

**May 5, 2013**  
**The Promise of God's Peace**  
**John 14:23-29**

**23** Jesus replied, "All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them. **24** Anyone who doesn't love me will not obey me. And remember, my words are not my own. What I am telling you 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 Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.

**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. **28** Remember what I told you: I am going away, but I will come back to you again. If you really loved me, you would be happy that I am going to the Father, who is greater than I am. **29** I have told you these things before they happen so that when they do happen, you will believe.

I mentioned last week that chapters 13 – 17 cover the last discourse Jesus had with His disciples before His death and He had some very important things to say to them. Here Jesus begins by saying (v23):

"All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them.

John 15:9b-10

Remain in my love. When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love.

He is letting them know that though He is going to die, He is not going to abandon them. And He offers the best comfort of all — there wouldn't really be any separation from Him and His followers; because, when Jesus returned to the Father, the Holy Spirit would be made available, allowing every believer constant access to the Father and the Son. To those who love Jesus, the Son and the Father will come and make a home with them or would abide in them, or inhabit them.

When we think of God's Spirit dwelling in us, it's not all warm and cuddly. Look at this example from the Old Testament of God filling His temple.

2 Chron 5:13-14

The trumpeters and singers performed together in unison to praise and give thanks to the LORD. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals, and other instruments, they raised their voices and praised the LORD with these words: "He is good! His faithful love endures forever!"

At that moment a thick cloud filled the Temple of the LORD. The priests could not continue their service because of the cloud, for the glorious presence of the LORD filled the Temple of God.

The Temple was filled with the glorious, and awesome presence of God. That Presence came with thick cloud, and the priests couldn't continue because of it.

Who are the suitable "temples" for the glory of God (The indwelling Presence of the Spirit of God)? Those who prove their love for Him. And how do you prove your love for Jesus? By doing what He says- keeping His teachings.

Acts 5:32

The Holy Spirit... is given by God to those who obey him.

We receive Jesus by faith and we receive the Holy Spirit the same way. But how do you know if faith is real, by your obedience. We are not saved by our works, but faith without works is dead, it not really faith. Evidently, Jesus anticipated that some would say they believed in Him and loved Him but would not be interested in obeying Him.

(v24) "Anyone who doesn't love me will not obey me. And remember, my words are not my own. What I am telling you is from the Father who sent me."

Your children may obey you because they fear the consequences, but isn't it a wonderful blessing when they obey because they love and trust you? (perhaps you're thinking, "it's a blessing if they obey me at all!"). Obedience comes from love and trust. So someone who does not love Jesus will not obey Him. The reverse is also true, that if you do not obey Jesus you do not love or trust Him. The question is do we relate to Him merely as a religious figure, or do we know Him as our Savior and as our Lord?

So are you with me so far? The test of the reality of love to Christ is doing what He says. If you love Jesus you will obey Him. You will not have to be forced to obey Him, you will spontaneously obey Him. "Whoever loves God has in him that spirit which will lead him to keep God's commandments." – St. Augustine

The evidence of love to Christ should be unmistakable.

(vv25-26) "I am telling you these things now while I am still with you. But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you."

The Holy Spirit is referred to here as the "Advocate." The word can also be translated, "Comforter." The Holy Spirit is a Consoler, a Counselor, a helper. Literally, "One who comes along side to help."

Jesus was leaving them, He had been with them to teach them and direct them. What would they do in His absence when He ascended to the Father in heaven? Who would

be their helper? The Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit is a person as we see by the fact that He will teach and remind. A power can't be a teacher only a person can be teacher; the Holy Spirit is a divine person just as the Father and the Son are. He has the same divine authority, and wisdom, and guidance. Otherwise Jesus would not have said, "the Father sends the Holy Spirit as my representative." As His representative He brings the Son to us. He is just like Jesus. The Spirit will continue Christ's teaching. The Holy Spirit would not teach anything new or different than what Jesus taught.

The Holy Spirit helped the apostles to remember everything Christ had taught, which is why they were able to write these things we read in the Gospels; and why we can be confident that the Gospels are an accurate record of what Jesus taught and did.

The Holy Spirit would bring us the teachings of Jesus; the presence of Jesus; the love of Jesus; and the peace of Jesus.

(v27) "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."

Echoing John 14:1

"Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me."

In the mist of fear and anxiety, and troubled hearts, Jesus offered His disciples peace. Who doesn't want peace? Everyone longs for peace, yet few find it. Sometimes we are able to get things the way we want them to be and feel peaceful for awhile, then suddenly something happens and the peace is gone.

The traditional Jewish greeting, *shalom*, was a wish for peace. But Jesus was doing more than giving them a traditional farewell when He offers them peace.

In the Old Testament peace was completeness, soundness, and well-being of the total person. This peace was considered God-given, obtained by following the commands of God. In the New Testament, peace often refers to the inner tranquility and poise of the Christian whose trust is in God through Christ. The peace that Jesus Christ spoke of was a combination of hope, trust, and quiet in the mind and soul, brought about by a reconciliation with God.

Jesus' peace would not guarantee the absence of trouble — for Jesus Himself would be facing trouble in the coming hours. Instead, Jesus' peace supplies strength and comfort in our troubles and for the burdens we are called to carry.

Jesus says the world cannot give you this kind peace. So where does it come from? Jesus says it is a gift that He gives. It is His peace.

Jesus gives peace and Jesus gives the Holy Spirit. If we love Jesus we will obey Jesus and His Spirit - the Holy Spirit will live in us; and the Holy Spirit will be our source of peace. Therefore, peace also comes by obedience. Why, if we calm to love Jesus and

have the Holy Spirit, why, do we not have peace? Disobedience. This was true in the Old Testament as well.

**Ps 119:165**

**Those who love your instructions have great peace.**

In the Old Testament, there is a great deal of talk about the fear of God. We tend to back away from this topic. Peace, on the other hand, is one of our favorite topics because it's what we all want. But the fear of the Lord is not dread and anxiety that God is going to get you, rather it is a holy reverence for God. A piety and awe connected with love and hope. This Fear of the Lord or love and reverence for the Lord causes us to obey God.

As much as the two seem to be separate, it seems that whenever the people of God forget their fear of God, and disobey, they lose their peace. We see this throughout their history which means that the fear of God, obedience, and true peace can't be separated and must be discussed together.

True peace comes from yielding all to the will of God. Let him have his way, then the heart can be at peace. This is the peace offered to us. Christians obtain peace through fellowship with God. Their peace is within, and the world cannot understand it, nor can it take that peace away.

Ashes to Fire Devotion for today reads:

The peace that Jesus gives is a peace that comes to an obedient and loving heart. Do you long for peace? Then ask yourself these questions?

- Are you seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness
- Are you abiding in Christ daily, spending time with intention in his presence, feeding on His Word and being renewed by the Spirit in prayer?
- Are you engaged in acts of service, loving your neighbor as yourself?
- Are your relationships with others characterized by grace, love, and forgiveness?

We all want peace the question is are we willing to do what it takes to attain true peace—the kind that Jesus offered his disciples and in turn extends to us every day of our lives?

If we love Jesus we will do what He wants us to do; He will love us and give us His Holy Spirit; and the Holy Spirit will give us peace.