one by one, and be surprised at what the Lord has done.

Amen. Amen.