

Sermon preamble:

Give thanks for the privilege of pastoring...

Prayer for illumination:

Please join me in prayer...

Sermon introduction:

Let me ask a few questions.

What is a war? War is defined as a conflict that has claimed more than 1,000 lives.

Has the world ever been at peace?

Of the past 3,400 years of recorded history, humans have been at peace for a meager 268 years, which is roughly 8 percent of recorded history.

How many people have died in war?

At least 108 million people were killed in wars in the twentieth century alone. Estimates for the total number killed in wars throughout history range from 150 million to 1 billion. (NY Times, 2003).

Not only is there an absence of peace between nations, but there is an absence of peace between siblings, spouses, co-workers, neighbors, corporations, church members, and ethnicities. Maybe you are conflict with someone right now?

Then there is the lack of inner peace. No matter how hard we try we (i.e., humanity) can't seem to find lasting inner peace.

Peace is incredibly illusive. That brings us to the good news of this passage. Jesus Christ, the prince of peace, offers peace to everyone everywhere.

The original audience needed to hear this offer of peace from Jesus. Why? They were on the brink of a great storm, with much to fear. Their leader was about to be arrested, falsely accused, and murdered. More than anything, they needed to hear that peace was possible, even in the midst of insanely difficult times.

We need to hear the same thing this morning, don't we? Many of us are enduring trials and we could use some peace.

Two points this morning...

The offer of peace
The grounds of peace

First, the offer of peace

We learn several things about Christ's offer of peace from verse 27. Like what? We learn about...

The content of the offered peace!

John 14:27 (ESV) — 27 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, neither let them be afraid.

What is the content of biblical peace? In other words, what does the word "peace" mean?

The word "peace," reflects the Hebrew word "Shalom." (ZSB)

Shalom is one of the key images for salvation in the Bible. The word shalom or peace means much more than the absence of conflict. Shalom means the absence of conflict and it means universal human flourishing in every area of life.

Said another way...

Shalom includes peace with God (Rom. 5:1-2).

Shalom includes the peace of God (Phil. 4:4-7).

Shalom includes peace with others (Col. 3:13-15; Eph. 2:11-22)

Let's quickly examine each aspect of peace...

Peace with God!

Most fundamentally, shalom means reconciliation or peace with God.

Romans 5:1-2 (ESV) — 1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. **2** Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

If you are a non-Christians, you are in the most perilous situation imaginable. You are at war with God, estranged from Him. It is a war you cannot win. I urge you as strongly as I can to flee to the cross that you might have peace with God.

We must never ever forget that the peace of God is very costly. For God to be at peace with us, he waged war on his own son, in our place...

Peace with God! Shalom also includes...

The peace of God!

Philippians 4:6-7 (ESV) — 6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. **7** And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

According to several Bible apps, this is the most underlined verse in the Bible! Isn't that telling? This implies that many people are anxious and in need of a supernatural sense of peace from God.

Illustration:

Many years ago, I was very anxious about a particular issue in my future. It robbed me of sleep, and it robbed me of joy. I could not find peace. I vividly remember going for a walk and reciting Phil. 4:6-7 over and over and over again. I thought about each word, each phrase, each promise. Then I prayed through each word, phrase, and promise. Finally, the peace came about 35 minutes into my walk. We must fight for peace by meditating on God's promises.

But here is the point, God offers us supernatural peace in the midst of intense trials.

Shalom includes...

Peace with God
The peace of God...

Peace with others!

Ephesians 2:14 (ESV) — 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility

This describes the peace that God worked between Jews and Gentiles. This peace is possible because the cross of Christ has broken down the dividing walls of hostility.

If this peace can reconcile Jew and gentile, it can reconcile any warring parties and it has throughout church history. Side note—the gospel of Jesus Christ is the only way that racial tension and racism can be destroyed.

As you can see, Shalom is so much more than the absence of hostility. Shalom is overall human flourishing. This is the content of Jesus offer.

We have looked at...

The content of the offered peace.

The contrast of the offered peace!

John 14:27 (ESV) — 27 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, neither let them be afraid.

The world promises peace, but it cannot deliver.

The peace the world offers is temporary at best. By contrast the peace that Christ offers last for all eternity.

How does the world seek peace?

Some seek peace in alcohol (some drink to drown away their sorrows). Alcohol may provide temporary peace but it can lead to long-term pain and misery.

Other seek peace in marijuana. One thinks of "Piece of mind cannabis company" on N. Division.

Others seek peace through breathing techniques/Yoga/Transcendental meditation/self-help books, or new age techniques. Again, some of these techniques may provide some measure of temporary peace, but it never lasts.

Others seek peace through bingeing shows (this provides temporary peace by taking our minds off our problems for a few hours, but then the show ends).

Still other think that making more money will bring peace (if I just make a little more than my soul will be at rest, I can stop striving, worrying, and all my problems will go away).

Others seek peace in shopping, listening to music, or sitting in hot tubs.

Yet none of the world's means of achieving peace works very long.

Illustration:

When I was in college, I was an RA in my dorm. It was against our dorm rules to burn anything in one's dorm room. One day as I was doing my rounds, I noticed a student burning a bunch of incense in his dorm room. I very kindly told him that burning incense was against hall policy.

He was not a happy camper. I find out later that burning incense was part of his religion. He was so angry at me for "persecuting" him that he began practicing voodoo on me with little voodoo dolls. No joke... Every time I saw him, he gave me the death stare. Fortunately, he was much smaller than me.

Later on, I was describing this conflict in a job interview and the HR rep told me that I needed to take a sweat bath in a teepee with my "Voodoo friend" to resolve our conflict.

Even if my voodoo "enemy" would have agreed to sit through a sweat bath with me, in a teepee, which was not going to happen, I don't think that it would have resulted in peace.

The world cannot provide peace. If we need peace, we must go to the prince of peace. When we do there are wonderful consequences. Which brings us to the next idea...

The content of the offered peace.

The contrast of the offered peace.

The consequence of the offered peace!

John 14:27 (ESV) – 27 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, neither let them be afraid.

Jesus says to his disciples, "Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." Why? Because he is offering them peace, his peace, real peace.

Is your heart troubled or afraid as the result of significant conflict, financial problems, political uncertainty, work issues, loss of freedom, health concerns, or a broken relationship???

If so, Christ offers you peace.

Maybe you are thinking... I understand the offer, but how is this peace possible? What is it grounded in? This brings us to the second point.

First, the offer of peace.

Second, the grounds of peace

What is our peace grounded in? Several things...

Our peace is grounded in Christ's ascension!

John 14:28 (ESV) — 28 You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

Jesus says, "you know that I'm about to die on the cross and then ascend to the father, I just told you that. My death, resurrection, and ascension should be the cause of great rejoicing. Instead, you are sad and grumpy."

If they loved him, his ascension should cause them great joy.

Why? The ascension means that Jesus gets to be with his father again, in his glorified state.

In addition, the ascension leads to several wonderful blessings for us. Like what?

Christ's ascension means that he will return to the father's right hand.

From the father's right hand, the son will permanently intercede for us.

From the father's right hand, the son will pour out the Spirit on all the saints.

From the father's right hand, the son will rule and reign over all things as the king of kings and lord of lords.

Our peace is grounded in Christ's ascension.

I need to pause for a moment and deal with a thorny theological phrase. At the end of verse 28, Jesus says that "The father is greater than I."

This verse is a favorite verse of Unitarians, Jehovah's Witnesses, and others who seek to deny Jesus' true deity and equality with the father.

The main problem with this view is that the Gospel of John, and the rest of the NT for that matter, is filled with direct claims to Jesus' full deity.

In John 10:30, for instance, Jesus stated, "I and the Father are one,." This was such a strong claim to deity that the Jews sought to stone him for blasphemy.

John Calvin explains that when Jesus says that the Father is greater, he "does not here make a comparison between the Divinity of the Father and of his own, nor between his own human nature and the Divine essence of the Father, but rather between his present state and the heavenly glory, to which he would soon afterwards be received."

Application:

Back to the point...

Our peace is grounded in Christ's ascension.

Since Christ ascended to the father you will receive the holy Spirit (he will allow you to experience peace).

Since Christ ascended to the father's right hand, he is seated on a divine throne. From that throne Christ is ruling over all things (more cause for peace).

Since Christ ascended to the father, he will now intercede for us (even more cause for supernatural peace).

Our peace is grounded in Christ's ascension! In addition...

Our peace is grounded in Christ's victory!

John 14:30 (ESV) — 30 I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, (include v. 31).

The ruler of this world is a reference to Satan. He did not earn the right to rule. God allows him to rule for a brief season to accomplish God's purposes. Satan, the ruler of this world, has no claim on Jesus Christ.

Why? Many reasons... but the main one alluded to in verses 30-31 is that Christ is sinless. He always obeys his father.

When Christ says, "He (Satan) has no claim on me," he is saying that Satan cannot charge Him with any sin. Why does this matter? The penalty for sin is death. If Christ had sinned, then he would have died and remained dead—never rising from the grave. Satan and death would have been victorious. Christ would have remained dead forever.

But Christ gained the victory over Satan through his perfect life.

Here is the good news—Christ victory is our victory.

illustration:

I have been a seahawk fan since I was a boy. I used to go watch them practice in Cheney Washington during the Steve Largent and Dave Krieg era.

Do you remember when the Seahawks were really good? A little less than ten years ago, Feb 2nd, 2014, they won the Super bowl.

Do you remember that season? Like many of you I watched every minute of every game. I watched press conferences; I took my boys to Seattle to watch the team practice.

Do you remember "Blue Friday" when everyone wore their seahawks gear to work on Fridays.

Why was everyone in Washington so excited? Because the Seahawks are our team. When they won, we felt like we won. We all felt like we were a part of their success. We, the fans, were the twelfth man.

Their victory was our victory.

Christ's victory is our victory. When he defeated Satan, we defeated Satan.

Application:

He defeated Satan because he was perfect. Satan has "no claim on him."

We can be victorious over Satan because we are perfect. Our perfection comes from Jesus Christ, not ourselves.

When Satan comes to us and accuses us of sin, we can claim Christ's victory. We can remind the devil that Christ was perfect, and all those who trust him are also perfect.

Satan is called the accuser of the brethren... he loves to accuse. When he does, we must remind him (and ourselves) of Christ's perfection.

Christ's victory over Satan brings peace... Satan can't ultimately harm you.

With that in mind, if you are not a Christian, don't be fooled, you are not autonomous. You are ruled by Satan, whether you are aware of this or not. He will do everything in his power to ruin you for eternity.

Yet, it does not have to be that way. If you humble yourself and confess your sins to God and then ask him to forgive you, he will.

Our peace is grounded in Christ's ascension.

Our peace is grounded in Christ's victory.

Our peace is grounded in Christ's obedience.

John 14:31 (ESV) — 31 but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.

Jesus' obedience to the Father signifies his love for the Father. Because Jesus loved the father, he obeyed the father perfectly, which secured shalom for all of creation.

Remember, the father designed the plan of salvation. The son agreed to the plan. Then the son came and carried out the plan. He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died on the cross, and rose from the grave. Why? to secure shalom for all of creation.

He was obeying and fulfilling his father's massive reclamation project.

God's plan was not merely to save humans, it was a plan to save the entire cosmos. Salvation is cosmic in scope.

We often underestimate the cosmic reach of Christ's saving work. We only think about Christ saving us from sin, hell, and wrath. Which, by the way, is amazing... But Christ came to save everything ruined by sin, not just humans.

He will bring peace to the earth.

He will reconcile all things to himself (Col. 1:15-20).

According to the great Christmas Hymn, Jesus "came to make his blessings flow as far as the curse is found."

Whatever the curse touched, Jesus will redeem.

This means that Christ's saving work will reach into every single square inch of creation.

He will bring shalom to everything.

Mountains, lakes, rivers, streams, and trees will be redeemed.

Science will be redeemed.

Architecture will be redeemed.

Dance will be redeemed.

Sports will be redeemed.

Engineering will be redeemed.

Literature will be redeemed.

Baking will be redeemed.

Education will be redeemed.

Movies will be redeemed.

Everything ruined by sin will be redeemed, or Satan gets the last word. This is shalom.

Christ loved the father. Therefore, Christ obeyed the father. Therefore all of Creation will experience deep and lasting Shalom.

Leading one scholar to write,

"Shalom is multidimensional, complete well-being, physical, psychological, social, and spiritual; it flows from all of one's relationships being put right-with God, with(in) oneself, and with others." (Keller from ZSB)

He goes on to write,

"When people share their resources with each other and work together so that shared public services work, the environment is safe and beautiful, the schools educate, the businesses flourish, and poverty and hunger are minimal, then that community is experiencing social shalom." (Keller)

When will all of this happen? When Christ returns and makes all things right.

In the meantime, we can experience peace knowing that everything will be redeemed someday. And by everything, I mean everything!!!

Conclusion:

I have a friend who was hired one year ago as the lead pastor of an old historic church with a spectacular building in a spectacular community on the east coast.

Under my friend's leadership, the church was thriving. New families were coming, young families were coming. Great gospel change was happening. The church had not experienced that much life and vitality in decades.

Yet, one year into his tenure, roughly one week ago, the church imploded. The old senior pastor turned his back on my friend the new senior pastor. Factions formed. A petition went around. All the folks loyal to the old pastor signed it.

To make a long story short my friend was essentially forced to resign.

He and his family will probably lose their house when he loses his job.

Can my friend still experience peace? Yes! How do we know? Jesus says,

John 14:27 (ESV) — 27 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, neither let them be afraid.

Lets pray...