

The God of Peace: A Marriage of Faith & Works

“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever.” (Heb. 13:20-21)

The above text will be our focus for this study; which we will open up more fully from the Scripture.

God is called the **“God of peace”**, and how He makes peace is of interest towards all of us is worthy of continual study, because not all are at peace with Him. Worthy because the man who has sinned is separated from His Spirit of peace; this causes a disconnect between God and man, “For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” (Rom. 8:6)

Before man sinned, and after he is redeemed from sin, the life and peace of God through the Spirit of God is to be in us. It is further stated in the Scripture of the God of peace how that peace is brought about. It is **“through the blood of the everlasting covenant”** that this peace is established. That peace that is brought to us is to bring a definite work into the soul:

“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself... And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled.”

(Col 1:20-21)

By that very blood, now you are reconciled to God, but before having this peace, you were counted as an enemy of God “by

wicked works", "because the carnal mind is enmity [hatred, hostility] against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Rom. 8:7) Yet that same blood of Christ (who is our peace [Eph. 2:14] with God, and called the Prince of peace [Isaiah 9:6]) so fully brings us back into the presence of the God of peace, so that we might be called truly "peacemakers" (Matt. 5:9), the children of peace, having peace with God, and in Christ, peace with all those who partake of His Spirit. Moreover, that "everlasting covenant", the blood of which brings this peace, is called "the covenant of peace" between God & Christ (Zechariah 6:13). God says of "the Jerusalem above" (Gal. 4:26), His beloved nation that He is married to: "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee." (Isa 54:10)

The God of peace is truly merciful; seeking to reconcile all to Himself. There are many today who are professing to be children of peace, and part of the covenant of peace, and say they are citizens of that beloved heavenly nation that is at peace with God, but why are there so few that truly have any real peace at all?

The answer can be found in what happens when the God of peace brings us to covenant relationship with Him. It states that He will **"perfect in every good work to do His will, working in us that which is wellpleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ..."**; this work that is worked in us by God, through Christ. What is "every good work" that He works in us? It is nothing less than His commandments. We are told that "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:10) The good works that we walk in, to reveal that we have peace with Him are the works which were "before ordained that we should walk in them." Only a few verses before, it contrasts the saved experience of walking in good works, with

the condition of before our salvation appeared: "Wherein in time past **ye walked according to the course of this world**, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of **disobedience**:...But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:" (Eph. 2:2,4-6)

Instead of walking in good works, we had walked in disobedience to God's law, being "dead in sins" (which is the transgression of God's law 1 John 3:4). But "**the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus**" has "quickened us together with Christ,...and has raised us up..." that we might now walk in good works, as the Spirit that raised up Christ Jesus dwells in our hearts working in us.

To all who believe in Christ as a personal Savior, and walk in His commandments, He gives us the assurance:

"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)

Peace can never be afforded from the world that doesn't know God or keep His commandments, but only to those who truly love God and truly walk in His commandments. The peace that the world offers is temporary, superficial, and outward; it seldom is true peace that reaches from our heart to the heart of God, and to one another. Thus He promises a true and abiding peace; heaven's peace is that which He works in us, and is called "the work of righteousness":

"And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." (Isaiah 32:17)

What a beautiful promise! The work of righteousness produces

the peace of God! Now, the only righteousness that can be worked is that which divine power in Christ, through His blood, can work, and apart from that there is no righteousness at all which a man can have. We need a divine peace, which comes from a divine righteousness; this is wholly a gift of God's grace, and not our own works, but receiving His works to be worked out in us. Man's standard of righteousness is to try and work to create peace with God, and with each other by their own strength independent of God; this is a very common for men to do this; to believe "I'm a good person", but blind to the obligations of God's law, and what it means to have His righteousness. Anything less than His righteousness is worldly; Christ declared the same: "Do not think that I've come to destroy the law...I've come not to destroy but to fulfill...Verily I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no manner enter into the kingdom of God." (Matthew 5:19-21) Only through blood of Christ which cleanses us from all unrighteousness can this be made a reality in our lives. And His righteousness, which works peace can only be manifested in us by obedience to His commandments. "Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law..." (Isaiah 51:7)

Here is the secret to real peace. It is knowing the law's searching even the thoughts and intents of the heart, and being cleansed deeply; thus producing a depth of peace that few have realized in their walk with Christ. It is only when realizing the magnitude of the holiness of God's law to reveal His own righteousness, that Christ may work in us to truly establish peace in the soul. Such a peace is found in the holiness of the law engraved on the tables of the heart that keeps God's commandments. It is God's righteousness in His law, and the blood of Christ which binds our hearts to peace in that law that finds the words fulfilled in our lives: "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." (Psalm 85:10)

It is evident by these passages of Scripture that if such a peace is in the heart, it is because the law is in the heart. Without the law in the heart, how can the soul be risen above stormy tempest, to heaven's atmosphere above the clouds, with the holiness of the Prince of peace? To such as who disregard His law as the basis of His righteousness, He says:

"O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea:...There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked."
(Isa 48:18,22)

Yet, of the redeemed children of that beloved nation of the covenant of peace, something far different is said:

"All your children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of you children." (Isaiah 54:13)

"Great peace have they which love Your law: and nothing shall offend them." (Psalm 119:165)

There is good reason why many do not have such peace today, they think that Christ came to take away the law instead of taking away our sins (the transgression of that law), rather than coming to fulfill the law in us. Like a shallow reading of the law and not seeing the deep holiness of God within it's precepts, there are many who are not discerning Christ's works of coming to fulfill the law, or the righteousness of God. The Scripture tells us that "what the law could not do, because it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh...that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us...who walk after the Spirit." (Rom. 8:3-4) Christ fulfills the law in us, He destroys our sins against that law, condemning them by His Spirit in our flesh; He restores order to the soul; He builds us anew.

It is not enough to have the law without Christ's blood (works). Nor is it enough to have Christ's blood without the

law (dead, empty faith). Both can never produce peace. These are the two chief reasons that so few actually have peace today; they do not see Christ as inseparably connected to His law; they do not walk as Christ walked, though they claim to be in covenant relationship with Him. Both extremes the apostles frequently opposed and taught against, teaching the truth to be a narrow road between the two ditches.

FAITH APART FROM OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW

“He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.” (1Jn 2:4-6)

“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.” (James 2:17)

Faith was alone, and James used starting words to declare the connection between faith and works. “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” (v. 26) Many are simply a body without the Spirit; if Adam’s body had been formed, but he received no breath of life, he could not walk, and live, and communicate. His soul was dead (non-existent) when he had an absence of life. The living soul of true Christianity is understanding the beautiful inseparable marriage between both the law and faith. It is true understanding when we realize that Christ did not die to divorce Himself, (or us) from the law, but to divorce man from sin, and it’s condemnation which brings death.

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:...Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.” (Rom. 5:1)

THE LAW APART FROM CHRIST

“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.” (Gal. 5:4)

Man is justified by faith, and that of faith by Christ's blood. It will forever change how we relate to the law; but does not justify walking in disobedience like we did before we knew Christ. “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” (Rom. 3:20) The law reveals sin. To try and keep it after you have broken it already, is sin; it is like Adam and Eve once they sinned and their nakedness appeared. They were guilty, but tried to clothe themselves to hide their guilt; but only Christ could clothe them by His sacrifice; God could accept nothing less. “For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.” (Gal. 2:18) Therefore, the law can only produce condemnation and never salvation, but true salvation in Christ, which is by grace through faith, can produce the good works required by the law which we had sinned against.

Moreover, that the children of God's covenant of peace are through-and-through commandment-keepers cannot be denied:

“And the dragon (Satan, the old serpent that deceived Eve into sin) was wroth with the woman (the beloved nation- the heavenly Jerusalem), and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ (the Spirit of God- Rev. 19:10).” (Rev 12:17)

And even though all the wicked, all the devils of hell and their agents shall come against us, yet the peace of God that is manifested to us will overcome and triumph over all of our enemies; the devil was cast out of heaven, and though we live on this earth and are not shielded from the tempter, we may be united with the power of heaven in Christ, being risen above the storm in the Spirit that dwells in our hearts, as we walk in obedience to His Word. This peace in God will unite us to a

divine source of power, which is well able to rise above the most terrible of persecutions.