



The Fruit of the Spirit - Peace

By: Morris O. Williams

INTRODUCTION:

Peace! America wants it. Iraq wants it. Saudi-Arabia wants it. Israel wants it. Russia wants it. Latvia wants it. China wants it. It appears that everybody wants it, but each on his own terms, and this self-interest has taken peace from the earth.

There are two kinds of peace:

1. There is the peace that Jesus gives, and
2. There is the peace that the world gives.

The first is a fruit of the Spirit and is the result of a relationship with the Prince of Peace. As such it is inward and political.

Promised Peace

Jesus made this clear when He said, "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). Jesus knew the nature of the peace that "the world giveth." He knew the liberties His disciples enjoyed at that time would soon be taken from them. He knew trouble and fearful times lay ahead. So He gave them His peace to prepare them for the day when the peace that "the world giveth" would be gone.

You see, the peace Jesus gives does not work in a vacuum. Neither is it the calm after a storm. The peace Jesus gives is a calm and quietness of heart in the midst of a storm! It is a peace the world cannot give.

History has proved that the peace the world gives is passing. It will last only as long as the resolve of the worldly men who make it. "The war to end all wars" failed to bring lasting peace. "Peace in our time" always seems to be a thing of tomorrow — and you know that tomorrow never comes.

Personal Peace

The peace Jesus gives, on the other hand, is the result of a relationship with the Prince of Peace. As such, it is inward and personal. Like the fear of the Lord that is the beginning of wisdom, this peace starts with God and cannot be had apart from a personal relationship with Him. It is as lasting as is our willingness to "abide in the vine" and draw peace from Christ's spiritual supply. It is a personal peace that passes all understanding.

The peace the world gives fails because it leaves out the Prince of Peace. There can be no permanent peace between men until men make peace with God. The vertical relationship must precede the horizontal relationship. But when the

vertical is put up against the horizontal, together they form a cross, and it is through a cross that Jesus made possible reconciliation between men. “He is our peace, who hath made both one” (Ephesians 2:14).

Paradoxical Peace

The peace Jesus gives is paradoxical in many ways. While the peace the world gives is based on an “evil for evil” principle, the peace Jesus gives enables those who have it to return “good for evil.” This means they receive spiritual power to do supernatural things. Look at the miracles they do.

1. They rejoice when they are reviled and persecuted (Matthew 5:11,12).
2. They pray for their enemies and feed them when they are hungry (Romans 12:20).
3. They go the second mile and turn the other cheek (Matthew 5:39-41).
4. They refuse to go to law with their brother when he has wronged them (1 Corinthians 6:7).
5. They place no stumbling block before their brother but rather allow his conscience to be their guide (Romans 14:21).

Talk about supernatural living. There is nothing natural about the peace Jesus gives. It takes more power to return “good for evil” than it does to demand justice and fight for it.

Partisan Peace

However, this does not mean the peace Jesus gives is passive and spineless. It is very “pro-Kingdom.” The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and righteousness is its first principle. Its peace-loving and selfless citizens are at war with unrighteousness in any form. While they do not fight for their personal rights, they will fight to the death for the kingdom of God. The weapons of their warfare are not carnal-but make no mistake about it, spiritual weapons are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. While the peace the world gives strives to end hostilities between the kingdoms of men, there can be no negotiated peace between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan.

The objective of spiritual warfare, therefore, is to “[cast] down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and [bring] into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:4,5). Notice that there is no “peace treaty” here. There is no compromise. There is no reconciliation of kingdoms.

What peace, then, comes out of such a conflict? Certainly it is not between the kingdoms involved. Rather, it is the peace of mind and heart the captive sinner experiences when he is reconciled to God and Satan’s power over him is broken. This is the peace Jesus gives. It is a “pro-Kingdom” peace that is militantly partisan.

He who produces the fruit of the Spirit does not come to terms with the unfruitful works of darkness. He does not say, “Peace at any price.” He does not say, “Forget doctrine in the interest of unity.” He does not say, “Soft-pedal sin so as not to offend the sinner.” He refuses to lay down the weapons of His spiritual warfare in the interest of a world brotherhood that would merge all religions under one banner. He is at peace with God, but He never makes peace with the enemy.

Peacemaker Peace

The apostle James gives us another dimension of the peace Jesus gives: “The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace” (3:18). What is he saying? He is saying, “You don’t find peace, you make it!” Jesus expressed it in another way. He said, “Blessed are the peacemakers.”

There are those who are always looking for noncontroversial assignments — for peaceful places where they can work without conflict. Those who do this seldom find what they are looking for. This is not a peaceful world, and personalities and differences of opinion make for strife and division. It is the sick who need a doctor. Jesus was saying, “Blessed are they who, with a peaceful disposition, move into a controversial situation and ‘make’ peace.” Blessed are the peacemakers.

Christ is our great example of peacemaking. Ephesians 2:14,15 says it eloquently. “For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of the twain one new man, so making peace.”

The peacemaker claims no rights. He refuses to become part of the problem. He refuses to think of himself. His whole concern is the reconciliation of others, and he is willing to suffer to see it done. Jesus did no wrong, but He took the blame for the wrong we had done, thus making peace. He was a peacemaker, and He has passed on to us the work of peacemaking. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself ... and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:19,20).

This means that the believer’s role as an ambassador for Christ is that of peacemaking. And what a role it is. Our present world is troubled with many questions and no real answers. “The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked” (Isaiah 57:20,21).

But think of this: God has cast His church into that troubled sea with the answer to the world’s unrest. That answer is Jesus. There is no other. We are commissioned to go into all the world with the answer. Christ himself will come “when [our] obedience is fulfilled” (2 Corinthians 10:6). So let us obey — and go — with our “feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace” (Ephesians 6:15).

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