

PP Root to Fruit! *Going Deep, Growing Up*

Part 5-Galatians 5:22, *Peace*

2/3-4/2018

My thanks Dave Sullivan for filling the pulpit well as usual while the Board was away
It was a very good weekend for us, and the notes from our meetings will be available shortly

Illus A long time ago, someone announced a contest where he asked any artist to produce a perfect picture of peace. The challenge stirred the imagination of artists everywhere, and paintings arrived from far and wide. Finally, the day of revealing arrived. The judges uncovered one peaceful scene after another, while the viewers clapped and cheered. The tensions grew. Only two pictures remained veiled. As a judge pulled the cover from one, a hush fell over the crowd. A mirror-smooth lake reflected lacy, green birches under the soft blush of the evening sky. Along the grassy shore, a flock of sheep grazed undisturbed. Surely this was the winner. Is this what peace looks like, is what it is? An unruffled life, glassy smooth and free from trouble? It was to that painter...life without problems in a landscape of serenity.

Is this peace, and if not, what is it, and how do we get it?

We're in a series called Root to Fruit, looking closely at the work of God through His Spirit
deep in our hearts, to produce the character of Christ in His children

All 9 virtues of this fruit are the character of Jesus that the Spirit is producing in us

They aren't a buffet line that we can pick and choose which to put on our plate

They are altogether the life of Jesus being produced in us by the power of the Holy Spirit

And He does that as we walk with the Spirit, surrendered, trusting and obeying Him

The fountainhead of them all is love

None of them function without love, agape love, a love that turns away from self toward others, a
love that views the recipient as supremely valuable

It is a selfless love, a love focused on God, on others, which is powerfully clear in these virtues

Selfish people aren't very joyful, and neither are they patient, kind, gentle, faithful

Their lives are oriented toward themselves, and depend on how others treat them

Love decisively turns us outward and freely displays itself whether or not it's deserved

But what does peace look like when our Master Artist paints it on the canvas of our lives?

Let's see where peace comes from, what it is, and how it looks in our lives

PP 1-This peace has only one source

Let's recall again, this is the fruit *'of the Spirit'*

This fruit can only be produced by the Spirit, He is its only source

Whatever it is we are about to see with peace, only someone Who possesses the Spirit can have
this, and only those walking by His power can experience it throughout life

PP *"from Me comes your fruit."* Hosea 14:8

You may see a young, small and newly planted fruit tree and wonder, *What kind of fruit tree is that?*

It may take a little time, but eventually that tree is going to bear fruit, and when it does, it will
give away its identity

There have been times when people have said of one of my kids, that's definitely an Ackley
Meaning that they were acting or looking similar to either Denise or me

As we walk with the Spirit, He is transforming us to look like Jesus, to increasingly display His virtues to the world

If the Spirit is in you, there will be, inevitably, the production of this fruit

The Bible talks about fruit a great deal, 70 times in the NT, 106 times in the OT

God has a great deal to say about fruit in the lives of His children

It is an indicator that a person is saved and walking with God

Something is seriously and critically wrong if there is not a great deal of this fruit in your life

PP ***"By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples."***

John 15:8

PP 2-This peace has an incredible meaning

The word *'peace'* is a big deal in the scriptures, found in every NT book except **1 John**

In the Old Testament the favorite word for peace was Shalom

PP *Shalom* was the Jewish greeting, which was more than wishing a person to have no trouble, but a hope that the person has a complete, whole, and blessed life

It has been said that the Jewish people coveted nothing more than peace

Yet it was so elusive for them, and for many Christians, they feel the same

As we turn to the New Testament, the Greek word is eirēnē

PP eirēnē (*'peace'*) is the state of untroubled, undisturbed tranquility despite the circumstances we find ourselves in

In its verb form, it means to bind, or weave together...the ability to hold it together at all times

PP But to go a little deeper, at its absolute depth, it is the tranquility of mind that comes from being reconciled to God, and trusting that God sovereignly cares for you

The effect of peace with God, no conflict, made whole with Him, is to have the peace of God

Now what I am about to tell you is hugely practical and very clear

To the world, peace comes when they are free from trouble

But for the Christian, the peace of God in our hearts can exist in the midst of trouble

PP *"Bible peace is not the subtraction of problems from life; it's the addition of power to meet those problems. You don't keep this peace; this peace keeps you. It's peace that passes understanding... You get it from God"* Adrian Rogers

"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." **John 14:27**

This peace isn't a freedom from trouble, it is the calmness that comes from having a relationship with a powerful, good God

It's the inner quietness that comes when we trust in God's sovereignty and goodness, even in the midst of difficult times

Illus Recall me telling you about a contest for someone to paint a picture of peace. The man who created the contest uncovered the final painting himself, and the crowd gasped in surprise. Could this be peace? A tumultuous waterfall cascaded down a rocky precipice; the crowd could almost feel its cold, penetrating spray. Stormy-gray clouds threatened to explode with lightning, wind and rain. In the midst of the thundering cacophony, a spindly tree clung to the rocks at the edge of the falls. One of its branches reached out in front of the torrential waters as if foolishly seeking to experience its full power. A little bird had built a nest in the elbow of that branch.

Content and undisturbed in her stormy surroundings, she rested on her eggs. With her eyes closed and her wings ready to cover her little ones, she manifested tranquility in the midst of all that turmoil

Peace with God brings the peace of God, inner calmness no matter despite outer chaos

PP 3-This peace has life-changing power

When I was flying over the Congo, traveling to Uganda, we were low enough to see the land
 There were entire areas where the land was barren but for these snaking ribbons of land that were
 colored differently than the rest of the topography
 They were riverbeds, some of which still channeled water in the rainy season, even if only
 underground
 On either side of those riverbeds were trees and grass, and further away barren ground
 Can you take that imagery, hold on to it for a moment with me?
 Lush growth along the banks of a river describes nicely the Christian walking by the Spirit
 No matter the twists and turns in life, as we are led by the Spirit, this fruit, these virtues grow
 No matter the conditions in life, good times and bad, this fruit grows, in abundance
 This fruit grows on the banks of the Spirit-led Christian, and the ones to enjoy it are not only us,
 but all those around us

PP ***“There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.”***

Romans 8:1-2

Let me explain this using finances for a moment
 Let's say life circumstances, and poor choices has landed you millions of dollars in debt
 An amount you have no ability to repay, no hope to come out from under it at all
 Someone comes to you with concern and you share how bleak your situation is, but when he
 counsels you, you angrily rebuff his counsel, his kindness and him
 But unknowing to you, that person is extremely wealthy, and He writes a check not only to
 forgive all your debt, but to give you more money than you could ever spend in a hundred
 lifetimes
 You have but to take that check to the bank, believing this benefactor is good for the money
 You deposit it, and your debt is immediately gone, but those old chains of misery and
 helplessness and the chokehold of debt are sometimes slow to go away
 Not only that, you have no idea how to manage this incalculable wealth you suddenly have
 So that same benefactor sends someone to you, to teach you how to truly secure your freedom
 from debt, how to see money and life differently, and how to use your wealth generously
 for others
 This new person decides it would be best if he lived with you, so you could have him constantly
 there for help, and counsel, to learn a new way to live as a wealthy man
 To have encouragement for you because temptation is constantly there to spend on your own
 desires, rather than love those around you who are desperately in need

Now, do you see from this scenario that it was Christ who earned for us God's forgiveness

On that cross, crying out ***'It is finished'*** He did what a banker did when someone made the final payment on a loan, your debt is cancelled, wiped out, you are free
 But former slaves to sin make terrible free people, the rate of moral recidivism is 100%
 So God sent us His Spirit, His Spirit that gives us and enables us to live the life of Christ
 So that we begin to have new desires, new appetites, new strength, new attitudes
 We begin to live free...free to love those around us
 We have been set free by Christ from the penalty and power of sin, and are empowered to live free by the Spirit to love

Notice the word ***'is'*** in ***'the fruit of the Spirit is...'***

This word is in a tense that means continuous and ongoing

For example, *Our well is producing good, clean water;*

Friends, the bible is not mysterious with the answer to how to live a life of peace

"You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You."

Isaiah 26:3

PP ***"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope."*** **Romans 15:13**

The key to the Christian being filled with peace is trusting and believing God

This is, by God's grace one of the greatest areas He has strengthened my life

When you truly believe that not one thing in life is outside of God's control, you will have an unshakeable joy in any circumstance

When you truly believe that God is always, at every minute perfectly good, you will have undiminished confidence in your loving God

When you truly trust that nothing can touch you unless it goes through the hand of God, you will have steadfast endurance no matter the trial

When you truly trust that if you needed something for life and joy, God would give it, you will have an inner contentment and quietness that endures no matter what

Are you going through a difficult time?

Are you in the midst of a storm in life?

Focus on God, trust in His sovereign goodness, and anchor yourself in His unfailing Word

PP ***"Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble."***

Psalms 119:165

Amen?

"The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace."

Numbers 6:24-26