

# Peace of Christ

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[ 0 : 00 ] If you open your Bibles to Colossians chapter 3. Colossians chapter 3. We're just going to look at one verse today. Verse 15. It's a great little verse. Colossians 3.15.

Hear the word of the Lord. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. To which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let's pray.

Father, thank you for all that you've given to us in your word. And I pray that right now that you would help us to understand what it says. That your spirit would illuminate our minds. That you would give us faith to believe what it says.

To trust you. And we pray this in Christ's name. Amen. January the 20th, 1982. I was in fifth grade. And it was a Wednesday evening. We had just gotten through with church. My dad was the pastor. And my home that we lived in was a mobile home. It was a 14 foot wide by 80 foot long mobile home.

[ 1 : 01 ] And that end was my bedroom. This end was my parents' bedroom. Right here in the middle was the living room. And then just a little further down was my older brother.

That night I happened to be still awake because I was doing spelling homework because I didn't do it earlier in the day. My dad was watching some made for TV movie. My mom was in this room with my younger brother trying to get him to go to sleep.

And my older brother was in his room down this direction. And at about 9.36 there were two shots from a .357 Magnum that came in through the end of the mobile home through the window of my bedroom.

And then right after that a, I don't know, eight, ten rounds of double-op buckshot 12 gauge ripped through the end of our mobile home. It was on the second .357 that my dad yells, hit the floor. So we all hit the floor. And, of course, I'm sitting cross-legged in the living room with my spelling homework. And so that looks a little bit like this. He's run off to his room.

[ 2 : 07 ] I can hear he and my mom talking. My brother has jumped into his closet. And you can hear him fumbling around. And so I'm low-crawling into the bedroom, getting into their bathroom. My little brother gets in there.

Then finally my older brother gets in there. And after a little bit, my dad has finished loading his rifle. And he's made it back into the living room, waiting, hiding behind a chair with his gun trained on the door, thinking that someone surely is coming to finish the job.

We happen to live right across. Our house was here. My grandparents' house was here. And the church my dad pastored was here. And my grandfather starts walking into the house.

Of course, my mom is telling him the whole time, it's your daddy, it's your daddy. So my grandfather is fine. And my dad doesn't shoot him or anything. But it turns out that there's so much backstory I won't get into.

But these gentlemen had pulled up into the parking lot of the church and decided to unload their guns onto our house for very specific reasons. And for months afterwards, my dad and my grandfather spent the night in the church with an arsenal of weapons.

[ 3 : 20 ] And the windows cracked, just waiting for them to come back. We had no peace for quite some time. It was definitely a weird experience.

They finally caught them, prosecuted them, and the Lord took out his vengeance upon them. But there are other things that happen to us in all of our lives, things that happen in the world that steal the peace from us.

You could look at the peace that's stolen October the 7th, 2023. When you have 20 villages attacked. You can look at the universities over the last week and see the agitation and the protests and the criminality of that.

And along with those who feel hostile towards all of these things. We could talk about the war in Ukraine. We could talk about the Somalian Civil War still raging. We could talk about Boko Haram still terrorizing where it is.

We could talk about the drug cartels and the violence that they bring. Or we could get away from sort of that world scene type thing and bring it into a more personal place.

[ 4 : 36 ] Finding out your loved one has cancer. Hearing of the death of a beloved friend. Discovering that there has been unfaithfulness.

Finding out that you're going to lose your job at the end of the month. Enduring the destruction of your personal property. Maybe even losing your home in some sort of natural disaster.

We do not lack for things that would rob us of our peace. We have enough. And I think most of us would have a tendency to want to talk about the idea of having peace.

At least from two angles. One would be, it would be nice if the litany of news items that come my way, both from the world and from my personal life, would just stop.

You know, so you don't get on the phone and find out from a loved one that something wrong is going on. You don't turn on some sort of news channel or look at some sort of news feed and there's terrible headlines all the way down the page.

[ 5 : 47 ] It's just actually all good news. That'd be great. And that's one form of peace that I think many of us would long for to have nothing bad coming our direction. But most of us understand that that's just not the case.

Most of us understand that it's going to be the case that bad things are going to happen. But we then tend to think to ourselves, well, what we want then to have peace is I would like to not feel very anxious about these things.

I would like to not feel in turmoil as I'm dealing with these things. I would like to be able to feel tranquil and calm in the face of all of these things.

The Bible speaks about a peace, but it is a peace that's different from these things.

And our verse here gives us two things about peace that I think it's good for us to see. And I want to break it down this way, that we have peace from Christ and peace of Christ.

[ 6 : 48 ] That's how I'm going to line this out. So, peace from Christ. What I mean by peace from Christ. There in verse 15, it says, let the peace of Christ.

Let the peace of Christ. It's a peace that belongs to Christ. It's a peace that He has. It's a peace that He has won. It's a peace that He has built.

It's a peace that He has created. It's a peace that belongs to Him. And this is the kind of peace that we need. And the reason that we need this is because there is enmity.

There's enmity between us and God. This word enmity, it's really not a common word that we use very much. But it's the word hostility. It's a hostility that builds between people.

The campuses this last week, and whether you were for one side or for the other side, you can just see the hostility brewing in these things.

[ 7 : 49 ] It is this idea of hostility that we have with God. That there is a hostility that exists between God and man. And the reason that that hostility exists is because of what Adam did in the garden.

He was the head of the human race. He was the federal head of the human race. This is the way God set it up. You're either in Adam or in Christ. There are no other options.

And so what Adam did counted for us. We were united with Adam in his actions so that his sin is our sin, even though we didn't eat the forbidden fruit.

It's what Romans chapter 5 verse 19 says, the first part. For as by the one man's disobedience, the many were made sinners. By his disobedience, we were made sinners.

Adam's actions made us sinners. And because we're sinners, we're hostile towards God. And the reason that we're hostile towards God is because we break his law.

[ 8 : 59 ] Breaking God's law is worse than saying something like dragging his name through the mud or something like that. Breaking his law is a violation not only of his law, but of his character.

So if you tell a lie, you're not just breaking his law, but you're violating his character because he is truth. And you can't break his law without violating his character.

And so the only question is, is are you still in hostility with God? Is there still a hostile relationship between you and God?

Let me ask you a couple of questions for you to think about. Have you ever told a lie? What does that make you?

Makes you a liar. It's true. Have you ever stolen anything, even if it was something small? Well, you just said that you were a liar, so you probably have stolen something too.

[10:08] What does that make you? It makes you a thief. That's right. Have you ever lusted after someone? Jesus says that if you look upon someone with lust, you've committed adultery in your heart.

Have you ever done that? By our own admission, then, we are lying, thieving adulterers at heart. We're enemies of God. We're hostile to God. And God is not a God to be trifled with. Exodus 34, 7 says that he will by no means clear the guilty.

He will not just wink at it and let it go away. He will not just say, you know what, I know that you're weak, and so I'm just going to let you get by with this. There's not a remedial class for saying that we can break God's law and sort of get away with it.

We're all on the equal playing field here. And when we have broken his law, we are enemies of God. And this hostility exists between us.

[11:11] Now, you need to know that to understand the next piece of the puzzle, and that is that Christ made peace between us and God. It makes no sense to think about Jesus coming and dying upon the cross if you don't understand why he needed to die.

That's because of the hostility. So Jesus, the Son of God, the one that the Father sent into the world, came and took on flesh. He became truly human with a true human body and a true human soul, and he endured life in a fallen world.

A fallen world where there's disappointments, where friends and family die, where sickness rages, where riots and sin and wickedness abounds. He came into a world knowing what it was to be us. He knows our frailty. He knows our weakness. He knows we're not as innocent as we would like to convince ourselves that we are. And he lived a perfect life.

He obeyed his Father in every single law. Every single attitude, every single thought, he has not one single speck of sin in his soul. And yet the Father imputed.

[12:23] Everybody say imputed. I know, you were just using this word this morning, thinking to yourself, you know, I think we need to talk about things being imputed. This word impute.

What happened is that the Father imputed to his Son our sin. The word to impute means that the guilt of a crime is laid on someone besides the one who committed the crime.

Or you could say the goodness of something done is laid upon someone else. It's like giving credit for a thing to someone else besides the one who did it.

God the Father laid the guilt of our sin upon his Son. Now, if the Son was not willing for that, then that would have been unjust.

But the Son was fully willing to come. The Son was fully willing to have all of our sin imputed to him. And so he came into this world, and when he goes to the cross, our sin is imputed to him.

[13:29] That's what 2 Corinthians 5:21 In other words, he imputed our sin to his Son.

He gave the credit for your sin to Jesus. He gave the guilt of your sin and laid it upon his Son Jesus. And when Jesus died upon the cross, he paid for that sin.

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also suffered once for sin as the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God. In his death, he died for us.

The righteous for the unrighteous, so that he might reconcile us or bring us to God. When he brings us to God, he's reconciling us. When he's reconciling us, he's bringing peace between us and God. It means that God counts. As God counted and imputed our sin to Jesus, now when we trust in him, he imputes Jesus' righteousness to us.

[14:37] He credits Jesus' perfect law-keeping to us. Imagine for a second this scenario, that you have a king.

And this king has in his dungeon a prisoner who murdered his wife. Now, not only has the prisoner broken the law of the king, but the prisoner has also made a personal violation against the king because he murdered his wife.

But the king is gracious. The king wants to be seen as gracious. But he's also a just king. So he's trying to figure out, how do I have both justice and grace?

So when talking it over with his son, they both agree that the prince would take the punishment that the prisoner deserved. The prince would take it because he was sure that he would overcome the punishment given to him.

So now justice could be done because punishment could be given for the crime committed, but also the grace of the king could be shown because the prisoner now, who's guilty, could be set free.

[15:46] So the prince does face the punishment. It does meet the requirements. And so the prisoner is brought up from the dungeon and is told what has happened.

And he's given a choice. He can either continue living as a prisoner in the dungeon where he does belong, or he can swear allegiance to the prince.

And if he swears allegiance to the prince, then what the prince has done will bring the prisoner back into right relationship with the king, will end the hostility and bring peace.

You and I are that prisoner. And so do you have this kind of peace from Christ?

It was something done in history. It was done. It is outside of us. It's not a feeling that we have, but it is a true spiritual binding legal relationship with God that we have been reconciled to him by the blood of Christ.

[17:00] And this is what the peace of Christ is. So that's the first part.

And you've got to kind of get that in your head before we get into this next part, because this next part is he starts talking about this peace of Christ, letting this peace of Christ rule in our hearts.

What does that even mean?

I want us to see a couple of things. One is that letting the peace of Christ rule in your heart. The word rule is this idea of control. It's the idea of controlling the activity of someone, that the peace of Christ, it's a peace that belongs to Christ.

Christ won this peace. And that is what should rule your heart. That's what should control your heart. It should not be some warm, fuzzy feeling that rules our heart.

It should not be feel-good emotions that rule our heart. It should not be blissful ignorance of an evil world that rules our heart. But it should be this peace that Christ won that should rule our hearts.

[18:07] And again, what is this peace? It's this reconciliation that we have with the Father. It's the peace we have. We're no longer enemies. Anyways, the peace that Christ won on the cross, paying the price of his life, that peace is to rule your heart.

Okay, but that's just weird. That's just weird. I just don't understand how that works. Like, until I, you know, got into the study, and I'm looking at the word here. But how is it possible?

How is it possible for this thing that's objective and outside of me, that's not about how I feel, that's a legally binding spiritual relationship between us and God that Jesus did on the cross that brings peace with us, how can that rule my heart?

And as it rules my heart, how does that help me with the circumstances that I'm facing? How does that help me with the circumstances that I'm facing? How does that help me with the circumstances that I'm facing?

Well, there's a couple of things that I'll answer into that. One is, even, let's see if I can say this this way.

[19:24] Because I just want, I want to be sure you get this. this peace that Christ has won at the cross, a historical event, becomes the fountainhead of peace that we can have throughout all of our circumstances.

And as we're trying to understand how that works, the first thing I need to tell you is that even in the most darkest, troubling, disturbing suffering you can endure, we still sin in the suffering.

there's never, ever, a sinless sufferer.

Recently, an old college roommate of mine took his own life. I was troubled by that for probably about a month. Really struggled. with that. And I sinned in the middle of that.

And I sinned about that suffering. I let it overwhelm me. I let it get the best of me in a lot of ways.

And the hope and the peace that I have is that even though I'm experiencing something terrible and awful coming right at me, and I sin in the middle of it, the good news is that I still have peace with Christ.

[21:15] I still have peace with God. That even though I sin in the middle of this terrible thing, I know that I'm okay because Christ paid even for that sin. because when we sin in the middle of suffering, it just compounds the problem.

But the second thing I want to say about that is this peace in our hearts, and by this I'm talking about this desire to have this feeling of tranquility, even though we're provoked and troubled and disturbed, that sort of tranquility, I believe, comes when we gain a proper perspective on our suffering.

And when you take a look at the suffering that's coming to your life, the first thing you have to compare it to is the suffering that Jesus experienced for us at the cross.

Anything we go through in this life is nothing compared to the suffering that he went through. And any suffering that we go through in this life is nowhere near as terrible as what we actually deserve. We need this peace. So how do we have this peace? If you look at the verse, it says, let the peace of Christ rule in you. That's a command. It commands us to have this.

[ 23 : 00 ] That's sort of strange. It's something Jesus did, something Jesus won, and I'm supposed to have this. How do I have this in my life? It's a command. So I've got to do this. It's a little bit like your doctor telling you to let the antibiotics work.

You take them, but then once you take them, that's all you can do. It's not like you can, you know, do some sort of, you know, microscopic surgery upon yourself and cause the antibiotics to do, you know what I'm saying?

That's just, that's like science fiction and weird. I don't even know why I said that. But the point is, is that antibiotics just work. And you're supposed to take them and take all of them because that's what you're supposed to do.

And you let it do its job. That's the way this is to be understood. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. It's not a peace that you sort of work up by some sort of, you know, psyching yourself up. It's not a peace by becoming, you know, blissfully ignorant about things, but it's a peace that he has and you are to let it rule in your heart. But it's also a call.

[ 24 : 05 ] It says, let the peace, let the peace of Christ rule in your heart to which indeed you were called. You were called to this.

He has worked these things in you. He has by his spirit and the preaching of the gospel. He has convicted you of your sin and he's turned you towards himself.

He has saved you by his grace. Maybe you were saved if you're a Christian. Maybe you were saved of the preaching of the gospel from a pastor. Or maybe you were saved at a vacation Bible school and some teacher who was leading that.

Or maybe you were saved because some Sunday school teacher taught you something. Or maybe you were saved at home because of family devotions going on in the home. Or whatever it was that God used in that moment, he did use the gospel to call you to himself.

And the reason you can obey this command is because he has called you to himself. And so these first two parts of how do I get this peace in my life is all dependent upon God.

[ 25 : 11 ] But then the third thing, it says that you were called in one body. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts to which indeed you were called in one body.

Listen, you can never have the peace of Christ rule in your heart so long as you keep your distance from the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you keep a distance from the Lord Jesus Christ bride, then you keep yourself at a distance from the preaching of the gospel.

The Lord Jesus loves his church. Ephesians 5.25 says, Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church.

Jesus loves the church and gave himself up for her. This peace of Christ that comes to us because of what he's done upon the cross and comes to us because of the preaching of the gospel.

There is no other organization on the face of the planet that Jesus Christ has promised to be with until the end of the age for the sake of the preaching of the gospel than the church that he established, than his bride.

[ 26 : 25 ] And so when you are struggling with whatever suffering that you're going through, it is here, this bastion of peace that is constantly dispensing peace from the word of God to preach the gospel so that you're reminded again you have peace with God.

You will be able to get through this. And finally, he says, be thankful. Now that's just so strange right there. It's just like almost out of the blue, he just kind of throws down be thankful at the end of this verse and you kind of go like, what are you talking about?

But let me see if I can give you an illustration of why I think this is completely in line. How many of you wake up every day expecting to float up into the atmosphere when you wake up?

You assume and live your life as though the law of gravity is always there and exists and you really don't give much thought to it.

You just presume that it's there. I think this is sort of what Paul is saying with the thanksgiving is that our part in all this is to give thanks to the Lord. The peace of Christ is there.

[ 27 : 47 ] If you are a Christian, if you are in Christ, the peace of Christ is there. You've got to go back and think about it, look at it, remember it, and because of that, your response is to be thankful to the Lord.

Thankful to the Lord. And so Christians, only you can take advantage of what this verse is saying. If you're a Christian, you really are a Christian, you really are in Christ, you're truly a Christian indeed, then this verse is for you.

And if you're not a Christian, this verse is not for you just yet. Because a Christian is someone who knows the answer to this question.

And I just want you to think about this question and we're coming right down here to the end. If God's eternal punishment were to fall on you like the fire breathed from a dragon, what would you grab to protect yourself?

What would you hold on to? What would you point to and say, that's going to protect me? The thing that popped into your head as soon as I said that, that's where your hope is.

[ 29 : 11 ] And if your answer is not Jesus' blood and righteousness, then your answer is suspect. If your answer is, well, I prayed a prayer once, then your hope is in your prayer.

If your answer is, I was baptized, then your hope is in your baptism. If your answer is, well, I believe that God exists.

I'm not a pagan after all. And James says, the demons believe and tremble. The only right thing that you can hold between you and eternal punishment is Jesus' blood and righteousness.

And so today, today, Christians, I call upon you to remember where you were, to remember that you once were lost and now you're found, and to remember what you've been through, and to remember what Christ has done for you, to remember that as you are going through the suffering in this life and something comes at you, it is better than you deserve because what we deserve is eternal punishment.

And let the peace of Christ rule in your heart. And if you're not in Christ, then what's keeping you from turning to Christ?

[ 30 : 38 ] What keeps you from Him? What keeps you from trusting in Him? Letting Him be the boss of your life.

Because the only hope we have is if you repent of your sin and turn to Christ for salvation. Let the peace of Christ rule in your heart.

I pray today that you would turn to Him. Those of you, some of you for the first time ever in your life, and those of you who are Christians, that you would turn to Him.

Remember the calling with which you've been called. And let the peace of Christ rule in your heart. Let's pray.