

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

“Let the Peace of God Rule In Your Hearts”

By Bobby Witherington

“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called into one body; and be ye thankful” (Col. 3:15).

The word *“peace”* denotes harmonious relationships. To possess *“the peace of God”* one must therefore possess a harmonious relationship with God. This, of course, was made possible by reason of the great sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, Who, *“by the grace of God,”* tasted *“death for every man”* (Heb. 2:9). Jesus, Who *“is our peace,”* became our sin offering, and broke *“down the middle wall of partition”* between Jew and Gentile, thereby enabling both Jews and Gentiles to be reconciled *“unto God in one body”* (the church) (Eph. 2:14-16; Heb. 9:28). When the *“enmity”* caused by sin is slain as one comes into contact with the blood of Christ (which is accomplished when the penitent believer is *“baptized into His death”* (Rom. 6:3), he is then at peace with God because he has received the *“remission of sins”* (Acts 2:38).

However, making peace with God by obeying the fundamental requirements of the gospel for aliens is no more important than keeping peace with God thereafter. Hence, writing to the saints at Colossae, Paul said *“let the peace of God rule in your hearts”* (Col. 3:15). Contextually speaking, there are a number of both negative and positive requirements listed in this chapter which make for peace.

Negatively speaking, one must not set his affections *“on things on the earth;”* he is to abstain from *“fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”* He must *“put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication,”* and *“lie not to one another”* (Col. 3:2, 5, 8-9).

Positively speaking, he is to set his *“affections on things above,”* and *“put on”* such things as *“bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering,”* as well as forbearance, forgiveness, and love. Further, he is to *“let the word of Christ”* richly dwell in his heart, do all by Christ’s authority, and be true in the many relationships of life; whether as a wife, or a husband, or as children, as a servant, or a master (Col. 3:2, 12-25; 4:1).

All of the above are mandatory for him who lives at peace with God. However, Paul said *“let the peace of God rule in your hearts...”* The word *“rule”* is from the Greek *brabeuo*, which means *“properly, to act as an umpire, hence, generally, to arbitrate, or to decide”* (*Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, p. 307). I like the comments of Albert Barnes in his notes on this verse. He says that the peace which God gives *“is to preside over and govern the mind; to preserve everything in its place; and to save it from tumult, and irregularity. The thought here is a beautiful one. The soul is liable to the agitation of the various faculties in place and order; and nothing is so well fitted to do this as the calm peace which religion gives, a deep sense of the presence of God, the desire and the evidence of His friendship, the hope of his favor, and the belief that He has forgiven all our sins. The ‘peace of God’ will thus calm down every agitated element of the soul; subdue the tumult of passion and preserve the mind in healthful action and order — as a ruler sways and controls “the passions of assembled multitudes of men.”*

Moreover, in addition to what has been stated, it behooves us to pay close attention to the inspired words stated so clearly in Philippians 4:6, 7: *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”*

Perhaps one reason why so many do not enjoy **real** peace with self and with God is because they cater too much to the desires of other people, or to the demands of passion, and thus fail to fully submit to the will of God in all

things. If you covet the “*green pastures*” of contentment, the “*still waters*” of peace, and the cup which “*runneth over,*” with **real** inner happiness, then completely commit yourself to the doing of God’s will! — *Rise Up and Build*, July 16, 2017. ■

“*Fields... White Already To Harvest*”

By Micky Galloway

When we lived in Arkansas, we had the opportunity to see huge fields of cotton that gave meaning to this expression. Just imagine four hundred acres of cotton, a literal sea of white, ready to be harvested. The Lord said, “*Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest*” (Jn. 4:35). These words are echoed by the apostle Paul as he spoke of an “*open door*” or a “*door of utterance*” (1 Cor. 15:9; 2 Cor. 1:12; Col. 4:3). John wrote of the “*open door*” which no man can shut (Rev. 3:8). Opportunity “*knocks,*” it does not beat the door down. As we drive into the Antelope Valley and stop at Vista Point to view the valley, we are reminded of opportunity. Living in the valley are approximately 300,000 souls in need of the gospel. This writing concerns itself with opportunities that are ours to teach God’s Word and our preparation and determination to take advantage of these opportunities. To be a Christian is not a dead belief, but a vibrant way of life that deeply affects our standard of conduct. A part of that conduct is our consciousness that those about us are lost.

Let us pray for an “*open door.*” The apostle Paul asked the Colossians to pray for him, “*that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ*” (Col. 4:3). It is right to pray for opportunities. Perhaps the very reason things are not more favorable for the growth of the church is our inability to see that we live in a “lost and dying world” and our apathy to pray for it. James said, “*the fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*” (Jas. 5:16). To fervently pray for opportunity means to rid ourselves of the fear of the responsibility associated with open doors. This can be done by preparation.

Let us get past “me-ism” (concern only with ourselves). Too many focus so entirely upon themselves, “me first,” that we fail to see opportunities and therefore fail to act when they abound. Paul said some would become “*lovers of self*” (2 Tim. 3:2). Yet, the same apostle taught that we are to “*bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each one of us please his neighbor for that which is good, unto edifying*” (Rom. 15:1-2). Even among brethren there is opportunity to teach. Paul said, “*Let no man seek his own, but (each) his neighbor’s (good)*” (1 Cor. 10:24). Paul also said, “*Not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others*” (Phil. 2:4). Wouldn’t that go a long way in our efforts to teach others? What a “*door*” of opportunity we have to restore those who have become wayward (Gal. 6:1; Jas. 5:19-20).

Let us believe in the power of the gospel. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). In a world that held the gospel in contempt, Paul, with the threat of persecution, preached it boldly. Paul had seen the gospel at work among Jews first and also among Greeks. “*The words of eternal life*” are words that are “*living and active*” (Hebrews 4:12). The gospel is ever relevant and can transform your neighbor and mine, if they will receive it with the realization that it is the revelation of God. Evidence of this truth is seen in every example of conversion in the book of Acts. Indeed, we have in our possession the power of God to change lives, but failure to proclaim it results in continued ungodly living that sends people to hell! Jesus commanded, “*Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby*” (Matt. 7:13-14). On that broad way leading to destruction will be someone’s mother, father, grandparent, friend, neighbor or work partner. In that great day of judgment will they say, “*You met me day by day and knew I was astray, Yet never mentioned Him to me*”?

Let us be aware of the unconverted. There are masses of souls who are hungering and thirsting for the truth. Many question their religious convictions. They know they are at sea without chart or compass. **WE** have great opportunity. Indeed, the fields are white unto harvest and the laborers are so few. In Acts 8, those who were scattered as a result of the persecution, “*went about preaching the word.*” Until we understand that the success of personal work is dependent upon each one personally working, opportunities will go by the wayside.

Reaping the harvest of lost souls will not occur by accident. Let us prepare ourselves for the greatest work on earth. Someone has said that there are four hinges upon which the gates of opportunity swing: initiative, insight, industry, and integrity. Surely, we have integrity, but what about the others? Let us never forget that procrastination is the grave in which opportunity is buried.— *Fifth Street East Church of Christ Bulletin*, September 17, 2017. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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