

LET THERE BE PEACE

Ephesians 2:13-18

INTRODUCTION

- A. We sing many religious songs about peace.
 - 1. *Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin:
The blood of Jesus whispers peace within.*
 - 2. *When peace like a river attendeth my way . . .
When sorrows like sea billows roll...
It is well with my soul!*
 - 3. *Master, the Tempest is Raging
(The winds and the waves shall obey Thy will, Peace, be still! Peace, be still!)*
- B. You don't have to be a Christian to sing songs about peace. You don't have to understand the person of Jesus, you don't have to be a part of the church to appreciate the theme of peace and to sing songs about that theme.
 - 1. Popular song during World War Two, the people of England loved to sing - *The White Cliffs of Dover*.
 - a. *There'll be blue birds over The White cliffs of Dover
Tomorrow, just you wait and see
There'll be love and laughter and peace ever after . . .*
 - 2. John Lennon, so confused and tormented knew enough about the needs of the world to write a song entitled "Give Peace a Chance." It became a theme song for an entire generation.
- C. The book of Ephesians is one more hymn about peace. From first to last, in the most beautiful melodies and with the most intricate of harmonies, Paul writes a song about peace.

I. JESUS AND THE GOSPEL OF PEACE.

A. The Messiah and Peace.

- 1. **Isaiah 9:6b-7a**
- 2. **Isaiah 11:6** - description of the Messianic Kingdom:
- 3. **Micah 5:4-5a**
- 4. **Ezekiel 37:24a, 26a**

B. Jesus and Peace

- 1. **Luke 1:76-79** - Zechariah predicting the work of John and the Messiah:
- 2. **Luke 2:14** - the angels announce the birth of the Messiah.
- 3. **Matthew 5:9** - Jesus blesses those who *make peace* and promises this is how others will know they are "*sons of God*."
- 4. Jesus sends away those He has healed with a blessing of peace (e.g. Lk 8:48), and teaches His disciples to "*be at peace with one another*" (Mk 9:50).
- 5. At the triumphal entry, as the crowd shouts, "*Peace in heaven and glory in the highest*" (Lk 19:38), Jesus weeps over Jerusalem because it did not know "*what would bring you peace*" (vs 42).
- 6. On the night He was betrayed, Jesus comforts His disciples with the words, "*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid*" (Jn 14:27).
- 7. Jesus was (and is) the *Prince of Peace* who came from the *God of Peace* preaching a *Gospel of Peace* so that we might *be at peace*.

II. EPHESIANS AND THE THEME OF PEACE.

A. The Problem of Alienation (Eph 2:11-12).

- 1. Separation between man and man.

- a. Prejudice between Jew and Gentile - Jews had the greatest contempt for Gentiles. They called Gentiles "dogs" and "uncircumcised," and were fond of saying that the only reason God had created the Gentiles was so that he could have fuel for the fires of Hell.
- b. Paul, writing to Gentiles, said there once was a time when the Gentiles were "excluded" from Israel and were "foreigners." Vs. 12
- 2. Separation between God and man.
 - a. The Gentiles once were "separated from Christ" (no expectation of a Messiah).
 - b. They were "atheoi" - without God.
- 3. There had been no peace in the lives of the Gentiles.
- B. Christ, the Peacemaker (2:13-18).**
 - 1. "But" - the most hope-filled word I know.
 - a. Though once we were alienated and excluded and separate, that is no longer the case.
 - b. Christ entered the picture, and with Christ came *reconciliation*.
 - 2. The work of Christ (vss 13-14):
 - a. When we were far away, he brought us near (vs 13).
 - b. He brought unity to division (vs 14b).
 - c. He destroyed the hostility (vs 14c).
 - 3. The purpose of Christ (vss 15b-16):
 - a. To make peace between people ("one new man out of the two"—vs 15b)
 - b. To make peace between God and man ("to reconcile both of them to God" - vs 16).
 - 4. The preaching of Christ (vs 17):
 - a. Christ came with a message of peace for those who were far and near (vs 17).
 - b. We both have access to the Father through him (vs 18).
- C. The Community of Peace (2:19-22).**
 - 1. The two-fold peace (vs 19):
 - a. We are fellow citizens - social peace.
 - b. We are members of God's family - theological peace.
 - 2. The growing church is the sign of peace and reconciliation (vss 21-22).

III. WHAT PRICE PEACE?

A. If this is Peace, Who Needs War?

- 1. Note: this book on peace concludes by talking of war.
 - a. "our struggle" (6:12) is constant.
 - b. Paul describes the Christian's armour (vss13-18).
- 2. The Prince of Peace knew he would not bring peace!
 - a. **Matthew 10:34**, Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a Sword. (Son against father, daughter against mother, enemies in the household.)
 - b. Perhaps not the intention of Jesus, but the *result* none-the-less.
- 3. Other examples of a lack of peace in the N.T.:
 - a. The church at Corinth, 1 Cor. 3.
 - b. The conflict between Jew and Gentile in the early church.
 - c. The argument between Euodia and Syntyche at Philippian congregation, 4:2.

B. What Kind of Peace did Jesus Bring?

- 1. It was not cheap peace.
 - a. Not the spineless ecumenism that is so often touted about as "Christ's peace."
 - b. Not the avoidance of conflict or the suppression of differences.
 - c. Not the sacrifice of principle for the sake of superficial harmony.
- 2. It was a very costly peace indeed.

- a. It cost Jesus his life. In Ephesians 2:11-22, that which won peace was the death of Jesus.
 - i. It was "through the blood of Christ" that we, who were far away, were brought near, v. 13.
 - ii. It was "in His flesh", Jesus destroyed the hostility between us and God, 15.
 - iii. It was "through the cross" that Jesus reconciled us to God and to each other, v. 16.
- b. It will cost us our lives as well.
 - i. The peace Jesus offers is a peace found among those who have also taken up their crosses and followed in his steps, Lk. 9:23.
 - ii. It is a peace available to those who are more committed to the kingdom of God than to "saving their lives."
 - iii. It is a reconciliation between ourselves and God and ourselves and each other that is accomplished through his blood, but then is built upon through our own dying to self.