

THE FRUIT OF PEACE

Contributed by amadi

CENTRAL TRUTH: Believers should be known as a people of confident peace in a world in chaos. **MEMORY VERSE:** Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid (John 14:27) NIV.

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TOPIC: THE FRUIT OF PEACE **INTRODUCTION:** Today we will continue our exploration of the Fruit of the Spirit as we talk about the third fruit mentioned by Paul in Galatians 5 peace. We have looked at the fruits of love and joy.

Let's recite together again Gal 5: 22-23, I believe we all have memorized it. Today we are going to look at what the word peace means. Is it inner peace, peace between people, peace with God, all of these, or something else? This is another major quality that we all need operating in our lives, especially with all of the uncertainty of this life, insecurity in our Jobs nowadays, marital issues, the threat of terrorist activity etc. and never knowing what is going to happen next. With all of this kind of heightened activity that we are all forced to deal with on a daily basis, it becomes very easy to lose your sense of peace - especially your peace in the Lord.

peace, what picture comes to your mind? Do you think of a calm stream, a beautiful mountain range? Let us look at a couple of pictures that the word peace paints for us. In part, the word "peace" means the opposite of war and disorder. Have you ever been in a situation where organization was poor? Was it a pleasant experience? Did you feel calm and peaceful inside? When we are at war with people, we cannot experience peace with one another. In the New Testament peace means not just freedom from trouble but everything that makes for a man's highest good. Have you ever come home after a hectic day looking forward to some peace and quiet, as you pull into the driveway you are anticipating a nice quiet evening at home with the family! You get out of the car and walk in the door and the dream is shattered.

Despite the uncertainties of the future, present upheavals in our society, a spirit-filled Christian could still remain relaxed, calm, and serene because the peace of Jesus Christ is in his heart. Read the following scriptures: Luke 22: 49-53; Acts 12:6; 2 Kings 6:15-16; Acts 16: 22-25 Peace is more than just an absence of outward hostilities. It actually has nothing to do with how things are going on the outside. The peace of God comes from the inside. It has to do with completeness, wholeness. The man walking in peace knows that no matter what happens, God has provided for him to have the victory.

MEANING OF PEACE: Peace is an inner quietness and trust in God's sovereignty and justice, even in the face of adverse circumstances. It refers to the tranquility (calm) of mind that comes from our saving relationship with Jesus Christ. It means that tranquility of heart which comes from the awareness that our times are in the hands of God. Peace is having a sense of tranquility inside of you even when things get chaotic around you. You know that God is in control and with you!

THE PAINTER OF PEACE who laid the brush to the canvas. Who and where do we go to in order to enjoy real peace? Peace is not something we can manufacture on our own. We can have a semblance of peace with other people, but true peace starts and ends with God. God is the author of peace and in order for us to be able to experience true peace; we must first be at peace with God. The picture of peace was painted by God with the blood of Jesus used as the paint. We cannot experience peace with God outside of Jesus. Peace hinges on our relationship with Jesus. Peace is grounded in God's work. Any picture of peace painted by anyone but God is a fake!

THE BEAUTY OF PEACE AND THE PURPOSE OF PEACE (Rom 5: 1)

When you look at a painting, what makes it beautiful? When you look at peace, what makes it so beautiful? The beauty of peace is found in its purpose.

Our relationship with God is restored with God through Jesus so we can be at peace with God.

We can enjoy tranquility because we know God is in control!

When you know God is your God, you can KNOW that He will take care of things. You can KNOW He has not left you or forsaken you. You can KNOW He will not let His children fail!

You have a serenity of heart that comes because you know you have been declared innocent (or justified) by God.

God's peace will guard our hearts from the troubles of life. God's peace will assure us that He is with us and that He loves us (Philippians 4:7). Peace removes the Fear of God's Judgment upon Sin (Romans 5:1 faith removes worry from our hearts and gives us peace.

THE PRESERVATION OF PEACE: Peace is obtained and maintained through communion or being one with Christ. If you have been to any art museum, you will see a lot of priceless works of art that are mostly very old. These old valuable paintings need to be treated in a special way in order to preserve them for the generations to come. God has given us the beautiful painting of peace; we have a part in maintaining it. Peace, like a fine automobile requires work on our part (Heb 12: 14; Rom 12: 18; Matt. 5: 9).

We are called to pursue peace. That is a continual action for us (2 Timothy 2:22). We are to pursue peace together. Pursuing peace means that we will continually focus on the things God wants us to focus on so we can keep on the right path. We have to allow peace to rule our hearts. This implies a choice on our part. We can choose to let the peace of Christ rule us or we can let the world and worry rule (Colossians 3:15). We are called to work at being at peace with others. Maintaining peace with others is something we must continually do (Romans 12:18).

1. INNER PEACE (PEACE OF GOD): In John 14: 27, when Jesus says I give you my peace he is speaking to his disciples as he is telling them about his leaving to fulfill his mission on the cross. This is inner peace. The Greek word for peace is Eirene. This word is really a translation of the Hebrew word Shalom which literally means "safe"; with other off shoots being "well"; and "prosperous". In other words this peace refers to doing well and being safe and provided for. One might think of how a well cared for baby might feel, completely worry free. That's what we're getting at here. Jesus is simply saying "don't worry because I have given you my Shalom.

2. Peace with God (Rom 5: 1; Ephesians 2:11-22)

Jesus brought us his peace to hold in our hearts, and he also brought us literal peace with God and with other people. This peace is received by: Faith in the Sacrifice of Christ on our Behalf.

Do you see that peace with God is only available through Jesus Christ? Because we are sinful by nature we could never dwell with God, but through Jesus sacrifice for us we have peace with God by believing in Christ. There is nothing we can do, go to church, and be good people, nothing besides putting our faith in Jesus that can bring us into a peaceful relationship with the Father. Jesus is our peace, and there is no peace without him.

3. PEACE WITH OTHERS (PEACE FROM GOD) Col 3: 12-15; Matt. 5: 9 Hebrews 12:14 Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. NIV Romans 12:18 Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. NLT. There should be peace in the church and with unbelievers. problem people anywhere. Yes we should stand up for the truth, but we should always do so clothed in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and love - more fruit of the Spirit. Let the peace of Christ rule in all of our actions and relationships. Peace is a characteristic of God and his Kingdom (Romans 14:17)

Peace is available to us in all Life Circumstances (John 14:27 "peace I leave with you). Jesus left his peace to be with us always. When we are not experiencing it, it's not because it isn't there, it's because we are not claiming it. Remember the fruit is available only if we abide in the vine. We have all been through many difficult circumstances in life. If you focus on Christ in the every situation, you will have peace, if you didn't, the peace will be elusive.

Because it is a fruit of the Spirit, we need to be "in the Spirit" to manifest it.

CONCLUSION: Peace is Achieved as We Submit Every Situation to the Lord (read Philip. 4: 4-9). Obedience to the commands of Jesus is a key to receiving peace. Isa 26:3 you will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you! NLT How can we constantly keep him in the front of our mind in all situations all the time? Don't focus on the difficulty, the worry, trying to find your own solutions. Focus on Jesus and see your situation from His perspective in the moment. We can also wake up every morning and pray that He would be at the center of every situation we are in for that day, that we would be constantly aware of his presence. Ask him to be the first thing we see when situations arise, that we would have his mind throughout the day. Our problem is that we want to be in control, to do things our way, to feel good about ourselves, we want to figure everything out, and so we hesitate out of habit to submit everything to Him. That is one of the key differences between us and Jesus. Jesus constantly chose to surrender his pride and have the mind of his Father rather than his own. We are to have the mind of Jesus rather than our own. Believers have peace not because they are oblivious (insensible) to circumstances, but because they have confidence in God, who "causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28). When every other system of stability has fallen, the steadfastness of confidence trust in God and the message of peace can be a very powerful fruit of the Spirit.