

THE GOSPEL OF BELIEF - Studies in John's Gospel

Part fifty-five - Sunday, September 7th, 2014, 10:00 a.m.

Teaching #1747 - Pastor Don Horban, Cedarview Community Church

THE RULER OF THIS WORLD HAS NO CLAIM ON JESUS

John 14:27-31 - "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. [28] You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. [29] And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe. [30] I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, [31] but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here."

It's been a little while, but we're continuing our study of the sermon of Jesus to His disciples immediately on the heels of the troubling events of chapter 13. In that chapter Jesus again stressed the nearness of His **departure** from His disciples. And that departure would be by His **death** by execution on a Roman cross. He then told these followers that one of His own inner circle would **betray** Jesus. So His own community of believers wasn't as loyal as it might first appear. Finally, He told Peter that he would **deny** His Lord three times that very night. It was an evening full of material for "**troubled hearts**."

Then, after Judas leaves to activate the betrayal, the whole tone of Jesus' remarks changes - "**Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me**"(14:1). Jesus is teaching to build hope. We studied the "**place**" Jesus said He would be preparing for them. They could pin their hopes on Jesus as the "**way, and the truth, and the life**"(6). There were mighty promises - promises that seemed too good to be true - about how Jesus would respond to them in mighty answers to prayer that His name would be proclaimed to the world and the Father would receive great glory (12-14).

And the **Spirit** would be given. The Holy Spirit would be **Jesus Himself** coming inside them in a special way - 18 - "**I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you**." Jesus unfolds the mystery of the Trinity. In the **Spirit's** coming **Jesus** was coming. In ways too great for their present comprehension their very beings would become the same kind of **home** for the triune God that the Son would be preparing for **them** eternally - **John 14:2, 23** - "**In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?....[23]....** Jesus answered him, 'If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him **and make our home with him**.'" "

In today's text Jesus summarizes the net effect of all these wonderful words. Yes, He was leaving them. And yes, they would soon scatter and desert Jesus. In fact, Jesus **tells them in advance** not one of them will stay faithfully by His side - **John 16:32** - "**Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone....**"

And yet our Lord pronounced a deep, profound **peace** upon this hapless band in the opening words of our text - **John 14:27** - "**Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid**."

Can this possibly work? How can this depth of inner peace - not just psychological **peace of mind**, but a profound **spiritual peace** produced by the **Holy Spirit** - how can **this** kind of resource be theirs in such trying times? That's the topic of today's teaching.

1) THERE ARE CERTAIN KINDS OF PEACE THAT WON'T HOLD UP TO LIFE'S TRIALS OR OUR DEEPEST SPIRITUAL NEEDS

John 14:27 - "Peace I leave with you; **my peace** I give to you. **Not as the world gives** do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

Perhaps the most basic insight in these words is the **contrast** between **different kinds** of inner peace and strength. Jesus makes it clear He doesn't mean to convey the idea that there is **no** peace offered by this world. His peace is "**not as the world gives**," which implies the world **does** give a certain kind of peace.

The point of Jesus' words is to separate all sources of peace into **two camps**. There is the **world's** peace and there is a peace that is totally **unlike** the world's peace. This is the peace Jesus distinctively labels "**my peace**" - "**Peace I leave with you**" **my peace I give to you....**"

So there is a peace **attached to Jesus** that is unique in its benefit to the disciples. "**My peace**" means it can only manifest itself **relationally** in Christ. It can't be found in any substitutions.

But we still need more information. How is this peace that only Jesus gives **different**? What does it offer these disciples that

the world's peace can't hope to generate? And the key to answering those questions is found in the last part of **verse 27** - **"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."**

Jesus' peace answers directly to **fear** - **"....neither let them [our hearts] be afraid."** The disciples are **afraid** when they are told of Jesus' death and departure. They fear His **absence**. And they fear His absence because they know His departure casts a huge question mark over their own future. If the Romans and the Jews kill Jesus it isn't likely it will go well for His followers. Their future is **all tied up with Jesus' future**.

And suddenly they're faced with everything they can no longer keep secure. Suddenly there is nothing they can hold on to. What once looked like the great coming Messianic kingdom is crumbling all around them.

Perhaps this dashing of hope and gulping of fear is nowhere more classically visible than in the conversation of the two disciples in conversation with Jesus on the road to Emmaus - **Luke 24:18-21** - **"Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?' [19] And he said to them, 'What things?' And they said to him, 'Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, [20] and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. [21] But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened."**

These two hoped Jesus was going to **do** something in the near future and now it looked like He wasn't going to be able to do it. They had **expectations**, but it doesn't look like they can possibly be realized. That's **fear**. This is the fear Jesus addressed in our John 14 text. Twice He tells His disciples not to be **"troubled"**(14:1,27). And what's troubling their hearts is their fear. And their fear is all bound up with a bleak **future**. This is as real as it gets for all of us.

Think of the things you presently own and prize. Consider every one of your earthly possessions and accomplishments. Which of them can save you from losing your spouse one day in the future? Which one of them will keep you from dying? Push far enough into your own, fast-approaching future and everything you love vanishes. There's no lasting peace there and this is the only hope for peace this world offers.

And now we're ready to answer the question we asked earlier. How is the peace Jesus gives - **"my peace"**(27) - **different** from the peace offers from the world. **Answer: this world can only mask this future-based fear with distraction and pain-killers. Only Jesus can eternally secure our lives through His atoning death and resurrection.** Only Jesus' peace can keep our hearts in the face of our own inevitable **death** and threat of **judgment**.

2) **WE NEED TO BE REMINDED OF TRUTHS WE HAVE ALREADY HEARD BECAUSE WE DON'T ALWAYS MAKE USE OF THE TRUTH WE KNOW**

John 14:28-29 - **"You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. [29] And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe."**

There is something in these verses that fascinates me. Past, present, and future are all pieced together in Jesus' words. We get to see Jesus telling His inner circle of followers the same thing **three times**. **First**, He points out none-too-subtly they had already **"heard"** Jesus say He was going away (28). Actually, He's already told them this **several times**. **Second**, He tells them again **"now"**(29) the same thing again. And **third**, He tells them when He **does** go away (still in the near future) He wants them to **"believe"**(29).

What are we to make of this? Jesus wants us to notice this - or at least, the apostle John, as he records the conversation. Jesus could easily simply have **reminded** them without making such a point that He **had already told them all of this previously**. It's the **repetition of truth** that's being emphasized. The point Jesus makes is they need to hear the same thing repeated. One learning of truth isn't enough.

Without being too hard on His disciples, Jesus is telling them they **could** have been **joyful** now instead of **fearful** if they had only **used what they already knew** - **John 14:28** - **"You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I."**

Now to be fair, it didn't **look** like Jesus was going to the Father when His bloody body was scrunched up on that cross. It looked for all the world like a terrible disaster. And that's why Jesus **told** them earlier His messy departure only looked disastrous from **our** side of these events. Actually, so Jesus stresses, His departure wasn't really a **departure** at all, but an

arrival. He was **arriving** before Father God, the Creator and Ruler of the entire universe.

Consider **these** words from Jesus as He discusses His future arrival before the Father after His ascension - **John 17:4-5** - "**I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. [5] And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.**"

That's the ascension. And that great **arrival** signified a colossal **victory** for His disciples over sin and death. He had **told** them all of this before. And the **take-home-from-church lesson** is we're not always the best judges of what we need to hear and relearn. **Circumstances** have the effect of **undoing** what we've already heard. Life makes us forget divine truth. So do the advertisers and shopping malls and network sit-coms. Learning something once isn't enough for spiritual safety.

I spent hours on my holidays meditating on terms I have used all my Christian life. I have been asking myself, "What do these words mean?" I'm going to do a whole series of teachings on what Paul means when he says Christians are "**in Christ Jesus?**" What does the New Testament mean when it says we are "**one with Christ?**"

3) **IF THE DEVIL HAS NO CLAIM ON JESUS, THEN HE HAS NO CLAIM ON THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST JESUS**

John 14:30 - "**I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me....**"

The sinless **life** of Jesus is a very important part of the redeeming **death** of Jesus. Theologians used to talk more about the **vicarious life** of Jesus Christ rather than just His **vicarious death**. The **death** of Jesus was unique because the **life** of Jesus was unique. His death has **atonement significance** because of all the members of Adam's race (remember Paul calls Jesus the "**second Adam**") Jesus was the only one not **deserving** death as a consequence of **His own** sin.

We all die because we **share Adam's sin**. We **buy into sin and death** and demonstrate our **ownership** of Adam's guilt. Not so with Jesus. He is the only **non-participant** in Adam's legacy of self-centeredness. **That's** what Jesus means in our text when He sums up the biggest truth ever heard in six words - "**....He** [the ruler of this world] **has no claim on me**"(30).

But there's more. Paul is the Apostle who seemed to delight in digging as deeply as his mind would take him into this truth - **Romans 8:1** - "**There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.**"

Underscore "**in Christ Jesus.**" This is what the sinless **life** of Jesus **means**. It is obvious to all of us there is no condemnation for Jesus, the Christ. But Paul takes it further. Through abiding in Christ (**John 15**), we are **pulled into Christ's perfection**. Please let the wonder of that truth properly shake up your mind this morning. There is no more condemnation for **Don Horban** before Father God than there is for **Jesus Christ**. We don't even feel comfortable saying that. But it's the grand, heart-singing truth that grows out of Jesus' wonderful words in our text - "**The ruler of this world....he has no claim on me**"(30).

"**Let not your heart be troubled**" indeed. To all who may be here this late summer Sunday morning who live through days and weeks and months hoping somehow you will end up being deemed decent enough or perhaps religious enough to stand before the throne of God after your inevitable death, you need to know there is no other safe place than being "**in Christ Jesus.**" All other ground is **sinking sand**.

4) **JESUS COMES BACK TO THE THEME OF OBEDIENT FAITH**

John 14:31 - "**....but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.**"

Jesus has already told His disciples He only had a little while left to talk to them - **John 14:30a** - "**I will no longer talk much with you....**" Time is slipping away for Jesus. He will have to choose His words carefully. What to say and what not to say presses on His heart. He will focus on the essentials.

His heart's desire is for these disciples - and all who will finally read John's Spirit-recalled words (**26**) - is that they will look at how Jesus **obeyed the Father** in the final weekend of His life. There wasn't an easy minute. It cost Him His life. But He would never - not for one second - consider **not** fulfilling the Father's will.

The last remarks of this conversation are aimed at having His disciples study the **obedience** of Jesus as proof of His **love** for Father God. And these disciples too must love the Lord by obedience. This weekend. And the following weeks. And months. Until they too - almost all of them - are called to obediently lay down their lives as martyrs in the same obedience their Lord demonstrated.

And then, in one faithful human chain, it flows down through the history of the church right into 2014. It's the same call. It's the same devotion. And it's the same obedience. It's the same ***Spirit of Jesus*** ruling our hearts. These words ***to you*** come from the same Jesus who spoke to these first followers. They come from the same Lord you obediently laid down His life for you. He calls for no less obedience from you and from me. That's what it means to say, ***"I'm a Christian."***