



Peace

Various Passages

December 4, 2022
Community Bible Church
Pastor Bob DuPar

Initial Insights

[Advent Video by Skit Guys: Peace!](#)

Eugene Peterson reminds us that...

Shalom, "peace," is one of the richest words in the Bible. You can no more define it by looking in the dictionary than you can define a person by his or her social security number. It gathers all aspects of wholeness that result from God's will being completed in us. It's the work of God that, when complete, releases streams of living water in us and pulsates with eternal life. Every time Jesus healed, forgave or called someone, we have a demonstration of shalom. Eugene Peterson, A Long Obedience in the Same Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society.

Christian theologian Cornelius Plantinga adds this insight,

The webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in justice, fulfillment, and delight is what the Hebrew prophets call shalom. We call it peace, but it means far more than mere peace of mind or a cease-fire between enemies. In the Bible, shalom means universal flourishing, wholeness, and delight. Shalom, in other words, is the way things ought to be. Cornelius Plantinga Jr, Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin.

Last week we lit the Advent Candle representing Hope. Today, we lit the Peace Candle.

As the video we just watched illustrated, Peace is tied-into the idea of God being our Good Shepherd!

“I tell you the truth, anyone who sneaks over the wall of a sheepfold, rather than going through the gate, must surely be a thief and a robber! ² But the one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ They won’t follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don’t know his voice.” ⁶ Those who heard Jesus use this illustration didn’t understand what he meant, ⁷ so he explained it to them: “I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me were thieves and robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures. ¹⁰ The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life. ¹¹ “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep. ¹² A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don’t belong to him and he isn’t their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock. ¹³ The hired hand runs away because he’s working only for the money and doesn’t really care about the sheep. ¹⁴ “I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, ¹⁵ just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd. ¹⁷ “The Father loves me because I sacrifice my life so I may take it back again. ¹⁸ No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded.”

Our Good Shepherd not only guards the door to life and salvation and security – He is the door! Though He created us and owns us, He laid down His life for us! And, He did this on His own initiative and by His own authority. Peace comes from hearing His voice and knowing Him personally. Peace also comes from knowing that He’ll provide for every one of our needs!

God’s Peace Is...

1. Powerfully Present

John 10:1-18; 14:27

As I mentioned in our teaching teaser this week, the peace that we’re talking about today is exactly the kind that each of us so desperately needs in our life and in this world! And, the **Good News** is that it’s not just a promise of better times in the

future, it's a **divine pledge** for the power of God's peace right now in the present through the person of Jesus!

Peace is about having a personal relationship with the Good Shepherd!

Jesus Himself said in [John 14:27](#),

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. So, let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful!"

Well, God's Peace Is Also...

2. [Comprehensively Complete](#)

Isaiah 9:6-7; 48:18

The world's peace is an intermittent peace, because the world's peace is based on circumstances. But, God's peace - Christian peace - is constant,

Timothy Keller, [The Two Advocates](#) (Encounters With Jesus Series – Book 7).

God's promise of peace is not merely spiritual – it's **also** physical, emotional, relational, psychological...

One of the dangers today of living in a constant state of distraction is that we never go to the bottom of our pain, our sadness, our emptiness! And, we would do well to hit rock-bottom once in a while – and rest there for a bit! Because, it's only when we hit rock-bottom that we can experience the all-sustaining power of God's peace that surpasses all human understanding!

Christian author [Paul David Tripp](#) shares this insight in his book, [New Morning Mercies](#),

So, you ask, "Where is peace to be found?" This question is answered clearly and powerfully in [Isaiah 26](#): You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock. (vv. 3–4) This passage tells us where peace is to be found. It's never found in trying to figure out the secret will of God. It's not to be found in personal planning or attempts to control the circumstances and people in your life.

Peace is found in trusting the person who controls all the things that you don't understand and who knows no mystery because he has planned it all. How do you

experience this remarkable peace—the kind of peace that doesn't fade away when disappointments come, when people are difficult, or when circumstances are hard? You experience it by keeping your mind stayed on the Lord.

The more you meditate on his glory, his power, his wisdom, his grace, his faithfulness, his righteousness, his patience, his zeal to redeem, and his commitment to his eternal promises to you, the more you can deal with mystery in your life. Why? Because you know the One behind the mystery is gloriously good, worthy not only of your trust but also the worship of your heart. It really is true that peace in times of trouble is not found in figuring out your life, but in worship of the One who has everything figured out already.

Paul David Tripp, [New Morning Mercies](#), 2014.

The Prince of Peace, His Kingdom & Reign will have no end!

“For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ There will be no end to the increase of *His* government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.”

Isaiah

9:6-7

In her book, [Breaking Free: Discovering the Victory of Total Surrender](#), [Beth Moore](#) asks the question: What do you suppose would happen if we paid attention to God's commands? Well, we don't have to wonder, because He's already clearly told us:

“If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your righteousness like the waves of the sea.”

Isaiah 48:18

Consider the following applications as you imagine peace like a river...

1. A river is a moving stream of water. God's Word doesn't say that we'll have peace like a pond! If we were honest, we might admit to thinking of peaceful people as boring. We might think, I'd rather forego peace and have an exciting life! But, when was the last time you saw white-water rapids? Few bodies of water are more exciting than rivers! To have peace like a river is to have security and tranquility while experiencing many bumps and unexpected turns on life's journey. Peace is submission to a trustworthy Authority, not resignation from activity!

2. A river is a body of fresh water fed by springs or tributary streams. To experience peace, we must be feeding our relationship with God. I've found that I can't retain peace in the present by relying on a relationship from the past. As a river is continually renewed with the moving waters of springs and streams, so our peace comes from an active, ongoing, obedient relationship with the Prince of Peace.

3. A river begins and ends with a body of water. Every river has an upland source and an ultimate outlet or mouth. Rivers depend on and are always connected to other bodies of water. Likewise, peace like a river flows from a continuous connection with the upland Source, Jesus Christ, which is a timely reminder that this life will ultimately spill out into a glorious eternal life. The present life is not our destination, hallelujah! We who know Christ move over rocks and sometimes cliffs, through narrow places and wide valleys to a heavenly destination. Until then, *abiding in Christ* (John 15:4) is the key to staying deliberately connected with our upland Source.

Take pleasure in knowing that God inspired His Word with great care and immaculate precision. He chose every word purposely. When He said we could have peace like a river in *Isaiah 48:18*, He wasn't drawing a loose analogy. He meant it. What does it take to have this peace? Attention to God's commands (by obedience) through the power of the Holy Spirit. Obedience to God's authority not only brings peace like a river but righteousness like the waves of the sea. Not righteous perfection. Righteous consistency.

Beth Moore, *Breaking Free*: Discover the Victory of Total Surrender, 2007.

Finally, God's Peace Is...

3. Universally Unifying

Ephesians 2:14-16

Jesus is our peace, who brought unity, tearing down dividing walls –

"For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. ¹⁵ He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. ¹⁶ Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death."

Ephesians 2:14-

Closing Comments

A positive theology of peace isn't simply reactive, but proactive. It takes the initiative. It creates peace. It sees peace not merely as something experienced by refraining from war, but also as something to be achieved through taking peacemaking initiatives. Peace, like war, must be waged courageously, persistently, and creatively, with heart, and wisdom.

Rick Love, Peace Catalysts: Resolving Conflict in Our Families, Organizations, and Communities, p. 61.

You can know God's children by whether they're willing to make sacrifices for peace the way God did!

John Piper

The book, *Mending the Divides*, describes an ancient Japanese Pottery tradition called Kintsugi, in which a clay vessel is broken and then put back together - but not in its original form.

Instead, the restoration process involves the use of pure gold to mend the divides and heal the fissures. The broken vessel is put back together in such a way that it is stronger and more beautiful than before it was broken. In Kintsugi, the scars tell beautiful stories of healing and restoration rather than painful stories of destruction.

Jon Huckins & Jer Swigart, Mending the Divides: Creative Love in a Conflicted World, InterVarsity Press.