

Advent 2024 Peace

Philippians 4:4-9

Two Ladies on a Train

- Years ago a man found himself on a train between two ladies. And Unfortunately for him the two ladies were arguing constantly about whether the window should be open or shut.

The lady farthest from the window argued that she would die of heat stroke if it wasn't opened. The other said she would certainly catch pneumonia if it didn't stay closed.

When the ticket taker arrived the ladies begged to him to come up with a solution. But unfortunately he didn't have a solution.

Finally the man spoke up. "First open the window. That will kill the one. Then close it. That will kill the other. Then we will have peace."

Today is the second week of Advent and The subject for today is peace!

If someone were to come and ask you, "WHAT IS PEACE", How would you answer them?

Is it one of the spiritual gifts?

Peace is one of those things that everyone wants, But no one really knows how to get...And if they do manage to get it they don't know how to keep it.

Peace is not merely the absence of activity.

Many people have a concept of peace similar to the man in this story. For them peace is the absence of conflict. However, this falls short of the biblical vision.

We often use the phrase "peace and quiet" as our need to slow down. But Peace is more than living without anger.

In Scripture peace is not the absence of conflict but the presence of love, generosity and grace as the transforming principle of our relationships.

Peace is a frame of mind that we have when we are right with God.

Peace is regarded as one of the supreme virtues And yet I often think it's missing in our lives.

We think we have to get rid of all the problems in our lives. And If we do, then and only then, we can have peace.

- If we can get rid of the stress,
- If we can just get a new job,
- If we can just pay off our credit cards, And get on top of things.

We have to understand that if this is what is needed to achieve peace...We will never get it.

### **A few things I learned over the years:**

1. Life is not about how fast you run, or how high you climb, but how well you bounce.
2. Life you need to forgive your enemies. Because it messes with their heads.
3. In Life, every path has some puddles.
4. In Life, don't corner something meaner than you.
5. And In Life words that sink into your soul are whispered, not yelled.

What I want us to see today Is that peace comes not by getting rid of our problems but by focusing on what God wants us to think about.

If we have a personal relationship with God, then we have access to all of His power and / all of His peace.

The question then becomes how do we tap into that power So that we can experience that peace?

## **1. We tap into the power of God Through His Word**

*"For the word of God is full of living power." (Hebrews 4:12, NLT)*

The Word of God is our greatest source of power and our greatest source of strength.

If we want to experience God's power, we must live in and saturate our lives with His Word.

We become so wrapped up in life that we fail to be wrapped up in him.

God's power flows from a life that's saturated with his Word. / Filled / Consumed

## **2. We tap into the power of God Through Prayer –**

*Jas 5:16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.*

Prayer is the combination that unlocks the door to the riches of the kingdom of God.

Our lack of knowledge about prayer  
And our failure to pray  
Are the things that block us from having a full and fruitful relationship with God.

## **3. We tap into the power of God Through other Believers –**

*Ecc 4:12 Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.*

It is thru unity with one another that we find peace. When we bind together with our fellow Christians it makes us stronger.

And when we're stronger we can stand up to the world when its problems hit us in the face. We have to depend on others to get us through the hard times.

All the explanations of peace that I have mentioned so far may be the same definitions that you would use if someone asked you.

We talk about peace as if it is something that happens when conflict and problems are not present.

This brings us to our main text for today.

## **Philippians 4:4-9**

### *Final Exhortations*

*4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

*8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.*

I don't think it's a surprise to anyone here that we live in a world that's plagued with violence and hatred.

Wars are being fought all over the world.

Startling Statistics:

Only eight percent of the time since the beginning of recorded history has the world been entirely at peace. In over 3,100 years, only 286 have been warless and 8,000 treaties have been broken in this time.

Jesus Himself tells us in Mt 24:6-7 *6 And you will hear of wars and threats of wars, but don't panic. Yes, these things must take place, but the end won't follow immediately. 7 Nation will go to war against nation,*

*and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in many parts of the world.*

That being said Jesus then comforts us in **John 16:33** saying

*3 I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”*

The world is at odds with the purposes of God.

This is the devil's one-time shot to try and win. This is the final seconds of the fourth quarter and he's behind.

But the good news here is that through all Satan's efforts, Jesus offers us peace.

Jn 14:27 *“I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid.*

He wants us to have His peace, So let's look at how to gain that peace

In order to find the peace of God in unsettling times, We need to...Put first things first:

We have to gain peace with God...We can't have the peace of God -- until we have peace with God.

The fact of the matter is that outside of Christ, We can't have a relationship with God. And there is a lot who reject Christ, Or refuse to accept His offer of eternal life.

We are all created in the imago dei...This means “ the image of God”

If we have hatred against our fellow man it's the same as having hatred against God.

We all need to Take care of problems between ourselves and others while they are small Before they turn into something that gets away from us

Jesus said that we can all be a child of God; all it takes is faith in Him God doesn't want us to be His enemy. He wants us as His child. He sent Jesus to make it happen.

Jesus would rather die than see us live our lives without God...Because there's a penalty for that – It's called eternal life in torment.

### **Some Strategies for living in the peace of God:**

*1. We need to understand that God is in control,*

From beginning to end, And that ultimately, His plans will succeed.

Jesus said that He has overcome the world.

He did that in His death, in which He conquered sin and its power, And He did it through His resurrection where He conquered death and its power.

He also did that in giving us His Word, so we could learn how to live for Him and at the same time find comfort.

God's plans will never be stopped by anyone on earth. No one can change the plans of God; No matter how hard they try.

God is sovereign. He is on the throne in heaven, and there is no getting Him off.

Understanding this goes a long way to help us live in the peace of God.

*2 We need to Pray about everything.*

A few years ago in Kentucky there was a little boy who was being very disruptive during service. After a few minutes, his father who had put him under his arm carried him out.

No one in the congregation so much as raised an eyebrow -- until the child cried out in a Southern accent, "Ya'll pray for me now!"

*Phil. 4:6-7*

*6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

The Bible also tells us to pray without ceasing, and to never give up.

God hears and he moves on behalf of His people.

God doesn't always answer us the way we want Him to, But He doesn't ignore our prayers. He's hears each and everyone of them.

One of the best ways to reduce the problems in your life is to turn them into prayers.

- We need to ask God for His help with our problems Instead of trying to do it all on our own.
- We need to Give our problems over to God and let Him take care of them

**1 Peter 5:6-10** *6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. 7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*

*8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.*

*10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.*

Praying is simply talking to God About what you think of Him, and what's going on in your life.

It is your means of taking your problems and giving them to Him. Nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*3 We need to start living with a Biblical mindset.*

Peace comes through a mind that focuses on good.

There is a saying “an idle mind is the devil’s workshop”... The only way to defeat evil thoughts –Thoughts that destroy our peace... Is to begin to think of something else. To think of happy pleasant things.

A mind that is filled with the wrong thoughts Is one that will rob us of our peace.

Having a Biblical mindset is one that believes that God’s Word Is correct about all it teaches, including the world and its influences, And the ultimate end of those who love Christ and those who reject Him.

The point I’m trying to make is that Those who love Jesus with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, Have an easier time coping and responding to the “peace” the world offers.

Only Christ can bring lasting peace –Peace with God – peace among men and nations - and peace within our hearts.

Until He Comes we can find peace in God’s Word.

*4 We have to Live in obedience.*

Sin hampers our relationship with God, but obedience brings peace.

We can enjoy the blessings of God because He gives them to those who obey. If we want peace, we have to live in obedience

God’s Word is filled with promises that He gave us to help get through the problems of our day-to-day world.



The best way to find these answers is to read the Bible on a daily basis. If we do this, we'll be surprised at what we find.

One of the greatest things we can discover is that God has some promises that seem directed right at each and everyone of us. And We can cling to these verses over and over throughout the years to come.

*Lamentations 3:22-23 –*

*23 great is your faithfulness. 24 I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him."*

I'm grateful for that promise, because I've made some bad choices in life. But God's faithfulness is always there, And we should thank Him for that.

If you have been a Christian for any length of time, You have discovered some of those wonderful promises.

I personally thank God for what He has done for me in the past. And I realize that it was God Himself that got me through those times.

He also has the power to bring me through today.

And when we realize this, God's peace begins to fill us up, Not because the problem is gone, But because we know that we have everything we need to handle what comes our way.

So As we celebrate this season, The season of our savior's birth, We need to remember that The Peace that Jesus gives is not the absence of trouble, But rather the confidence that He is there with you always.

Only God can provide the peace that we need.