

DAY 21 PEACE



John 14:27

"I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid."

Peace...God's peace, what a wonderful word. Who of us doesn't need peace-God's peace? I sure do- especially right now-- in this pandemic, with all the surrounding unrest in our world. When I have decisions to make when I feel so unsure about so many things- when it's hard to fall asleep at night--when I worry about my kids--when I worry about the future when I hear troubling news day after day,

I think it's helpful to really see the context in which Jesus speaks these words. This section of scripture is part of what's known as "The Upper Room Discourse"- Jesus has called the disciples together for a last meal- He knows that his time- his last hours on earth are coming and all that will entail--- he washes their feet- he predicts Judas' betrayal and Peter's denial to come- and he begins to reveal to them that he's not going to be with them much longer. That he's going to go away (and prepare a place for them), and they can't come. Their leader, their friend-going to the Father. They had to be perplexed, worried, maybe even feeling betrayed-like "What? What are we supposed to do now, Jesus?"

Well, what Jesus says is not: "Hey, everything's going to be fine, guys! You can fend for yourselves now--don't worry, be happy!"

Verse 26 tells us that he's leaving an Advocate, the Holy Spirit, to be with them- and that he will teach them all things and will remind them of everything Jesus had said to them. And then, "I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid." Two gifts: the Holy Spirit and his Peace- gifts the world cannot give you.

Peace that's not just the absence of conflict- more than what comes when enemies lay down their weapons and "makeup." That's not bad, but it's certainly incomplete; that's the best the world's got for peace- God's peace is different!

Peace that the world offers is dependent mostly on circumstances.---When everything lines up, when life is good, and there are no problems, this is when a measure of peace comes. Peace, by the world's standards, really is simply the absence of any problems, disturbances, or inconveniences.

The peace that Jesus gives is never dependent on circumstances. His peace flows even in the middle of persecution, trouble, disappointment, confusion, and anxiety. Jesus knew that he would not always remove his disciples or us- from challenging situations of life. He never promised to do that. What he did promise is that in spite of the situations in life, he will give you peace.

The Hebrew word for peace- Shalom- refers most commonly to a person being "uninjured and safe, whole and sound. In the New Testament, shalom is revealed as the reconciliation of all things to God through the work of Christ: Shalom experienced is multidimensional, complete well-being — physical, psychological, social, and spiritual; it flows from all of one's relationships being put right — with God, with(in) oneself, and with others.

Are you experiencing God's peace- God's shalom- in that fullest measure? Where do you need it right now? Talk to Jesus about that right now.

Daily Practice

Find a quiet place today and hear Jesus speak these words into your life- over and over again- in the middle of your circumstances: "I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid."

The below reflections are written by congregants & staff of CPC. All reflections are following Trevor Hudson's book Pauses for Lent and are both heavily influenced and borrowed from his work. Any quotes without attribution should be credited to him.