

Title: Jesus Is Returning

Object:

Scripture: ²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. ²⁸ You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. (John 14:26 & 28)

Has your family ever moved from one city to another? Sometimes, a move to a new city can be very difficult for a family. It can be especially hard for children to leave their friends.

This morning I want to tell you a story about a boy named Andrew. Andrew's dad had a new job and the family was moving to a new city. It was about this time of year and since it was so close to the end of the school year, it was decided that it would be better if Andrew stayed behind to finish the school year.

It was hard for Andrew to be left behind, but his father explained that they would go ahead and find a place for them to live and make sure that it was ready when it was time for Andrew to join them. He told Andrew that there was nothing to worry about because he would be staying with some very good friends who would look after him and make sure that he had everything he needed.

During the time that Andrew was separated from his parents, his parents called to talk to him on the phone every day. They told him about their new home and how much he was going to like it. It helped Andrew a lot to talk to his parents and to

know that they would soon come for him and he would join them in their new home.

That is very much like what Jesus has done for us. Before Jesus returned to heaven to be with His Father, He said that He was going to heaven to prepare a place for us. He promised that He would come again and take us to our new home in heaven.

When Jesus went to heaven, He didn't leave us alone. He asked His Father to send the Holy Spirit to watch over us, teach us, and remind us of all that God has told us in the Bible. Not only that, we can talk to Jesus every day in prayer. In fact, I would like to talk to Him right now.

Dear Jesus, we are thankful that You are in heaven preparing a home for us. We thank You for the Holy Spirit who guides us and comforts us each day and we look forward to the day when we join You in our new home in heaven. Amen.

John 14:27-31

Peace

“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) In Hebrew I say to you **שְׁלוֹם** (*shalom*) [shaw·lome] or in Greek **εἰρήνη** (*eirēnē*) [a-ray-aa] or as we say in English “peace”. My beloved, may God give you His peace and tranquility. I pray for God’s blessing of peace in your lives. For everyone desires peace. But what is peace and where is it found?

As believers we live life in faith, by faith we will experience the peace of Christ, even in times of trouble, just as the disciples did. If we possess the peace of Christ we will not be troubled nor be afraid as we live in this world. How simple and at the same time, how very difficult. Jesus’ parting gift to the disciples and to all believers is peace.

Elusive Peace

However, peace is elusive in this fallen world. Turmoil and strife rules this world. Turmoil internally, within family, in our city, our nation and especially among nations - turmoil is the norm for this fallen world. When I searched I found that there are currently 65 countries in armed conflicts or wars they have armed clashes totaling 638. The USA has not declared a war since World War II; Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan and many others are not official wars. Currently under the Special Operations Command the USA has military forces in 134 countries.

Historians have calculated that in the previous 5000 years the world has seen less

than 300 years of peace. Considering Cain and Abel, I am not sure there have been even 300 years of peace. In the last 5000 years history records more than 8,000 peace treaties have been broken and more than 14,000 wars fought with an estimated 4 billion casualties. Even though global peace is talked about and even sought, our world is unable to achieve peace.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German pastor, theologian, anti – Nazi dissident, and founding member of the Confessing Church. His writings on Christianity's role in the secular world have been widely influential for Christians. Bonhoeffer was known for his staunch resistance to the Nazi dictatorship, including vocal opposition to Hitler's genocidal persecution of the Jews. He was also known as a man of peace. He was arrested in April 1943 by the Gestapo and imprisoned for one and a half years. During that time bring many fellow prisoners to Christ. Later he was transferred to a Nazi concentration camp and then executed by hanging on April 9, 1945 just as the Nazi regime was collapsing. Bonhoeffer died just two weeks before Allied forces liberated the concentration camp and three weeks before Hitler's suicide.

Bonhoeffer said this about peace, “There is no way to peace along the way of safety. For peace must be dared. It is itself the great venture and can never be safe. Peace is the opposite of security. To demand guarantees is to want to protect oneself. Peace means giving oneself completely to God's commandment. Wanting no security, but in faith and obedience laying the destiny of the nations in the hand of almighty God. Not trying to direct it for selfish purposes. Battles are won not with weapons, but with God. They are won when the way leads to the cross.”

Bonhoeffer suffered much for the cause of truth and the gospel of Christ. Yet, he knew peace, the peace given by his Lord Jesus.

Peace is elusive for the unsaved – people desire peace in their personal lives. Our conversations are often filled with concepts of peace. People seek “peace and quiet”, they want to “make peace” with their past, they want the police and military to “keep the peace” and as we approach the end of life we desire to “rest in peace.” As Bonhoeffer stated peace is only found at the foot of the cross and by surrendering ourselves to Christ. This is difficult as we live in a world of conflict and war, in a nation divided because it no longer fears God, in a state divided over many issues, in a city with growing gang violence and in our souls within us, even as believers - a battle wages between selfish-desires and surrendering to Christ.

We live in a messed up world, we live waiting – waiting for the return of our king. When the disciples came to Jesus and asked ³“Tell us, when will these things be, and what will the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” ⁴And Jesus answered them, ‘See that no one leads you astray.’ *The only way to prevent being lead astray is studying and living the Word of God without compromise.* Jesus continues, ⁵“For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray. ⁶And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars.” *People claiming to be Christ returned are popping up everywhere. As we just saw there are conflicts and wars and rumors of new wars all over the world.*

Continuing is verse 6, “See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet.” As Christians we live in this world, but are not of this world. Yet, God calls us to be an influence for truth and justice in this world by living and sharing the gospel of Christ. When we are obedient to God’s command we will have peace even if arrested and placed in a concentration camp.

Jesus tells us, ⁷“For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom,

and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.” As the world tears itself apart in conflict over power and control, Christians will become a torn in the side of men who are inflicting pain on their fellow man. So, ⁹ “Then they will deliver you believers up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name’s sake.”

Bonhoeffer experienced this very thing and we see this continuing to unfolded before our eyes. People are not allowed to criticize anyone’s beliefs or life style – with one exception – the world berates Christians.

Continuing, “And then many will fall away and betray one another. ¹¹ And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. ¹² And because of lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.” Because the world no longer fears God it will continue in its downward spiral. Because of fear and lack of peace some who call themselves Christian will leave the church and join the lawlessness of the world. Back to verse 13, “But the one who endures to the end will be saved.” We are called to endure for Christ and be faithful in this lost world. It will be harder on our children than it is for us to remain faithful and know the peace of Christ. We must prepare them, teach them and help them seek Christ so they will have the Word of God in their minds and hearts, for it is Christ alone that will bring them true peace.

Finishing in verse 14, “And the gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” (Matthew 24:3-14) The world in its sin is speeding like a comet towards the sun and as it burns itself up God will send Christ back to judge and begin eternity without sin. Jesus calls the disciples and us to have peace amid all the conflicts around us. How? How can we hope to have peace?

By casting out fear through faith in Christ. Paul wrote that one aspect of the “Fruit of the Spirit” is peace. “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22-23) These aspects of the fruit are intertwined and cannot be separated for they make one fruit. To have peace one must have the rest of the fruit and if one possesses the rest of the fruit they have peace. In the Gospel According to John it is recorded that Jesus promises to prepare a place in heaven for all believers, that He will return. But, until Jesus returns He will continue His work through believers, He will listen to and answer their prayers, and He will send the Holy Spirit to dwell in them, give them wisdom, comfort them and bring them peace. The Holy Spirit who dwells in our souls gives us wisdom and peace when we surrender our will to His. Jesus said, “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) When we live life in faith, we will experience peace, even in times of trouble, just as the disciples and Bonhoeffer and because we possess the peace of Christ we will not be troubled nor be afraid. How simple and at the same time, how very very difficult. Jesus’ parting gift to the disciples and to all believers is peace. Jesus is telling the disciples in this verse He is leaving, but He is leaving His peace behind.

Peace Amidst Turmoil

The world speaks of wanting outward peace and cannot achieve it. Christ was about to suffer the violence of crucifixion. The disciples were deeply distressed and fearful. They knew trouble within their ranks, they experienced trouble from the outside and Jesus was leaving. It is amid this tense time that Jesus speaks of a peace the world does not know and has never known.

In times of outward peace anyone can experience outward peace. Actually, even this is not true, for some people will find ways to kill peace even in times of peace. On the other hand as history has shown, the world, for any extended time, has never known peace. It takes an exceptional internal peace, a supernatural peace to know the peace that Christ is speaking of here in the midst of a world that lacks peace. To be in the midst of trouble and distress to know peace is not human. It is Christ's peace, it is supernatural peace, and it is the gift of God to His children who believe, and are indwelled by His Spirit, and surrender to the Spirit. In Christ's absence the devil has been given the ability to do evil and to promote evil upon the world through evil men. I wish it was not this way and I do not fully understand why God is allowing this, but I know God has a purpose, a plan and that He has called us to stand against evil and by faith not be affected by evil. When we do this we will know His peace. As King Solomon reminds me, *"Just as you do not know the path of the wind and how bones are formed in the womb of the pregnant woman, so you do not know the activity of God who makes all things."* (Ecclesiastes 11:5) God's way are right and are beyond our full understanding. The question for me and for you is do we believe enough to trust God? If we let go of our desire to control and of being upset by our lack of control – then faith will allow us to have peace.

Lack Of Peace In A Fallen World

Look around you – what is it the world gives? Technology has changed over the centuries, but man has not. King Solomon wrote, *"I have seen all the works which have been done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and striving after wind."* (Ecclesiastes 1:14) This is true today as it was in King Solomon's time. I remember as a young arrogant man I thought I could have the world set on fire by the time I was thirty. With all my hard work I accomplished a number of things and by the

world's standard more than most men, but when I turned thirty I saw my vanity. The truth was I could not even see smoke let alone any fire – I had been “[striving after wind](#)” and knew no true peace. The world gives insincerity for its gifts are not lasting and they offer false sense of peace that is as fleeting as the wind. I came to realize the world gives scantily – it always gives less than it could – so the world will always have the poor and needy. Fallen men's hearts are insincere, as Jesus said, “[So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.](#)” (Matthew 6:2) When we do a good deed it is often with a selfish motive. Look at our welfare system; it began with good intentions, but in most cases it does not help people for the long-term, but traps them in a way of life that robs the opportunity for them to know peace. This is not how Christ gave and continues to give. Jesus gives sincerely out of genuine love for those God has called to Him. He gives effectively, bountifully and at great personal cost; Jesus' gift of peace cost Him His life at the cross. This is what it means to have peace with God. Jesus the Christ made peace two thousand years ago with God the Father for those God has called to Jesus. The children of God do not have strive to make peace with Him; He has given believers the gift of peace through Jesus. When we surrender we have peace in God and having spiritual peace in Christ we will grow in peace until we have abundance and this abundance causes peace to flow out of us. This is the peace Jesus modeled while here on earth - strife was all around, but Jesus had peace with God within. This peace has two primary evidences. First, it is a peace based on one's intimate knowledge of God by the Spirit, His Word and faith. Second, the peace of God is entirely independent of circumstances. We can see this in both Jesus' and Bonhoeffer's lives. The world raged around their lives and yet their peace was not affected by the world. They

remained in faith and traveled the path God had set before them, a path that led to their deaths; they traveled this path with the peace of God. Is this the depth of peace you long for? It is a free gift for those who surrender their lives to Christ and at the foot of the cross find their Lord and Savior. Lay your burdens down at the foot of the cross. Jesus is saying to you, **“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)

Lack Of Peace In The Absence Of Christ

This peace Christ is speaking of is to be present in believers in spite of Christ’s physical absence. This is why Jesus follows verse 27 with verses 28 and 29, **“You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. ²⁹ And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe.”** There are two reasons the disciples and you and I should be at peace even though Jesus is physically absent. First, true love always seeks the best for others. It was best for Jesus to return and be reunited with God the Father in heaven. Jesus gives the reason for His return saying, **“the Father is greater than I.”** During Jesus’ incarnate time on earth He had assumed a position below the Father in terms of glory and divine position. Now Jesus returns to heaven and once again assumes His greater glory and position equal to the Father; His rightful triune position of One God. Is this not true for us as well? When we die it is a loss for those left behind, but we are exalted and are made spiritually perfect, not in the sense God is perfect, but we have entered into perfect eternity with God. As Christians we mourn the loss of those we love, but we also rejoice that they have completed the race and have heard, “welcome home, enter into the presence of

God.”

The second reason that the disciples and ultimately we should be at peace with Jesus’ departure is that Jesus had repeatedly taught that when He left the Holy Spirit would come and live within believers. By the Holy Spirit they would believe, they would have a relationship with God. This is what Jesus meant in verse 29 saying, “so that when it does take place you may believe.” Jesus is saying, when I leave the Holy Spirit will come so that you may believe. I am telling you now so when it happens you will believe. At this time of Jesus instructing the disciples they did not understand that the resurrection followed the crucifixion and that then the Holy Spirit follow Jesus’ ascension. Jesus was telling the disciples no matter what followed, even things from the world’s perspective that are tragic, including being martyred was for their own good, for their growth in faith and for blessings in their lives and the lives of others. Do you believe this? Bonhoeffer did, he had peace even in a Nazi concentration camp, even when being hung. That is the reason he said, “There is no way to peace along the way of safety. For peace must be dared. It is itself the great venture and can never be safe. Peace is the opposite of security.”

Peace Despite The Enemy

Verses 30 and 31 also speak of peace, ³⁰ I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, ³¹ but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.” These verses tell us the peace of Christ should be present even in the face of Satan’s evil efforts all around us. At the time of Jesus’s instruction to the disciples Satan was entering and working through Judas for Jesus’ arrest and crucifixion. Jesus confronted Judas and Satan with true peace. Satan worked hard

to destroy Christ and failed. His evil resulted in the fulfillment of God's plan for the salvation of mankind, not its destruction. For Jesus, the incarnate God man, He could say with complete truth, "the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me" for Jesus knew no sin. (v. 30) Satan has a hold on people, even believers; it is only when we surrender to Christ and let Him stand for us that Satan loses his grip on our lives. We must trust Christ. As Corrie Ten Boom said, "Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrows, it empties today of its strength." Our strength is found in Christ alone. It is through the peace of Christ that one sheds the worries of this world.

Peace of Christ

My beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, my family of God, Jesus has left us a legacy of peace. But, we need to ask ourselves have we entered into His peace? To do so, first we must belong to Christ. But, even as His chosen we are able to prevent His peace from entering our hearts because we are focused on the worries of this world. Especially when the world crashes down on us; lost of job, children or spouse, and illness can take our focus off of Christ and we look inward – for Satan and the world teach we are owed much and it is all about us. Jesus teaches it is all about the glory of God and He has given His own Son that we might know His glory – what a gift – this is to be our focus. When we take our focus off ourselves and place it on Jesus, surrender to Him, trust Him, have faith in Him – then we will know the peace of Christ.

Let me close with the words given to the prophet Isaiah by God as recorded in the 26th chapter. Verses 1 to 4 are called the "Song of Judah" and tell of how Jesus keeps us in His perfect peace. Please stand and let us read together.

“In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: ‘We have a strong city; he sets up salvation as walls and bulwarks. ²Open the gates, that the righteous nation that keeps faith may enter in. ³**You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.** ⁴Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD God is an everlasting rock.’” (Isaiah 26:1-4) Jesus is “that day”, He is “perfect peace” and He gives us a precious gift, “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 14:17) Jesus is the Christ, our Lord and Savior – He is our peace!
Amen!