

The Spirit-Filled Life: Peace

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Preacher: Pastor Ken

[0:00] Please take your Bibles and turn with me to Galatians 5, Paul's letter to the church in Galatia, the fifth chapter there, where we've been the last few weeks.

What would it take for you to have peace? You find that you're faced with a problem that's robbing you of peace?

Maybe your present or future financial condition puts your peace on the back burner. Maybe our country's present and future condition has you worried and is robbing you of peace.

Maybe you have a family situation or a rocky relationship that's stealing rest from you. You're desperately desiring that rest and peace.

So only you can answer that question. What would it take for you to have peace?

[1:31] Our day-to-day circumstances that are notoriously unstable make for a terrible foundation for the peace that we desperately desire and need.

As we've been going through the fruit of the Spirit, we see among those mentioned is this aspect of peace. I'd like to read that for you.

Galatians 5, 22 through 24. Paul writes the fruit of the Spirit in contrast to what the fruit of the flesh is.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

[2:31] Verse 25. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep step with the Spirit. We need to understand that the peace produced by the Spirit is not merely the absence of trouble.

That has been made clear, I think, abundantly the last couple weeks and months of sermonizing that I've been able to do and share with you in the Word of God.

We have the promise of trouble and trials and hardships. So what we see the Spirit produced for the believer is not the absence of those things.

But, and especially as we relate to peace. But the peace produced by the Spirit is the settled confidence that comes from knowing that I am right with God.

That God is with me. That He is for me in Christ. And I can trust Him with whatever comes. And we must understand that peace is a two-pronged matter in the Christian faith.

[3:33] Before the Spirit can produce in you the peace of God, you must first settle the matter of having peace with God. This peace, the peace with God, is a peace, it's foundational for the Spirit-filled life.

It is what delivers us from judgment and brings us into a right relationship with Him. Romans 5 verse 1 says, Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Peace with God is what every person ever born needs. Except for the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. To have peace with God means you have forgiveness of sin.

In case you need a definition, sin makes us enemies of God. Because sin is our failure to obey or live according to God's law.

We look at the world around us and we see problems and issues and trials and hardships and things that make us sad and disappointed and angry.

[4:50] And we see one problem after another arising in our own lives and in the lives of those around us that we love dearly. And the fundamental problem with humanity, it's not that we're anxious or stressed.

It's not that life is difficult. Our fundamental problem is that we are sinners. We are offenders of a holy God. We do not live according to His word, His standard.

He is the creator. We are the creation. The creator has dictated and decided how the creation is to operate and carry itself along. But sin puts us in rebellion against our creator.

Isaiah 53.6 says, All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way. As God's special creation, instead of adhering to the dictates and expectations of our creator, we've decided we know better than God.

We know more than God. We want what we want and so we're going to follow our own ways away from God. Romans 3.23 says, All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

[6:04] I've shared with you before, Ephesians 2.1-3, where Paul, in writing to the church at Ephesus, reminds them of their once reality apart from Christ.

He tells them, You were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked. Following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.

Among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

All of mankind walk in their own way, away from God, to fulfill the desires of their flesh and their mind. Romans 8.7, For the mind that is set on flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law.

Indeed, it cannot. It's a lot of bad news. What a very real perspective of what the issue is at the core of our society.

[7:14] The Bible does not begin with, In order to have peace, you need to learn how to relax. It's not about going to a masseuse or a spa. It's not about so-called mental health days and all this nonsense.

But it begins with the you need to be reconciled to God issue. We are sinners who seek our own ways. And when sinners try to seek their own way, no doubt they're going to come in conflict with other sinners who want to seek their own way and have what they desire.

That's where the gospel comes in. Colossians 1.19 and 20, For in Christ all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

As sinners, we are enemies of God. As sinners, we have broken God's law, and as judge, he's going to judge us accordingly. It is not a degree thing either.

It is not, oh, how much did you sin? How much did you fall short? How much did you break the law? It's not about the quantitative aspect of it.

[8:40] Because once you become a transgressor of the law, even in one point, you are a law breaker needing to be punished and judged accordingly.

And because we break the law of the holy, eternal, just God of all the universe, then the punishment is going to fit the crime against whom we have committed it.

And I think I've shared that with you before, how we have, if you take a sin such as lying, now if you lie to your children, probably nothing is going to happen to you.

You may strain that relationship, but by and large, your children can do nothing against you. If you lie to your spouse, it's probably going to cause an argument, maybe even a separation.

If you lie to the police, you're going to be arrested. If you lie to the government, you're going to prison. So what happens if we lie against our creator, the ruler of all creation, the highest authority in all the universe?

[9:59] Then we are going to receive the highest level of punishment, and rightfully so. But Christ, the fullness of God was pleased to dwell through him to reconcile all things, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Did you know that we do not make peace with God? We are not the negotiators. We don't bring the contract. We don't sit down at the table with the Lord and say, all right, let's work out a compromise and an agreement.

No. We don't make peace with God. Christ made peace for us. And he did it not on our terms, on his terms.

He made peace through his blood, dying on the cross, paying the penalty of our sin, enduring the wrath of God for us in our place.

The cross is the place where our rebellion was answered by Christ's substitutionary sacrifice. The theological term is he was a propitiation for us.

[11:15] That means he's the satisfactory offering for our sin. When you go through the Old Testament and you see the sacrificial system, and bulls and lambs and goats and da, da, da, this being sacrificed for this purpose and all that.

No, we look at that like, wow, that's barbaric and weird and old and ancient. But the fact is that came from a holy God to his people and how he determined sin to be covered.

And the sacrificial system in and of itself was a temporary means of receiving forgiveness for sin until Jesus Christ came to the earth, born of a virgin, lived a sinless life and was tried unjustly, giving himself as our substitute, as our offering to God.

He took our place on the cross. Isaiah 53.5 says, he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities.

Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace. And with his wounds we are healed.

Everything Jesus endured was for the sake of us having peace with God.

[12:31] It was a trial that we should have been put on trial for. We should have been found guilty for sin. But Jesus, who knew no sin, God put our sin on him.

It was a judicial act. Peace with God begins with Christ's finished work. Peace with God is objective before it could ever be experienced.

That's important. You can be a Christian and not feel peaceful. Not be at peace. Your emotions can be unsettled. Your circumstances can be frightening. Your mind may be racing.

But your relationship with God does not change every time your emotions change. Your relationship with God doesn't change when your circumstances change. That's a settled objective truth.

Your peace with God is an objective reality established by Christ. It's not a, I feel peaceful, therefore I must be right with God. It's, oh, I feel like I'm in a good place with God.

[13:41] The reality doesn't care about your feelings. It's not about how do you feel about your relationship with God. It's what's the reality.

And when you come to Christ, you've repented of your sinful way. And you've called on him for salvation. And you've called, and you've submitted to him as Lord and Savior. It does, it goes from being, I feel like I'm in a good spot with God.

To, I've been reconciled to God through Christ. Therefore, I have a foundation on which I can learn to rest. The whole world can fall apart around you.

And guess what it is? The whole world can be falling apart around you. But you have a peace that is grounded in your relationship to God through Jesus Christ.

A child can be frightened during a thunderstorm and not feel safe. I'm sure you've had this experience or you understand what I'm saying anyway. Thunder's rocking the house.

[14:47] There's lightning. It's heavy rain beating against the window. And that brings a tremendous fear in the body and mind of a child. They don't feel safe.

But if they're in the room with their mother and father, the child's experience of fear is dampened by the reassuring presence of their parent.

Right? I mean, in the middle of the night, I remember when I was little, in the middle of the night, that storm hit. I was scared. I was right to my parents' bedroom. I've had that also happen with my own children.

They get scared. They have a nightmare. Whatever it is, they feel the comfort of being in the presence of their mother or their father. And the experience of safety and peace can fluctuate for a child of God.

You may not feel at peace. You may be, you know, uneasy and rocked. But your father's presence doesn't change. He is with you. He is there always, 100%.

[15:55] Peace is also a fruit of the Holy Spirit's work in your life. And we know fruit grows because of life that is present in a tree.

Fruit is produced by the Spirit and the life of someone who belongs to Christ. And that's where it starts. You need to be made right with God. You have the peace with God.

That's the first question you must answer. Do I have peace with God? If your answer is no, saddened to tell you that there's no amount of stress management that will ever bring you lasting peace.

You can go to all the spas in the world, enjoy all the saunas and get whatever done you want done. You can go hunt and kill all the deer you want. I don't know what it takes for you to feel like you're getting your stress out.

But there's no amount of that that's going to bring you lasting peace in your life. It will always only ever be temporary. And when you reach the end of your effort, you'll be standing there.

[17:09] I have no peace. There is no hope. And there are many people in our society, many people in our world that experience that in their lives.

And at the end, when there is no answer for them, they decide it's not worth living anymore. The only answer to lasting peace is found in Christ Jesus alone.

And it is when a person is truly in Christ that then they can experience the peace of God. You have to have peace with God before you can have the peace of God.

And the peace of God is peace for day-to-day living. It's a benefit of having peace with God. And it is the fruit of the Spirit in your life, as we've seen in Galatians 5.

I'd like to read to you out of Philippians 4, 6, and 7. God is bringing our study in Philippians and our study here in Galatians with the fruit of the Spirit all together at once at the right time because we just started these verses this past week.

[18:14] Philippians 4, verses 6 and 7. If you want to turn there, you can. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Notice that the peace of God will only come upon those who are in Christ Jesus.

Now, again, that doesn't mean it's the absence of trouble. We've already noted that. Jesus tells us in John 16, verse 33, I've said these things to you.

He's speaking to his disciples. I've 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.

Jesus gives two promises in that verse. One is that we will have tribulation in this life. Don't expect it to ever stop. There's no amount of money that will buy you lasting peace.

[19:24] People with the most money in the world still are troubled in their life and are shaken to the core. So there's the promise that we will have tribulation in the world and there's the promise that we will have peace in him.

Whatever happens in your life, whatever happens to you, Christ remains Lord. He has promised victory over the tribulation of this world and our peace is grounded in that reality.

We will have peace in him because he has overcome the world. Peace comes from trusting the God who is sovereign. Romans 8, verse 28, and we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good.

For those who are called according to his purpose. That's not saying that everything that happens is good. It's saying that God is able to work through everything for his good purposes.

There's unspeakable evil that happens in this world. I don't need to tell you that. You know that. It's been shaking me a bit to the core as I've just glanced here and there and followed things here and there on Facebook.

[20:42] It's sad. It's sickening what takes place in our world. And what may even be more sickening are the answers that our world offers. You've got people murdering others for their own happiness.

You've got natural disasters destroying communities and taking lives. You have oppressive governments taking the God-given unalienable rights from those created in his image and suppressing them, killing them for the expression of their faith.

The believer does not have to understand everything that is going on. It is not up to us to make sense of everything because our peace is strengthened through our confidence in God's sovereignty, especially when circumstances are unwelcome or uncertain.

We see what's happening in the world. We see the mass persecution of Christians in different countries such as Nigeria. We see Christians being killed for their faith.

Islam, the religion of murder, taking over countries, oppressing people. I don't know why.

[21:59] I don't know what's going on. Lord, what are you doing? Lord, what are you doing? My confidence is in the God who is over all and is sovereignly in control of the things that I cannot make sense of.

How do we experience the peace of God? Going back to Philippians 4, 6, and 7. You're not anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication.

With thanksgiving, let your request be made known to God. You replace your anxiety with prayer. At its core, anxiety is a, you know, it's worrying, right?

Anxiety, worry, concern, maybe even scared. At its core, anxiety is a failure to trust God's sovereign rule. It assumes that our circumstances are outside His control or beyond His care.

And the Christian can reject anxiety because God is near, God is sovereign, God is faithful. We can reject, we can push away, we can get past anxiety because of who God is.

[23:16] That's why it's so important for us to be in the Word. That's why it's so important for us to embrace eternal life. Eternal life in knowing God, in knowing Jesus.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, let your request be made known to God.

The word everything is important because nothing is excluded. In everything, make your request known to God. In everything, through thanksgiving, make your request known to God.

Large concerns, they belong to God. God. You're like, yeah, of course they do. The small concerns belong to God. The inconsequential concerns in your life belong to God.

The future concerns belong to God. The present concerns belong to God. All of them are His. Give them to Him. You've got to replace anxiety with prayer.

[24:22] And it's in prayer that we express our confidence in God to hear us and to act according to His will. You replace control with surrender.

1 Peter 5, 6, and 7. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time He may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on Him because He cares for you.

Peace can come about when we are fully surrendered to God. Why? Because anxiety often contains an unspoken demand from us, doesn't it?

When you think about that, when we're anxious and we're scared and we're concerned and we're overwhelmed by the trials and tribulations of this world and things that go, that take over our minds and direct us into the way of anxiety and being scared, we think of it this way, like when you're anxious, you have the unspoken demand that I need to control this.

I need to know what happens. I need to make sure that this turns out the way that I want. I need God to give me the answer I have already decided is necessary.

[25:40] That's ultimately what anxiety is. It's having the need of control. I need to know what's going to happen.

I need to know this. It needs to go this way. What if it doesn't go that way? Well, I'm going to be really sad and upset then. Oh, I don't know how I'm going to handle life if this happens or that happens.

The biblical piece says, God, I trust you even when I cannot control this.

One of the hardest things in our lives is to be out of control of anything. Not like out of control crazy, but unable to control what is happening and going on. You don't get to control other people's decisions and actions.

We would like to. We would like to know what someone's going to do, how they're going to act given a certain situation. But you don't have that control.

[26:41] So you need to trust God more. You need to relinquish that control or that need for control and trust Him. What else do we need?

We need to replace demanded outcomes with thankful trust. Philippians 4, 6, again, in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Thanksgiving changes the nature of our prayer. It causes us to say, God, this is what I want, but I trust that you know what is best. That's ultimately what it comes down to.

God wants us to pray. He wants us to leave our burdens with Him. We need to be honest with how we feel about things. But in the end, we need to say, Lord, You know what's best for us.

And He does. We don't always comprehend what happens and why things happen the way they do. And we may get to the end of our life and still not understand.

[27:50] But God sees a picture that's greater than our life. God sees the whole picture. He sees the picture of 8 billion lives.

He understands what's happening in world history from beginning to end. And so, yeah, something may happen to me in my life, in my relationships, with my family, whatever, that I don't understand.

And it may break me. But God knows and God understands. And that's where I need to stop demanding the outcome to be what I want it to be and trust that whatever the outcome is, God's using it for our good and His glory.

We don't stop caring about the outcomes. Right? But we trust God with whatever the outcome may be.

And one great thing about Philippians 4, 7 is it tells us that the peace of God guards us. It says, And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

[29:03] The peace of God is not understood by the natural man. The peace of God looks foreign to those apart from Christ. It looks weird. How can you be okay with what's happening?

Well, don't mix up peace with being okay. I have a hard time with injustice. I have a hard time with trials and hardships that come upon people that are difficult for them to bear and I can do nothing about it.

But the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, it comes from Him. It's a fruit of the Spirit. It comes in trusting Him fully and completely.

And God's peace becomes a guard for our hearts and our minds. I've told you that many times over, right? Proverbs 4, verse 23. Verse 23. Be vigilant to guard your heart for from it flow the issues of life.

the problem may still exist. The diagnosis may still be there. Your financial situation may still be difficult. That relationship may still be strained.

[30:19] But something has changed when you have the peace of God that has developed in you because of the Spirit of God. You're no longer carrying that burden alone. You've brought it before the throne of God.

You've left it in His presence. God's peace stands guard over your heart and your mind. Isaiah 26, verse 3. You keep Him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you because He trusts in you. When your mind is stayed on God and not on your circumstances, not on things that you can't control anyway, then you experience the peace that is beyond understanding. People won't get it. People won't understand it who are not in Christ. but you'll get it because you know the God who is over it all, who is in control, who is capable of doing amazing, miraculous things and one of those things is guarding your heart and your mind in Him.

The Spirit-filled life, it's not a life without storms, but it's a life that has found peace in Christ through faith in Christ. And we can have peace with God because Christ has reconciled us to Him through the death on the cross.

[31:30] Acts 17, verses 30 and 31, the times of ignorance God overlooked, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent because He's fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed and of this He has given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead.

Day of judgment is coming and He's calling all of us to repent. In Romans 10, 9, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

And when we have peace with God, we can experience the peace of God because we have learned to trust the God who holds us and keeps us and works all things according to His good purpose.

We know the God who indwells us and who is faithful in all things. Father, I thank you for this short word on the aspect of peace in our lives, Lord, a peace that can only begin when we have peace with you and a peace that is produced by your Spirit in us, leading us through trials and hardships, causing us to cast our cares fully on you, to leave behind our anxiety and worry and to fully trust in you, to pray with thanksgiving that you will oversee the big and the small in our lives, that you will oversee the present and the future.

Lord, we truly are thankful for the peace that passes all understanding, the peace that guards our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus.

[33:24] Amen.