

John 14:27-“PEACE”

INTRO: Today is the second Sunday of Advent. Last Sunday we looked at the “Hope” that the coming of Jesus brings. Today’s theme is “Peace.” Given the state of the world and of our society today, this is so important.

That is one reason why this season of Advent is important. It is also a reason why the Christian or liturgical calendar is important. Historically, Baptists, other Evangelicals, and Pentecostals have gotten away from the Christian or liturgical calendar. Many of us don’t even know that there is such a thing. But the Christian calendar is still followed and taken somewhat seriously throughout the bulk of Christendom in the Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, Eastern Orthodox, and even some Reformed churches.

It is designed to divide the year up according to major Christian events—primarily Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost—so that Christ will be in our minds as we go through our lives, week by week and month by month. And the calendar begins with Advent, where we look forward to the coming of Christ. The season of Advent, of course, culminates with Christmas. If we took Advent a little more seriously, it might affect our view of Christmas and how we celebrate it. But I digress.

I said that the theme of this second Sunday of Advent is “Peace.” Could anything be more appropriate, especially coupled with “Hope”? Our nation is very, I would say “terribly,” divided. The world is reeling from Covid-19 or, some would say, governmental responses to Covid. Friends are estranged because of politics. Old people in nursing homes are dying from loneliness. Despite the absence of foreign wars, governments are grabbing power in unprecedented ways, and there is even talk of potential civil war. Rich and powerful individuals and corporations are grabbing ever more while many people and small businesses have been shut down.

In today’s passage—**John 14:27**—Jesus speaks of this. He says: **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.**

PROP: What is he telling us here? He’s telling us that in him we will have true and lasting peace.

O/S: We will see this as we see the three movements of this passage: (1) **Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you;** IOW, Jesus is our peace. (2) **Not as the world gives do I give to you;** The peace he gives us is not the kind of peace we may be looking for. (3) **Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid;** If we understand who he is, what he is all about, and are connected with him, we will no longer be afraid or even troubled. We will have true and lasting peace:

I. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.

What is the context in which Jesus says this? Today’s verse is **John 14:27**. But the context is a lengthy discourse Jesus gives to his disciples the night before he died. The discourse is found in **John 14-16**. Jesus had already told his disciples that he was going to be betrayed, soon was to be killed, and he would be leaving them. Naturally, his disciples were troubled. In **John 14:1** Jesus began his discourse by telling them, **“Let not your hearts be troubled.”** But in v. 6 he went on to tell them—and us—**“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me,”** in v. 9, **“Whoever has seen me has seen the Father,”** and in v. 11, **“I am in the Father and the Father is in me.”**

Then in vv. 16-18 he revealed that, although he would be going away, he would not leave us as orphans. Instead, he would send another Helper—the Holy Spirit—who will be with us forever.

The rest of this discourse continues these same themes. **Chapter 15** is all about being connected to Jesus as branches are to the vine. We show that we are connected to him by how we show love for each other. But he goes on to say that the world will hate us because it has hated Jesus—but the Helper will be with us.

Then in chapter 16 he again warns us that we will face hardship and persecution and be outcasts, but the Helper will be with us and guide us into all truth. He concludes this entire discourse in **John 16:33** by saying the same thing he said in **14:27**, **“I have 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.”**

What we see is that in Jesus we have peace. But note that in today’s verse he immediately goes on to say:

II. Not as the world gives do I give to you.

Why does he say that? In **John 14:27**, Jesus began by saying, **Peace I leave with you.** But then he immediately qualifies that by saying, **MY peace I give to you.** Why does he say **“MY peace”**? The reason, I believe, is that when most of us think of “peace,” we tend to think of the absence of conflict, or perhaps of the peace we feel when things are going well (by which, if we are honest, we mean **“when things are going the way I want them to go”**). We think of the peace of being happy, and full, well-off, and, essentially, the peace of a pleasant life. **AND THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH ANY OF THAT.** Those are all good things.

BUT, you don’t need Jesus to get any of those things, however good they may be. That is why everything Jesus was saying here was different. The whole BASIS of his giving us *his peace* was that HE was being betrayed; HE was going to be killed; HE was going away; and WE were going to face hatred and persecution and be outcasts. IOW, our circumstances would be the EXACT OPPOSITE of what we usually think of when we think of “peace.”

Consequently, the peace Jesus gives is not and cannot be like the peace that the world gives. So what is it? We have already talked about this implicitly, and we find it again in the last phrase he said:

III. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

This whole discourse began in **John 14:1** by Jesus’ saying, **“Let not your hearts be troubled.”** Now he ends **v. 27** again by saying, **“Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”** Why? Because he is saying, **“I am giving you a peace that will be present, and real, even in the worst of circumstances. You will have peace, because it is a different kind of peace—it is *my* peace.”**

How can that be? The answer is that the peace he is giving us is *himself*—himself in the person of the Holy Spirit who will abide with us and IN us forever. In **John 14:16-18** where Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit, he also says, **“I will come to you.”** IOW, the presence of Christ is the presence of the Spirit and *vice versa*. Additionally, in **v. 16** Jesus said **“I will send you another Helper.”** The word “another” means another of equal quality. The Holy Spirit is equal with Jesus Christ, just like him only not in bodily form. Because he is not in bodily form, the Holy Spirit actually comes to live inside of us. **John 14:17** says, **“He will be *in* you.”**

That is why the peace Christ gives is “not as the world gives,” because the peace Christ gives is *Himself, not a circumstance or a condition.* The peace Christ gives is not dependent on our circumstances or conditions. Christ said, **“I will never leave you or forsake you” (Heb 13:5).** That means that HE—and the peace he gives—is just as present when times are bad as when times are good; just as present when the Democrats win as when the Republicans win; just as present in sickness as in health, in poverty as in wealth, in sorrow as in joy. Remember, in **John 16:33** Jesus said, **“In the world you will have tribulation . . . but *in me* you will have peace.”** That is why Paul called it **“the peace of God which surpasses all understanding” (Phil 4:7).**

How many of us are experiencing this kind of peace? My guess is: not so many, or not so much. And let me say that I am speaking about myself as much as anyone else. So what is the answer? How can we have this peace as an ongoing reality of our lives?

It’s sort of like **1 Cor 2:16** which says, “We have the mind of Christ.” If, as Christians, we have the mind of

Christ, then why aren't we all thinking like him and acting like him? Why don't we have his compassion and love and forgiveness? Because we have his mind, but we do not develop it. Some of us are students, and many of us are parents. If you are a student, you have a mind. But if you don't do your homework, you're not going to learn, or develop your mind, or understand, and you will fail in school. If you are a parent and just let the kids spend their time with video games, junk food, and nonsense, you are going to fail as a parent.

The same is true with the peace that Christ gives. What did he say in his discourse? In **John 15:4-5** he said, **“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”** So the first thing is, we need to see him for who he is and ourselves for who we are, and come to grips with our relationship with him. There is a line we have to cross whereby we get off the throne of our life and confess that we have been trying to do this on our own. We did not create ourselves. God created us; he created us for himself. Yet in most of our day-to-day activities we hardly ever give him a single thought. We need to repent of that, ask his forgiveness, and ask him to come inside and take control. Consciously be aware of his presence during the day and draw on him.

But in his discourse, he gave us some further insight that will help us experience his peace regardless of our external circumstances. In **John 15:7** he spoke of **“my words abiding in you.”** And in **John 14:26** he said, **“the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”** Now, to his original disciples, when Jesus said that, he was talking about what he had personally told them. Now, his words have been recorded in the Bible. The Bible is the primary means by which God communicates with us. Even the Spirit or what we may discern in prayer will not contradict what God has said in his written word. How much of his word are we getting into us on a regular basis? We need to abide in his word: read it; think about it; get it deeply into us so it begins transforming us.

Speaking of prayer, prayer is communion and communication with God. Most of us are pretty good at telling God the things we want and need—and that is legitimate. But communion, communication, relationship, which is what we are talking about—a relationship with God through Jesus Christ—is a two-way street. So, in addition to speaking to God in prayer, how much do we listen to him? Have you ever heard of “listening prayer”? I have a booklet written in the 1960s by a woman who was a missionary to India. It's all about being silent and listening to hear God's direction. He can give us insight and direction if we listen for him and to him.

In his discourse, Jesus gave us still further insight that will help us experience his peace regardless of our external circumstances. In **John 14:21** he says, **“Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.”** It's not enough that we come to Jesus, read his word, and pray to him. He has come inside of us in the person of the Holy Spirit to change us—to make us like himself—so that his thoughts become our thoughts, his values our values, his priorities our priorities, his compassion our compassion, his generosity our generosity, his love our love. But as Jesus also said, **“A tree is known by its fruit.”** It's only when we start following him, doing what he says—and it costs money and time and maybe heartache to do this—that's what shows that we are really abiding in him and his word is abiding in us.

His discourse tells us one other thing we need to develop the peace he brings. That is, be in close relationship with other Christians. In **John 15:12** Jesus says, **“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”** We were built for relationship. The Bible says that **“iron sharpens iron.”** We need each other to help each other as we are going through the wringer; to remind each other of Christ's presence; to be examples for each other of the peace that it is possible to experience even in the worst of times; and to remind each other that we are not alone. Jesus was in close relationship with his Father and with his disciples while he was on earth. Since he is now in us, we are to be like him.

That's when we will experience his peace, because we will be just like him. He led a hard life, yet he wasn't whipsawed emotionally when he first faced praise and then condemnation and persecution. He had peace—the same peace that he gives to us. What does that look like? Jesus tells us in **Matthew 25**, the account of the sheep and the goats. He's talking about the day of judgment, when everyone will stand before him either as a sheep or a goat. He says to the goats . . . He says to the sheep . . . What's the difference? The faith of the goats did not penetrate to change their hearts, their minds, their actions, and their relationships.

The faith of the sheep did. Christ, by the Holy Spirit, was working in them, changing their hearts, minds, emotions, attitudes, values, priorities, will, actions, and relationships to make them like his own. They were responding to him by having a dynamic, personal relationship with him. Their new nature in Christ became “second nature” to them. They themselves may have been poor, sick, or facing other awful circumstances, but they had peace.

CONCL: Are we there yet? At least for myself, the answer is “no.” But let us set this before our minds. Develop our relationship with him. Draw on him. Draw on his word. Draw on our brothers and sisters in Christ. Let us firmly resolve to put him first, to listen to him, and to follow what he says, as we go through our day-to-day life. As we do this, we will start experiencing the peace he gives to those who love him.