

Devotional Thoughts :: Peace In The Midst Of Turmoil

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"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."(Luke 2:14)

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword."(Matthew 10:34)

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."(John 14:27)

At a glance that would seem like a direct contradiction.

"my peace I give unto you" "not as the world giveth"

The peace the world gives isn't very stable. We can look around this world and there isn't very much peace. Terrorism is rampant and it shouldn't surprise us when we see and hear the terrible things these terrorists do. This world is under the curse and Satan is the god of it. That doesn't justify what they do but it does explain it.

We are in the age of grace and God is extending His mercy and not willing that any should perish but that they should come to Him for salvation. God will eventually bring this world system to a head and destroy it and lift the curse and Christ will rule this earth, but for the time being His grace is being extended, but that time could be coming to a close soon as the Church could be almost complete and He will be coming back for it.

Then the most terrible time this world has ever seen will begin and the problems the terrorists even ISIS are causing now won't be a drop in the bucket compared to what will be unleashed on this world during that final 7 years that Satan will rule this world.

The message of the cross and the followers of Christ do not have peace with this world system. That is very evident and has been for 2000 years. I believe what Jesus was speaking of in Matthew chapter 10 will culminate in the 7 year tribulation. But the disciples in the first century certainly didn't have peace with the world system and that holds true today for the followers of Christ.

But do the followers of Christ have peace with God and can we experience that peace? Absolutely.

Romans 5:1 states that we are at peace with God and are no longer enemies with Him.

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."(Romans 5:1)

Totally justified before God.

But what about experiencing that peace that Jesus said in (John 14:27). The peace He said He would leave with us and for us not to be troubled. We know we have troubles in this life. We experience them everyday. So can we experience this peace that Jesus speaks of in the midst of our troubles and the turmoils this life might present to us? I believe He assures us of that peace as we can see it portrayed out through the lives of Paul and the other Apostles and through countless others back through church history and even through ones living today as they are enduring hardships beyond what many of us can imagine.

Look at what Paul states in (1 Corinthians 4:11-13).

"To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now." (1 Corinthians 4:11-13)

It is really hard for us to imagine what Paul and the other apostles went through. It is so easy to pick up the Bible and read about their lives and the challenges they had while at the same time reading scripture where they encourage us and continually remind us of the promises we have in our Savior. They present quite a challenge to us knowing what the end results might be. We may never go through what Paul or any of the other apostles did but their attitude, dedication and prayer life would have been something to behold.

Let's look at some of the encouragement Paul gives us during his turmoil.

"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy, meditate on these things." (Philippians 4:8)

Here Paul lists the things we should meditate on, the important aspects of the Christian life itemized here (things that are TRUE, NOBLE, JUST, PURE, LOVELY, and of GOOD REPORT)

Then Paul instructs us:

"Those things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the GOD OF PEACE (my emphasis) will be with you." (Philippians 4:9)

The Philippians had seen the full extent in the example of Paul, the important aspects of the Christian life itemized here. They had learned and received them through instruction by Paul and heard and saw them lived out through his life. Now by continuing to practice these things the full experience of God's presence as the (GOD OF PEACE) would be theirs. Just before that in verses 6 and 7 of Philippians chapter 4 He instructs them not to worry but to carry everything to the Lord (with thanksgiving) and the PEACE OF GOD which passeth all understanding will guard your hearts and mind.

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the PEACE OF GOD, (my emphasis) which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7)

I believe we are assured of experiencing the peace Jesus promised.

But will there be peace on earth as the angels stated to the shepherds? Yes Isaiah says there will.

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will I perform this." (Isaiah 9:6-7)

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah 11:6-9)

Yes Jesus will rule "this" earth for 1000 years with the curse lifted.

Yes and we can experience this inward peace in the midst of turmoil now, because He promised it and we have the hope instilled in us that He could come for us any moment and deliver us from this world system and from the pain and misery we suffer in these bodies.

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body." (Romans 8:18-23)

Perhaps Today He will come for His Church.