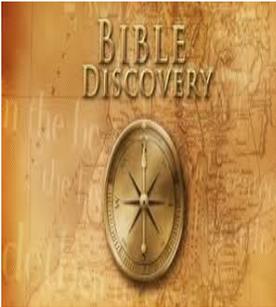


November 23, 2014

Colossians 3:12-17

# The Peace of Christ

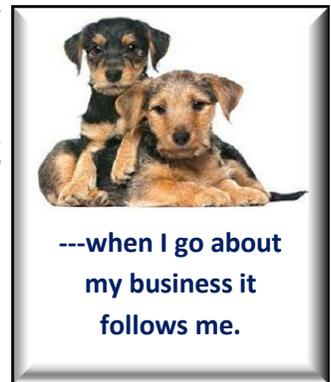
“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts...” [vs. 15]



Everyone talks about peace - countries want it, armies fight for it, political figures promise it. The alcoholic holds his bottle in search of it, the drug addict uses in hopes of reaching it; even the prostitute sells her body believing peace is just a relationship away. Yet never do they grasp peace! All of us anticipate world peace, striving to achieve personal peace. While there's the desire for peace within relationships, not only do we fail to find it, we find ourselves asking do we really know what peace is?

Some say as long as I've money I've peace. Others say as long as I've family I've peace. Yet others say as long as I've health I've peace. While these are wonderful explanations of peace; nevertheless, they are symptoms of peace, not peace itself and all examples of what is achieved through imperfect peace. Man tries to find peace along many different avenues only to discover they're chasing something they can never comprehend without God!

There's the story of a puppy and a big ol' dog. The puppy says to the big dog, *"I've mastered philosophy. I've learned that the best thing for a dog is happiness and happiness is my tail. Therefore I'm chasing it and when I catch it, I shall have it!"* The older, bigger, and now wiser dog replies, *"I too have found happiness is a marvelous thing for a dog, and happiness indeed resides in my tail. However, I've noticed when I chase it, it keeps running away from me; but when I go about my business, it follows along with me."* People are often like the puppy chasing after peace misunderstanding scriptures such as Psalm 34:14 *"Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it"*. This doesn't mean we chase peace like the puppy after its tail. No, we pursue peace with others as members of one body called to peace. In fact Jesus teaches at Matthew 5:9 *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."* Blessed are the peacemakers? Many misunderstand believing it's referring to keepers of peace; however a peacemaker isn't a characteristic driven by the absence of conflict, it's a responsible activity belonging to every Christian. Many of us have asked, "What is peace?", "How do I find peace?" or "What must be done in order to have peace?"



**We must let the  
peace of God  
rule in our heart!**

The Apostle Paul helps us find answers to these questions in Colossians 3:15. He directs his answer to us in effect saying, *"You must let the peace of God rule in your heart"*. In essence he's instructing that we must allow God to be in charge of our lives. As a believer, God's peace is always present in our hearts to give direction we so desperately need.

Do you see what's happening? I'm speaking of *"peace"* as an active part of your life, as the CEO, the director of your life. So often we think of peace as being the absence of any action but

in fact it's the very opposite. God's peace comes in the midst of everything we do, everything we encounter. It occurs while we're "in the game" of life. Just as every game – every sport – has disputes to be settled by officials, the peace of Christ is the referee who settles all disputes pointing us to the will of God for our lives. But we must learn to listen to and heed His call if we're to discover the peace of God in our hearts.

Let me emphasize again God's peace is something every born-again believer has. "If you confess with your mouth that Christ is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead you will be saved." [Romans 10:9] If that is your confession, then that's the presence of Christ in your life and His peace is with you. But God's peace doesn't demand our response. How many times have we acted contrary to what brings peace to our hearts? How often, after we experience disaster, have we caught ourselves saying, "I never felt good about that"? That's God's peace seeking to lead you even while you chose to play by your own rules.

Writer Sheridan Voysey has said, "God has drawn you here because He loves you. When you leave here you'll find all sorts of distractions will be placed in your way to ignore what you've heard. Don't be distracted. God is calling you. Listen to Him and find out who Jesus is." May I add, having found Jesus afresh in your life, having discovered the direction of God and determined the source of His peace, **follow Him!**

Having said that, there are some things we can do to facilitate the peace of Christ in our lives. First, we should consider all options. Many wrong decisions are made because we jump to conclusions, too quickly to assume the first option is our only one. Failing to consider all the options, we let fear rule out God's wonderful possibilities. You and I have both been there. On one hand we let fear eliminate possibilities because of the myriad of excuses why "it won't work!" On the other, we miss out on God's direction because we stick with what we're familiar – what we've always done. Either way it's fear giving direction, not the peace of Christ. *But when we put our problems in GOD'S HANDS, He puts His peace in our hearts.*



Only when we surrender to the will of God, seek His direction, can we use our imaginations to explore what can happen through a multitude of choices. Where's God leading? What's God for us today? What can I do to serve Jesus in a whole new way? These questions lead us to discovering peace only Christ can give. Only in seeking such answers are we able to discern a greater peace as we consider the option our Lord would have us take. That's not to say there'll be total peace with our choices. In our spirits, there'll be total peace over the right choice, but we aren't always walking in the spirit – in fact we're often anchored in our flesh, right?

So it's not unusual for there to be turmoil. Interestingly, for first year college and university students, the number one reason for students dropping out by Christmas is confusion and frustration. Guess what? A natural by-product of learning new things is confusion and frustration. If only we educated our students to that fact. If only we listened to our coach as He

makes the call. We need to be bold enough to follow His direction knowing it'll give peace because we trust our Lord takes care of us.



One final bit of advice this morning –the rudder of a large ship can't provide direction until the ship's under way. The ship doesn't have to be going full steam ahead for the rudder to work, but it has to be moving. Likewise, we have to be active, involved, doing something, before the peace of Christ will give us perfect peace. If we make mistakes (*welcome to my life – and yours*) our faith is the foundation on which we continue to trust in Christ. The Lord can bless wrong decisions made in faith from a pure heart – more than He can bless indecision. In

fact, God tells us, "*The man who has doubts is condemned*" [Romans 14:23].

Uncharacteristically, for me, we've focused on just one verse this morning. May I suggest it is the pivotal verse not only within our reading but to our hearts today? When I review the remainder – the call to "*clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience*"; the emphatic plea that we "*bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another*"; even the command to "*put on love*" requires that we walk with God, following the will of God, discovering the peace of Christ.

Doing so then brings us to the place where we truly have thankful hearts. So the call is clear – "*let the word of Christ dwell in you*", "*praise the Lord*" and "*do everything you do in the name of the Lord Jesus*" trusting that He'll lead you in the way you should go knowing you'll discover the full peace of Christ.

Do you know this peace? This peace which passes human understanding? Only in knowing Jesus as your personal Saviour will you find true peace. For more information call us at 519-317-8659 or drop a note to [office.mbbc@xplornet.com](mailto:office.mbbc@xplornet.com).

***Blessings.***

*Pastor Dave*