

**May 13, 2007 (Mother's Day)**

**"Peace"**

**John 14:23-29 NLT**

A man observed a woman in the grocery store with a three-year-old girl in her basket. As they passed the cookie section, the little girl asked for cookies and her mother told her, "No." The little girl immediately began to whine and fuss, and the mother said quietly, "Now Jane, we just have half of the aisles left to go through - don't be upset. It won't be long now."

Soon, they came to the candy aisle and the little girl began to shout for candy. When told she couldn't have any, she began to cry. The mother said, "There, there, Jane, don't cry - only two more aisles to go and then we'll be checking out."

When they got to the checkout stand, the little girl immediately began to clamor for gum and burst into a terrible tantrum upon discovering there'd be no gum purchased. The mother said serenely, "Jane, we'll be through this check out stand in 5 minutes and then you can go home and have a nice nap."

The man followed them out to the parking lot and stopped the woman to compliment her. "I couldn't help noticing how patient you were with little Jane. It's quite commendable," he remarked.

The mother replied, "I'm Jane. My little girl's name is Tammy."

Today I want to talk about peace...not just for mothers, but for all of us. The Scripture reading for today is: John 14:23-29 NLT

Jesus replied, "All those who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and live with them. 24 Anyone who doesn't love me will not do what I say. And remember, my words are not my own. This message is from the Father who sent me. 25 I am telling you these things now while I am still with you. 26 But when the Father sends the Counselor as my representative--and by the Counselor I mean the Holy Spirit--he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I myself have told you.

27 "I am leaving you with a gift--peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give isn't like the peace the world gives. So don't be troubled or afraid. 28 Remember what I told you: I am going away, but I will come back to you again. If you really love me, you will be very happy for me, because now I can go to the Father, who is greater than I am. 29 I have told you these things before they happen so that you will believe when they do happen.

One of the best newspaper cartoons of all time is Calvin and Hobbes (little boy, Calvin, and his [stuffed] sidekick tiger, Hobbes). One day Calvin and Hobbes come marching into the living room early one morning. His mother is seated there in her favorite chair. She is sipping her morning coffee. She looks up at young Calvin. She is amused and

amazed at how he is dressed. Calvin's head is encased in a large space helmet. A cape is draped around his neck, across his shoulders, down his back and is dragging on the floor. One hand is holding a flashlight and the other a baseball bat.

"What's up today?" asks his mom.

"Nothing, so far," answers Calvin.

"So far?" she questions.

"Well, you never know," Calvin says, "Something could happen today." Then Calvin marches off, "And if anything does, by golly, I'm going to be ready for it!"

Calvin's mom looks out at the reading audience and she says, "I need a suit like that!"

That's the way many of us feel as we see the news and deal with life. Sometimes this world seems quite overwhelming, violent, evil, not very peaceable. A suit like that would help, so we can say with Calvin, "Whatever may come my way, I'm going to be ready for it! Bring it on!"

Well, I don't have a suit like Calvin's to give you this morning, but I do have word from Jesus this morning: *"I am leaving you with a gift--peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give isn't like the peace the world gives. So don't be troubled or afraid."* These words of Christ allow us, like Calvin to say, "Something could happen today. And if anything does, by golly, I'm going to be ready for it!"

The late advice columnist Ann Landers use to receive something like 10,000 letters a month. When asked what seems to be the most common topic, she answered that most people seem to be afraid of something. They are afraid of losing their health, their job, or their family. They are afraid of upsetting their neighbor, alienating a friend, or committing a social faux pas (indiscretion). Many are even afraid when there is no reason to be afraid. Ours is a world of fearful people.

When people are asked, "if you could have any wish what would it be?" I think the most common answer given is peace. Peace is important. Jesus makes a point to tell his disciples that He is going to leave them with peace. Peace is part, a vital part, of our faith. Let's look a little closer at what Jesus means by peace.

There is a defining phrase in the statement that Jesus makes. One that tells us what kind of peace Christ gives us. Listen to it again and see if you can pick it out: *"I am leaving you with a gift--peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give isn't like the peace the world gives. So don't be troubled or afraid."* The defining phrase is: "...the peace I give isn't like the peace the world gives." Let's see how that defines God's peace:

#### 1. First, there is the Peace the World Gives

The world promises peace through the rule of law. Law and order is the only way for a society and a people to experience peace and law and order must be kept by the aggressive use of force. That's the only way that the world can bring about peace. The world's peace is often very conditional, fragile, temporary, and, is frequently reduced to mean only the absence of war and strife.

Bob Deffinbaugh, in *Facing the Future: A Prescription for Peace* writes:

This week someone left a cartoon on the Xerox machine at my office in which a man was lying on the couch of a psychiatrist. When the psychiatrist asked the client what his problem was he confided that he had all kinds of fears about the future. "Doctor," he began, "I'm worried about the energy crisis, inflation, the situation in the Middle East, political and social upheaval in Africa, our diplomatic relations with China ." I wish I could remember all of the concerns of the man in the cartoon; there were at least a dozen. In the final frame the psychiatrist responded, "Shut up and move over," after which he proceeded to get on the couch with the patient.

A cartoon such as this would be much more amusing if it did not contain so much truth. The problems of the future are almost overwhelming. Those in a position to know the facts are privately saying that things are not nearly as bad as they seem--they are worse. Public officials seem to have taken the same approach to our national problems as many doctors do with a terminally ill patient--keep the unpleasant truth from them as long as possible.

Jesus doesn't hold to that particular philosophy.

2. Second, there is the Peace the Lord Gives

*"I am leaving you with a gift--peace of mind and heart."* His peace is given as a gift. And comes with the wonderful promise that it will last forever. When Jesus says I give you peace, He is saying I give you My Own peace.

His peace means the gift of salvation, forgiveness and reconciliation between God and us. The sin that stands between God and us has been done away by the death of Jesus on the cross and by His resurrection from the dead. We no longer fear God's anger because of our rebelliousness against God. Jesus reconciles us with God – He restores the friendship between God and us and promises us Eternal Life. (v28) "Remember what I told you: I am going away, but I will come back to you again."

Peace is also the Holy Spirit in our lives as friend, comforter, counselor, teacher, intercessor, strengthener, and healer. He comes to live in us to help us. He is Christ representative. He is just like Jesus and will remind us of all that Jesus taught.

This peace is not the absence of trouble, but peace in the midst of trouble. Peace is knowing that no matter what troubles may come our way, God, our heavenly Father, has promised to never forget us, to never leave us, and to always be our helper and strength. He sent his Son to die for us... He won't give up on us now. We are His loved children.

Peace with God can flow from us as we deal with life and as we live and work with the people in our day to day relationships and activities.

This peace has a positive effect on our health and well-being. It is well documented that stress, tension, and fear have negative effects on our body. Jesus gives us a gift of -- *peace of mind and heart*.

### 3. Third, there is the Obedience We Give

Here is how Jesus will give you peace (He says in v23), *"All those who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and live with them."* If you obey His word He and the Father will come to you and make a home with you. Right in your heart. Not by force but by choice. They will abide in your heart bringing peace. The world's peace is peace through strength. The Lord's peace is peace through surrender.

As we get to know God, and His wonderful promises for us, we will be more willing to surrender our lives to Him and as we do our peace will increase.

So what as He told us to do? To believe in Him and trust Him. To Love God and love others as we love ourselves. He also gives us this command (in 27 AMP), *"Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. [Stop allowing yourselves to be agitated and disturbed; and do not permit yourselves to be fearful and intimidated and cowardly and unsettled.]"*

How can we do that?

First, *get to know what kind of God we have*. He is powerful, gracious, loving and faithful. We only have to look at the cross to remember what He has done for us.

Get to know God as King and Ruler, Sovereign of the universe. There is nothing so great or too difficult for Him to handle. He parted the sea to save the Israelites, saved Daniel from the lions, and Paul from a shipwreck certainly He can help us when we are afraid.

Second, *get to know God's promises* and trust that he will stick by what he says. They are recorded in the Bible. Be assured that God keeps His promises; that He is with us, even in the worst possible situation imaginable on this earth.

Third, *get to know that your own attempts to be bold are not sufficient*. There will be times you will have anxiety and fear. You may even feel that God has deserted you. It's then we need the Holy Spirit to help us – to forgive us for our weakness of faith, to enable us to trust that God has not forsaken us, to support us while we tremble in fear and to help us get through. Your own strength is not sufficient, but His strength is all sufficient. Trust and wait on God (patiently). He knows all of our needs, He is willing to use His power to help us, and He works all things out for His good purposes.

Fourth, *pray*. Ask God to intervene in your troubles and the fear they bring. Pray for faith, for boldness and courage when afraid. Pray to be able to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit who points us to the love and compassion of God, and pray that in the end God would take us from the troubles of this world into the eternal world where there will be no more fear.

When fears and worries create tension and upset your life, Jesus promises, *"I am leaving you with a gift--peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give isn't like the peace the world gives. So don't be troubled or afraid."*