

Righteousness, Peace, and Joy

by Alan Martin

This sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness, highlighting the spiritual nature of God's kingdom and the need to align our beliefs and actions with His word. It explores the concept of righteousness through the example of Abraham, emphasizing the continuous faith and obedience that leads to righteousness. The message warns against compromising God's truth for the sake of peace, stressing the significance of living by faith and following God's instructions to experience true peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 18:36, Colossians 3:2, Romans 14:17, Romans 5:1, Hebrews 10:38, Hebrews 11:1, James 2:20, James 2:21, Isaiah 48:22

Topics: "Seeking God's Kingdom", "Faith and Righteousness"

Description

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Transcript

The message this morning actually came from the one of the songs we sang one of the first songs from Matthew 6:33. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these other things shall be added unto you. So let's consider what does it mean to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

We should remember that the kingdom of God is not of this world because remember Jesus before Pilate when Pilate was questioning there we can find this in John 18 Pilate was asking him so are you a king then and Jesus said well you're the one who says it and Jesus said my kingdom is not of this world or else my servants would would fight to prevent my arrest of the Jews but now my kingdom is from another place I am sent here to speak in behalf of the truth all who are on the side of truth listen to me and of course Pilate's famous answer what is truth but Jesus indicated my kingdom is not of this world so this this explains why Paul said to the church in Colossians set your mind on things above not on things of this earth if we're going to seek the kingdom and it's not of this world we're going to have to seek it from another place the kingdom of God comes from God the Father himself where the Father and Jesus are seated together reigning in heaven and this is what Paul said set your mind on things above not on earthly

things where Christ is seated at the right hand of God and that's where your life is hidden so that's the life that we're supposed to be seeking this the kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom that comes down from heaven and affects us in this earth Paul puts it this way and I'm going to start actually giving you these references so you can follow with me if you'd like in Romans chapter 14 verse 17 Paul wrote for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking but the kingdom of God is righteousness peace and joy and the Holy Spirit so the kingdom of God that we're to seek it's interesting that Paul lists first righteousness the kingdom of God is righteousness peace and joy Jesus put the two together seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness I believe Paul was intentional when he places righteousness first in this list that the kingdom of God is righteousness peace and joy in the Holy Spirit because peace must flow from righteousness and we'll explain that a little bit further in today's message and then the result of joy the reason joy being a result of righteousness and peace with God so we're gonna start by looking at the righteousness that we're to seek the righteousness of the kingdom of God and if you want to turn with me I'm going to turn to Romans chapter 5 a very famous verse to most of us if you've been in church you're gonna be familiar with this passage Romans 5 1 therefore since we are justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ now if you're following me you'll notice your Bible either says since we are justified or some of your versions say since we have been justified how come they would translate it those two different ways well it's because it's in an heiress tense in the original language and the focus is not when it's not when we're justified heiress is a tense that the writer uses when he went when he wants to focus on how something happens not when it happens the focus is here is the way men are justified men are justified by faith and that's what brings him peace with God not we don't focus on the wind and there's reasons though I want to establish that with you this morning because this this verse the beginning of chapter 5 and this is part of the problem although it's helpful that men make chapters and number verses men did that there are no original numbers and chapters in the Bible matter of fact there's no periods or commas or quotation marks or exclamation points it is just letter after letter and scholars have to study and literally separate understand where one sentence begins and where another ends and they add punctuation and they add numbers for us for the sake of study can you imagine reading a document and it's just all the letters and there's no punctuation well that's how much you have to learn study the original language to get a grasp of it but the difficulty when you make chapters is sometimes you choose a chapter break where you think there's a change of subject and that's clearly not the case here because the best example of what it means to be justified by faith is Abraham in chapter 4 of Romans is all about Abraham and if you're going to understand what Paul goes into you need to understand Abraham's justification by faith and Paul's going to carry that understanding into his beginning of the explanation in chapter 5 so let's back up to Romans chapter 4 and let's look at this process of Abraham who's called our father in the faith we're very familiar that Abraham was justified by faith not by works but let's look into it more clearly and I'm I have this I'm very grateful for this I God in his mercy gave me a hunger to read the original language original Greek because I can tell you it's clearer in the original than it is in our in our English and I'm going to try to make that practical to you without losing you in the details I don't want it to be all Greek to you okay I want you to get something out of it but look where it says here in in the life of Abraham verse 18 of Romans chapter 4 in hope against hope Abraham believed and so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken so shall your offspring be this word Abraham believed that's also an heiress the focus is not when on when it happened the focus is on how he became the father of many nations he became the father of many nations by believing what did that believing look like well Paul goes on to explain it verse 19 and without becoming weak in his faith he contemplated his own body now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old and the deadness of Sarah's womb so here Abraham is hoping against hope for a period of he's almost a hundred

years old at this point do you know it most people when they talk about Abraham being justified by faith they go to Genesis chapter 15 verse 6 where the Lord took Abraham after he had lived in the land of Canaan ten years you know that because that's what it chapter 16 of Genesis opens up chapter 16 is the story of Abraham and in Hagar where Sarah gave Hagar her Egyptian handmaiden to Abraham as a wife it says in chapter 16 that after Abraham had lived in the land ten years that means in chapter 15 when the Lord brings Abraham out and tells him to look at the sky and see if he can count the stars if he can number them then his generate his descendants are going to be as numerous as that well he's only 75 but the verse says Abraham looked up he believed God and it was reckoned unto him his righteousness but look at this if you see Paul's context here Romans chapter 4 that's not what he's talking about the belief that he's talking about with Abraham remember though the means by which he becomes the father of any nations is by faith it's not focusing on when it's not here this event in Genesis chapter 15 verse 6 this is a process Abraham was 85 years old when this happened in Genesis chapter 15 verse 6 he's nearly a hundred years old now that's 15 more years in hope against hope is a process of believing not an act of one-time faith and you need to see this in Paul's very specific and it goes on to say verse 20 yet with regard to the promise of God he did not waver in unbelief but he grew stronger in faith giving glory to God being fully assured that what God had promised he was able to do he was doing that over a period of 15 years not a one-time act he lived by faith that's why Paul and the first part of the book of Romans says that the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel from faith to faith Abraham had faith exercise faith in Genesis chapter 15 verse 6 when he looked up and he believed God and in hope against hope he continued to live by faith until he actually received the his child Isaac when he was a hundred years old during that process Abraham believed in and it says verse 21 and being it fully assured that God had power to do what he promised he was able to do so in verse 22 therefore it was reckoned to him his righteousness now Paul should know something there Paul knows that it was reckoned to Abraham his righteousness in Genesis 15 6 now how is he tying it here to Abraham receiving his son Isaac because Paul understands it's the same faith in Genesis 15 16 it's the same faith in Genesis chapter 18 and 19 and 20 when Paul begins to actually receive the sign of circumcision and after that a year later Isaac is actually born through Sarah's womb and God fulfilled his promise and in a Abraham receives Isaac the son of promise and then he says verse 23 now not for his sake only was it written that it was counted it to him but for the sake also of us to whom it will be counted as those who are believing the righteousness of faith is a righteousness that God accredits to those who live by faith not those who have committed an act of faith at one time that emphasis is an emphasis man places on the justification by faith justification and righteousness are the same word man becoming righteous before God is by faith and I want to take you to a passage that that actually highlights this even even further let's go to James oh no let's go to Hebrews Hebrews chapter 10 the again a famous passage in the New Testament about living by faith Hebrews chapter 10 verse 38 but my righteous one shall live out of faith shall live is a Greek future middle tense what is what that means a righteous one who himself is believing will live by faith will live a righteous one will live through faith and if he should himself shrink back my soul has no pleasure in him but we are not of those who shrink back to this to destruction but of those who have faith to the preserving of our souls and then let's continue to read now right into chapter 11 the writer Hebrews thought continues now faith is the substance of things hope for some of your Bibles put assurance but the literal Greek word is hoopas tosses the underlying basis faith is the underlying basis of things hope for and the conviction of things not being seen and this happens over a period of time faith in the heart where you continue that's your basis of continuing to hope and by the way when the scripture uses the word hope that means someone is waiting for something they do not yet have you know what we're waiting for we are waiting for the hope of salvation and we wait so by faith so any assurance you have a salvation you have on the underlying basis

of faith but you're hoping for it you don't see the full salvation not yet you have God's promise and he will say and it's coming and all these promises will be fulfilled but Paul is very clear no one hopes for the things he already has but our basis for being able to hope in this is that is the underlying basis of faith faith is a substance of things hope for the conviction of things not seen and then verse 2 listen to this very carefully by this faith by this underlying basis that is what the men of old obtained witness it's a it's an interesting phrase in other words God watched the men of old he saw their lives and those that he himself testified this is a righteous man they obtained that witness by faith and God did declare men in the Old Testament righteous didn't he Noah Job Samuel Ezra David the man after God's own heart the prophets Isaiah Jeremiah Ezekiel Daniel and others like that men trusting God believing God and acting on that faith obtained a witness that is pleasing to God that they believed him and he goes on to say in verse 6 of the same chapter and without faith it's not possible to please God so all of these men were examples of those living by faith none of them are an example of a one-time act of faith a life of faith my righteous one shall live through faith it's a faith is how we live faith is what is pleasing to God and it is faith in God that God reckons as righteousness now this is explained even further by another writer this righteousness of faith and he establishes even more a connection that I want to add to this not only is faith a continual faith a process of believing this faith is not even complete until it becomes an actual action let's let's add that to it James adds that go with me to check James chapter 2 James chapter 2 let's start in verse 20 are you willing to recognize Oh foolish fellow that faith without works is useless it's unprofitable it's vain so faith with if you separate faith from what a person does it's useless let's just all understand that however you want to say it in a systematic theology faith without and the action that follows is useless is what James is saying then he goes on to say was not our Abraham father justified and there's the heiress not a single time remember heiress is focusing on how he was justified not when he was justified read it that way was not our Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up the Isaac on the altar now now some of us right there if you know your scriptures well you say wait a minute there's no way Genesis 15 6 says Abraham looked up believe God and it was he was justified it was credited to him as righteousness and here James James is talking about something entirely different James is talking about was not our a our father Abraham considered justified for what he did following through offering up Isaac on the altar I want timeline with me follow with me did I want you to see this Abraham is the example of living by faith from faith to faith at age 75 in Canaan he looks up he believes God he is justified God reckons to him as righteousness at a hundred years old he against all hope in hope he continued to and therefore became the father of many nations when Isaac was born and Abraham is a hundred years old now Isaac is a young man able to carry wood up to an altar and now God is saying was James is saying is not was not Abraham justified for what he did when he actually obeyed God when God told him take your son your only son and offer him on the mountain I will show you which of those times is the time Abraham was justified that's a trick question the focus is not the time it's the means every single time Genesis chapters 6 15 verse 6 by faith at a hundred years old circumcised receiving Isaac by faith at probably 115 120 years old obeying God to take Isaac up on a mountain Abraham obeyed by faith by faith by faith by faith and this is why it was reckoned in his righteousness and then James adds to this verse 22 you see and I'm hope you see in this you see that the scripture was fulfilled which says and Abraham believed God the scripture was fulfilled now the scripture the word scripture just means that which is written that which is written is referring to Genesis 15 6 and you know what just Genesis 15 6 it's the marquee of Abraham's life you know what the marquee is a poster like it you know outside of the movie what do they have they have a poster with the name of the movie and some things from the movie and what does it say this is the life of this person Abraham is described by a life of faith that's a break that's what it means looking back James is able to say what God said of Abraham is fulfilled God said he was a man of faith he was wasn't he when

he was in or of the Chaldees he was 75 years old God called him to leave his country leave his family leave his kinship and go to the land I will show you Abraham believed and went ten years later he's living in Canaan he still has no children Sarah has probably been barren 30 plus years already no children God says he's going to make him the father of many nations and he's going to give him a son Abraham still believes he's still believing he's 85 at this point and against all hope under on the basis of his underlying faith he continues to believe that God has power to do what he's promised and nearly at a hundred years 15 more years Abraham actually holds the promise of Isaac in his hand Sarah has a son Abraham has to be the first heir that God says will be the fulfillment of his promised him to make him the father of many nations and 15 or more years later Abraham believes God when God instructs him to take his son Isaac and go up to the mountain and often there where he shows him and James says this do you see his actions were working together with his faith and making his faith complete consummating finishing it your version may say perfect the idea is it's not until we act that faith is made complete and what act is God looking for why is it without faith it's impossible to please God because faith is the underlying basis of what it takes to please God because God does not want us following him because we're afraid of going to hell and God doesn't want us following him because we believe he has spoken his law and if we miss his law he's going to take his big celestial hammer and wrap us every time we do something wrong faith is God doesn't want the heart that was like that unfaithful lazy wicked servant remember him the servant that was only given one talent why do you think that his master only gave one talent which says that the master called his servants and gave them talents according to their abilities so how come this servant had such limited ability that the master only gave him one talent it's because of what he thought of the master this is the one servant didn't say this about the other servants this servant knew the master to be a hard and austere man and God doesn't want to be viewed that way God is good he's perfect his wisdom is perfect his love is perfect his care for us is perfect and every word that comes out of his mouth has our best interest at heart it's filled with his love it's filled with his wisdom it's filled with his goodness and it's believing that knowing him for who he actually is that's pleasing to him what about so what's happening in our day and time how can men decide that something God has said is now wrong and they disagree with it because that's happening churches are changing things things that specifically God said don't do this this displeases me it uses a stronger word it's hardly even spoken in churches today the word is abomination that's you don't know what most of us don't even know what that means other than it's something really bad that the basic of the original word video means to stink basically God says some things stink to him they're rotten that's what he said how is it how is it that men entire churches take something that God said stinks to him and now they say mm-hmm we don't want to be that way we are open to all we know it says that but we don't we don't believe that what are they saying about God if they're right does it that make God wrong are you following me are y'all awake are you gonna be faced with this so if God said it and they're right then God is wrong now that doesn't seem to bother them so what does that mean how do they reconcile that with themselves because they're not denying that it's in the Bible so how do they reconcile that when now they say we are actually going to receive something that God has said he cannot receive how did they do that they said they do not believe God said it they believe man claims God said it so you know what their basis of right and wrong is what becomes their basis of right and wrong is can't can't be this because if you change that if that's not true and if that's not true well then that's not true and that's not true because we've decided it's not true then what's true whatever we agree upon and you know what a lot of these churches that are going this direction they don't it's not even the majority it's not the majority of them that change it starts brother Rudy knows you can ask him he was from a Methodist Church you can ask him about it didn't it start with just a small group of people and they decided not only was the Bible not correct neither was the rest of their church even their church disagree with him didn't stop them in their

mind all of that is wrong we're right this is what we're going to do and that's what we're facing in our day and time and if we're going to seek righteousness where we're going to get is that what's the idea of righteousness then what's right and wrong if we cannot trust what God has said that his word is inspired these are it every scripture is the living inspired breath of God if we cannot accept this is right you know what becomes right everyone does what's right and you know what Jesus said would increase in the last days lawlessness you know what another good description of lawlessness is everybody does what they think is right and no longer it's not based upon what God has said and what do we know what is what is faith come by faith comes by hearing and where does this hearing come from the Word of God so if we're going to live by faith then we're going to be a people who live by the Word of God but if my righteous one shrink back shrink back from what the accusation that you're bigoted unloving unkind phobic intolerant gonna shrink back you're gonna join the new majority the new revelation that has decided in their own mind that we're not basing what we do on that see we are to seek righteousness and righteousness is based upon believing what God has said having the right heart and attitude towards him and now this is going to tie the scripture together blessed are you when men or persecute you because of righteousness see if righteousness comes from believing what God said then what's in our future for believing what God says persecution from those who decided that's not the way we're going to be our church is not going to be that way we are going to be the church of the open door we are going to receive all we're not going to say it we're not going to say those hurtful ugly old-fashioned fundamental things anymore and what we'll do is we'll create this character will create this character of this mean-spirited spitting fundamentalist Bible-thumping preacher who yells and and that way that's who will be rejecting everyone will know that's an idiot and we are the wise kind open-hearted ones open to all we no longer believe those old religious fundamental things we're not ignorant like those people blessed are you if that's the way men treat you for simply believing what God says simply believing what he says here's the thing if you don't believe what God says then you're going to be some you can become something that I don't think anyone intentionally became I'm gonna I'll explain remember we started in Romans 14 where the kingdom of God is righteousness peace and joy in the Holy Spirit see peace can only come from righteousness and when you separate peace and righteousness you know what you become may be well intentioned because that seems to me what's happening there are churches nowadays that are separating what God has said and they want peace we want peace with all we don't want to make anybody feel bad call yourself whatever you are he she it they will I mean whatever whatever gender whatever you are caught we're open to you we just know this we love you whatever you will you know what that's a description me that's just a place that wants peace we're just a people of peace you know that there were men like that in the Old Testament there were men like that in the Old Testament you can read about them all through there they kind of got the idea that you know what it's not about everything God has said come on his covenant is not the only way this this people do it this way and this nation does it this way you know what they feel like the these conservative people over here these prophets of God or these these priests that all they do is sit around they want to make sure it's exactly what God said forget them we care about you don't listen to them and you know what they would do you know what they would do they cared about the people they wanted the people to have some Liberty some freedom come on do it your way don't listen to those people who just insist that it must be exactly like God said you know what God called you know what God called those men false prophets and you know what he said about them he says that this is the two things that God had against those men said first of all they treat the wound of my people superficially what do you think the wound of the people what did he mean by that what was causing the wound of the people you know what their real problem was they had stopped living by the instructions they had separated God from his actual words they still wanted God but they basically said not according to those words we'll worship

God our way our time well we're gonna adopt some new things I like the way they do it let's just do it that oh I liked it I like that image of God let's incorporate that in our worship that's what they were doing they were being night it much more open-minded that's the first thing God said about them that they heal the wound of my people slightly and you know the next thing God said about them they this was the basic part of their message they kept preaching peace peace peace but God said there is no peace now why in God's mind would there not be peace but in the mind of these people who have these new thoughts and this openness and they care about people and they want people to be able to have their own expression and they want there to be greater freedom why do these people why is God saying there's no peace and that while they claiming there's peace because God says the only way you can have peace with me is you live the way I say that's how my righteous person lives my righteous person believes my words and lives by them these men over here they claim they're for peace they're not making you be they're not they're not bringing you to have peace with me so their message of peace is cheap and it's any and the Lord said this over and over again do not listen to what these men are saying they will not do you any good the New Testament brings new ideas into this says they promise you freedom they talk about freedom but you know what they're talking about freedom from they're talking about freedom from living according to every single word of the Lord Jesus Jesus wants to get wants us to be free but Jesus told us how we can be free Jesus said if you continue in my word then you're really my disciples and then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free if you continue in my words here's what Jesus also said if anyone is ashamed of me can you finish it for me or my words there's a lot of us done you're not ashamed of Jesus but are you ashamed that Jesus believes that every scripture in the Old Testament was from his father do you believe that Jesus does that the things that were an abomination to the father are still an abomination to Jesus do you believe that because if you don't believe that you're not ashamed of Jesus you're just ashamed of his words or or you're one of these open persons I'm more open to that I don't think that's right I don't think Jesus would be against anybody you know Jesus looked at his disciples and said I don't call you servants anymore I call you my friends because I've made known my will to you servants don't know their master's business but I've made know my will to you and he said you know if you continue in my word then you're gonna be my friends if you keep my word you're really my friends so if Jesus said that if you keep my words you're really my friends what about those people who don't keep Jesus words because they don't agree with them they don't think it's loving they don't think that's very peaceful they want a church that's open to everybody everyone's idea pink hair purple hair I don't know I'm not saying anything wrong with hair color my wife used to color her hair if you watch her now it's kind of slowly going back she two-tone she's probably listening to you I'm gonna get in trouble we just have to stop and think I don't think we think of where the world's going the words of Jesus and the words of our Heavenly Father are being undermined and there is no peace without righteousness no peace Isaiah 48 22 and 57 21 I believe both say this and it's interesting if they say this in your English versions in the Greek version of the Old Testament they use a different word but they both fit here it says even as the sea when it's stirred up by a storm as the waves pick up mud and they toss it the tossing of the waves pick up debris and mud says there's no peace for the wicked both of the verses say that but in a Septuagint it doesn't use the word peace he uses the word joy rejoicing isn't that interesting there's no rejoicing for the wicked I like that the reason I like that is because of Paul's insight that the kingdom of God is righteousness peace and joy in the Holy Spirit and I want to summarize this message try to make you understand how these three things are so dynamically corrected connected what does God consider righteous the person who believes every single word he says and acts on it that's what God considers righteous Abraham as the example make Abraham your example of faith and you won't go wrong it's from faith to faith by faith against hope in hope in faith fulfilled acted did was declared righteous by faith to faith faith all along righteous in God's sight and

you know what Abraham was called the only person in the Old Testament called this as a special relationship with God it might tell me whatever it what God called Abraham the friend of God didn't Jesus say you were my friends if you do what I command you don't want to sing about Abraham Abraham had the relationship with God that God longs Abraham believed God was good Abraham sought to understand the goodness of God and when God spoke even when it was difficult for Abraham Abraham acted even when he didn't fully understand it all and that's the kind of heart that God wants and you know what it brings a person like that you know what happens to someone who no longer thinks God is just up there in heaven and he's sending people to hell at least what those fundamentalist Bible thumpers think when they yell and scream and scare everybody and hold their signs and there can't maybe let the earth be rid of them maybe some of those people in their expression were wrong be careful though I may have been one of those persons at one time you didn't know we haven't known me all my life I think at times that I misrepresented the Heavenly Father in a way that I regret yeah I'm not gonna go so far as to change not a single word what did Lord Jesus remind us do not think that I am come to abolish the law I'm not come to abolish the law I tell you the truth not even one jot not one tittle not one tiny mark is going to be erased from the law until all things come to pass and then told the people unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and the Pharisees you will not enter the kingdom of heaven and we studied last week if you were here last week what is the hypocrisy of the of the Pharisees they really everything they did they did to be seen of men and what they taught they taught according to what God said but they taught things and did not do them so how is our righteousness need to surpass the scribes and the Pharisees don't claim you believe something and not do it do what you know to do faith is not complete until the action that you're doing from your faith is done faith is completed and here's what that here's what that brings us to the person who comes to this place where they they know God is good they know he's perfectly loving they know his wisdom is perfect so every word of his mouth is goodness to us it's light to us it's truth to us it's protection to us it's support to us that person has the heart of faith it pleases God and that person is at peace with God God's not their enemy God is good and you know what that person calls God my father I'm not my father is the creator of the universe my father gave his son to rescue me from the sinful world I'm not scared of my father my father loves me with a perfect love that no human on this earth has and my father is wiser than every single genius this world have put together by a thousand times and therefore I'm at peace with him you see when you come to that kind of place you have peace with God therefore being justified by that faith you have peace with God you're not in it you're not afraid of him you're not at odds with him you you love his law and you love doing what he says your peace and you know what comes out of that you believe him you have that heart that God considers and imputes righteousness to you have peace with God now and now you now the creator of the universe is your father and and his son his perfect son sent to save you is your brother so now you have the creator of the universe as your father the Lord of the universe as your brother and you've got his instructions here and his spirit on your in inside to help you you know what that produces joy what's a good life joy unspeakable full of glory it what a joy to serve the Lord what a joy to do his will because things are in order you're seeking his kingdom you're seeking his kingdom because he's the only righteous King the only one perfect the only one who with no corruption with no prejudice with no injustice the only one that is perfectly good towards all and you any question or bad ideas you had about him you have come to the side you've come to understand his goodness and your peace you have found righteousness and it's produced in your life peace and having that peace and that righteousness in your heart the result is joy righteousness peace and joy in the Holy Spirit would you have that's what we're to seek that's why I wanted to kind of go over these things with you again we are to seek first God's kingdom if I didn't explain what that white why it's called a kingdom you put this way a king is a person in charge it's a and in his dominion is the area he controls what the

kingdom of God is is comprised of the people who want God to rule them we want I want him to rule me I want him to be in charge I want his laws to be in place I want to follow him I'm seeking that kingdom I'm seeking to be a part of everyone on the earth who loves our Heavenly Father who believes that he sent his son to save us and who believes that every single word from Genesis to Revelation is for our good and been preserved for us I just seek to do it I'm at peace with him and there's so much joy and that is what we are to seek together you get that all right enough for today

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