

Peace To All Of You Who Are In Christ

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[0 : 00] Greet one another with a kiss of love, and especially peace to all of you who are in Christ Jesus. Peace to all of you who are in Christ Jesus.

As we know, Peter, who penned this letter, has often been described as the Apostle of Hope, because hope features prominently in his writing.

Just as in John, love is often the main theme, and in Paul's writings, we often find that faith. Of course, Peter deals with faith and love, and John deals with hope and faith as well, and Paul deals with love and hope.

But the hope is largely what Peter is focusing on. And it's quite interesting, because we had a recent study on 1 Peter, and Peter was writing to a persecuted church to believers who were struggling, believers who were being scattered everywhere because of persecution.

And we don't normally associate suffering and trial and fiery trials, that's what Peter writes about, with hope and peace.

[1 : 24] But Peter began his letter with the themes of hope and peace, and Peter comes towards the end of his letters, and again he has the great theme of hope and of peace.

And what we've always got to remember is that in God's hand, God is working for a particular plan and a particular purpose in our life.

And all the trials that we go through, they're not random. Sometimes, and it's one of the first things we're liable to do, is think that God has forgotten about us, or that he has a controversy with us, or that something is fundamentally wrong with us, and because of this, we are suffering.

And we often feel that God has forsaken us, and we wonder just where we're at. Well, nothing happens by chance. And how thankful that is so.

I've heard people try, and when there's been calamities and tragedies, make out that God didn't know. And God does know. He knows everything.

[2 : 34] And he rules and overrules everything, even the things that hurt us, the things that don't make sense, the things that break our heart. And you know, it's good to know that God will overrule all the sorrows, and all the pains, and all the heartbreaks that the Christian has to go through.

He was going to overrule all these things for good. And God will work all these things for good, for your eternal good. And although you might go through this world and still not see why or how, you will.

And even if it takes you to glory, to see, and you'll be able to say, oh, now I see what God was doing. Now I see. And it can be very difficult and very trying.

So Peter was writing in this way, recognizing that although there was so much suffering, yet there's hope and there is peace side by side.

Now Peter begins, or he's ending, he's saying, and he says, greet one another with the kiss of love. And very simply to say there, that that's exactly what he says.

[3 : 51] Some people have tried to get around it. I've seen a translation to greet one another with a holy handshake or something like that. Well, we might do handshakes within our particular culture.

That's not what it says. And what it's highlighting here, very simply, is that the Christian is part. We're all part of a body. We're all part of a family.

And this is a kiss of welcome that a family, that one person within a family would give another. It's as simple as that. It is a family kiss.

And it is the, whether you hug or kiss, it is the affection and the bond that is within a family. And that's, it's as simple as that. Nothing, there's nothing, sinister or anything.

You can't read anything in or out of it. That is very simply what it is saying. Greet one another with a kiss of love. And then he goes on to say, peace to all who are in Christ.

[4 : 51] Every Christian is in Jesus Christ. And that's really what we're wanting to think about just now. So we ask the question, how are we in Christ?

Well, first of all, we are in the body of Christ. You and I are part of the body of Christ. Jesus Christ is the head. And we are the body.

The head, in a sense, is over the body. Because it's kind of, well, I'm not going to give you a biology lesson. It's kind of obvious. But the head is sort of, we always think of the head as predominantly that, this is where everything sort of, the mind, the brain, all this is, although there's the body, you've got your heart and everything going.

But at a spiritual level, Christ is head overall. He is the head. And you cannot separate a head from the body. Because it's all one.

And the moment we become Christians, we become one in Jesus Christ. We need him. And I'm going to say this reverently. He needs us.

[6 : 04] As mediator, as savior, in the role that he has been given by the father, Jesus Christ needs us.

Because we are his body. We are his bride. We are the joy that was set before him. Why he endured the cross. You see, all the time, Jesus was looking ahead to what he was going to get, what he had been promised.

And he was promised that as he, as the head, would receive this body, would receive this bride, would receive this family for himself.

This is all part of the great purpose and plan of God. So, in this sense, we are all in Christ. All of you who are in Christ, we are in the body of Christ.

But again, we can say that we are in Christ with regard to the law. And again, that's very, very important to us because the law of God requires that we give every single day and every single night perfect obedience.

[7 : 19] God's law is requiring that even when we're asleep, that we're giving perfect obedience.

That in every thought we think and in every act we perform and in every word that we speak, God's law demands perfect obedience.

Now, you and I know that it's an impossibility even with the best effort in the world where all was going to come short. We've all failed. We've all come short of the glory of God.

And as a result of that, we are, as we know, we're sinners. But sin leaves us as it is in a terrible plight because the law has condemned us.

Supposing I broke the law and you break the law whatever it is and we're caught for what we've done and we have to appear in court, the judge isn't going to ask is he or she a good neighbor? Is he or she a good family man or family woman? Is he or she a nice person? The law's not interested in that. Not interested in the kind of person really we are. The law is only concerned about one thing.

[8 : 35] Has he or she broken the law? And if we've broken the law then that means that we have to wait to find out what the sentence of breaking the law will be.

That's how it works. And that's how it works spiritually as well. And that is why we are all under the sentence of death. death. It's really an incredibly sad and solemn situation that we're in.

But the wonderful thing is that in Jesus Christ because Christ has fulfilled the law he has done so for us and because of what God because of what Christ has done for us the law looks at us and says yeah you're perfect every day the law pronounces you innocent because the law is looking at Christ in your place.

so that's what it means for us to be in Christ Jesus. And again God the Father looks at every Christian in Christ Jesus.

And that's the most wonderful thing because as God looks at you tonight he looks at you through his son. And that's what it tells us in the Bible that we are accepted in the beloved.

[10 : 11] Isn't that beautiful? Tonight you're accepted. Straight away God looks at you and he says I accept you. It's like the royal scepter is being held out to you.

You're welcome. And I'm going to take you home with me because I love you. I love you because of my son. I love you because of what my son has done for you. You are in him and he is in you.

You and he are you're all one. And that is why the Lord Jesus he was saying as part of the high priestly prayer he was longing for the time when his church would be with him in glory.

Father I will let those whom you have given me be with me where I am that they may behold my glory. And that prayer will be answered the day that the last passion who trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ is taken out of this world.

His whole church, his whole bride, his whole body will be together with him. And that is how the Father looks on us tonight. Despite our sin, despite all that we are, he's looking at us through the work of Jesus Christ.

[11 : 32] And then we see the blessing that is extended here to all who are in Christ Jesus. peace to all of you. Now as we know, peace is really at the very heart of the Christian faith.

And this peace that we have here is a peace that we now have in the world. The moment you come to faith in Jesus Christ, you have peace. We're told that being justified by faith, we now have peace with God.

That's the equation. Justified by faith equals peace with God. That's how it works. And so straight away in this world we have that peace.

But we don't have perfect peace. At one level we have a peace that is foundational and can never be removed. But because we live in a world that is at enmity with Christ and enmity with us, then it is impossible for us to journey through this world knowing the type of peace that we will have in glory.

Now the type of peace we will have in glory is actually the same type of peace as we have here. Because the peace that we have here is peace in Christ. And the peace we have in glory is peace in Christ.

[13 : 01] peace in the peace in the peace in the peace in peace in the world is a corrupt world.

It's a dying world. It is a world that has to be burnt up with fire because of the corruption and the evil. Because we have to remember the fall didn't just affect you and me.

It affected the whole creation. The whole creation is groaning. And just as we ourselves are going to be changed, the body will become a new body, same body but resembling a risen saviour.

The world is going to be new heavens and a new earth. And so we've got to remember that although we are looking for that peace and it's our prayer that God's peace would fill the whole earth, we know that in this world as it is, that is not going to happen because of the sheer venom and enmity of the powers of darkness and the evil and corruption that is at work throughout this world.

So we have received peace but we don't have its fullness in the way that we will. When we leave this world, when we are conformed fully to the image of Christ, when we resemble him as he is, as our mediator, we are in an environment where everything is peace and where everything within us and around us and about us is peace.

[14 : 42] But that is what is still to come. But here in this world, we will still, we still have this peace. And that peace we have is permanent.

Because it's the peace of God. God can't change. Now that doesn't mean that every single day you're going to say at the end of the day, well you know this, I've had perfect peace all day.

I would love that we could all say that every single day. You know this, that's another day of absolute perfect peace. I don't believe that anybody here would be able to say, you know, since I became a Christian, every single day, I've had perfect peace.

From first thing in the morning to last thing at night, when I wake into the night, it's perfect peace. Maybe there is, maybe some of you have, maybe there is somebody. But because of our nature, because of the sin that's still within us, it's like that you know how the sun shines.

Sun always shines. But sometimes we can't see the sun. It's hidden behind the clouds. Some days, it's a storm and a gale.

[15 : 55] Sun's still up there. And so it is within our own life. That's how it is to the Lord. His peace, who he is, doesn't change.

And his view of you doesn't change. And his peace to you hasn't changed. But because of where you are and what is happening and the clouds of sin and all these things, we might not be as conscious of us peace, as sometimes we are.

But this peace, as we see, is given by Christ Jesus. Peace to all of you who are in Christ Jesus. It comes ultimately to us, given by Christ Jesus.

And everything about Jesus is peace. He's called the Prince of Peace. Remember when he was born into this world, the angel sang glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace and good will to

all.

All throughout his ministry, Jesus' life was one of peace. We obviously have no idea what Jesus looked like. Artists have tried to paint pictures and there's many a painting of what people imagined Jesus to look like.

[17 : 08] And the interesting thing, that every picture that you ever see, or every portrait, or every painting, I should say, that anybody has ever made, always, their mind, or their image of him, is with eyes of peace, of a face that radiates peace.

You never see a Jesus, a painting of a Jesus, that looks angry. It's always got these kind of eyes of love and of peace.

Now, that's only artist's impression, because we don't have, but I'm sure as you think of Jesus, that's the kind of image that you have in your mind as well, because his ministry was one of peace. His message, although he preached judgments, it was also a message of great peace. And he brought peace into so many lives.

Every life he touched, he brought peace. Whether it was Zacchaeus, the little man who was filled with greed and anger, he changed when Jesus met him. Jesus displayed his power over the power of darkness.

[18 : 19] Legion is an example of a man who was demented, caused mayhem in the neighborhood. Everybody was terrified of him, tried to chain him up, met with Jesus.

It all changed. In fact, the impact was so great upon the whole community that, this is a mad thing, they wanted Jesus to depart. They couldn't believe when they saw him sitting, clothed, and in his right mind.

Jesus even brought peace to the very nature. He commanded the waves which were raging, and the wind that was howling, and he just says, peace, be still.

And there was a great calm, immediately, instantly. And that's who Jesus is. And he does that to us spiritually as well.

Jesus commanded, that's what he did in your life. When he commanded his life to come into you through the work of the Holy Spirit, peace came. When Jesus was leaving, remember he said to his disciples, do you know what I'm going to give you?

[19 : 34] Do you know what my legacy to you is? It's my peace. My peace I give you. Not as the world gives, I give I unto you. When Jesus reappeared to the disciples after the resurrection, the very first thing he said to them, peace be to you.

His very first message was a message of peace. And that is in this crazy mixed up world that we live in, a world that's so angry and a world that's so restless.

Jesus says, do you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to give you the blessing of peace. And you know it's an impact. People see it. People see the love of a Christian.

People see the peace in a Christian. And when Jesus gives peace, it's not like he sends a partial, it's not like he sends peace in a lump and says, right, Holy Spirit, you take that and put that in that person.

it is himself. He gives himself through the Spirit. It's him who has come into our heart.

[20 : 47] And that's the beauty of it, because that's why that peace is there. It governs it. In fact, we're told elsewhere, it's a peace that garrisons your heart.

It guards your heart. And we know it, that peace. And then, in turn, we are also told that we are to live at peace as much as is possible with all.

We are told, in fact, one of the great in the Beatitudes, Jesus says, blessed are the peacemakers. That is part of our responsibility. If we have received peace, then it is our duty to promote peace wherever we are, in whatever way we can.

And when we are peacemakers, we're told, we are the children of God. So we see here the tremendous blessing that we are given. Peace to all of you who are in Christ Jesus.

Let us pray. O Lord, we give thanks for your word to us. We give thanks for the great benediction that your word so often is.

[21 : 57] peace. And we pray that as your grace and your peace and your mercy and your love have been shown and displayed in our lives, we give thanks, Lord, for what you have done.

So often we take for granted what we have. Sometimes we need to stop and to think. Sometimes we need to think back as to what once we were. And we remember days where we didn't have that peace.

peace. We pray for any of your people tonight who might be struggling because of our lack of peace. And sometimes the clouds of sin and there are various things that can come in at times which may disturb our peace.

We know that the evil one, that's one of the names that is given to him, the disturber of our peace. That's what he wants to do all the time. He wants to take away that peace. But although he may shake us for a little, he cannot take it away because he can't take you away from us.

And so we give thanks, O Lord, for that. And so we pray that you will bless us and that you will part us with your blessing. Grant us a love for one another, that you will do us good, be with those who mourn.

[23 : 12] We pray that you will bring comfort to their heart. We pray for all who are sick, those in hospital and those in their own homes and in homes. Lord, we commit them to your care and pray for healing and restoration and renewal and revival.

O Lord, bless them, we pray. Do us good and take away our sin. In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen. Psalm 85 in conclusion.

And for the Scottish Psalter, Psalm 85, verses 8 to the end. I'll hear what God the Lord will speak to his folk, he'll speak peace and to his saints, but let them not return to foolishness.

To them that fear him, surely near is his salvation, that glory in our land may have a habitation.

Truth met with mercy, righteousness and peace kissed mutually.

Truth springs from earth and righteousness looks down from heaven high. Yea, what is good the Lord shall give. Our land shall yield increase, just as to set us in his steps shall go before his face.

[24 : 27] Psalm 85 from verse 8 to the end. Amen. I'll hear what God the Lord will speak in his horrific pain, and to his sins.

But let them not return to foolishness.

With him that we and him surely near is his salvation.

God that glory is our and may have heard our habitation.

Truth met with mercy, righteousness and peace mutually.

[25 : 46] Truth brings water and righteousness and righteousness who shall from heaven high.

Yea, what is good the Lord shall give him and heal in dreams.

Justice to set the minister shall go be for his faith.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.