

A True and a False Peace

by Catherine Booth

True peace comes from confessing and forsaking our sins, and casting our guilty soul on Jesus.

Scripture: Psalm 32:5, Jeremiah 6:14, Romans 14:17, Philippians 4:7, Revelation 2:5

Topics: "True Peace", "Repentance"

Description

Catherine Booth preaches on the universal desire for peace, emphasizing that true peace comes from reconciliation with God and a cessation of hostilities, not from false methods like excusing sin, stifling convictions, or adopting false views. She warns against the danger of delaying repentance and settling accounts with God only on one's deathbed, stressing the importance of confessing and forsaking sins to receive God's lasting peace that surpasses all understanding.

Transcript

JEREMIAH vi. 14.-'They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.'

PEACE is the universal want of man. Everywhere and always the race is in a state of unrest, 'tossing like a troubled ocean,' seeking rest and finding none. Consequently, men adopt many counterfeits, and try to satisfy the aching void of their souls with the opiates of Satan.

Let us look for a moment at the nature of true peace. Peace is not a state of mere quietness or insensibility. Alas! Many are in this state of torpor; and when you ask them about their souls, they say, 'Oh, yes! I have a hope; I have a measure of peace. I hope I am right.' But when you try to shake them up, and find out whether they have any thorough foundation for their peace, they don't want to be disturbed. But peace is not insensibility to existing differences between the soul and God; for in such a condition there are all the elements of awful and eternal warfare, and there only needs a change of circumstances in order to land the soul in conflict, distress, and desolation. We do not mean that sort of peace. True peace, Divine peace--the only peace that will do to die with--arises out of a settlement of our differences, and a cessation of hostilities towards God, and reconciliation between the soul and God, bringing assurance and quietness in view of both the past, present, and future. But let us look at one or two false methods by which Satan lulls the souls of both sinners and backsliders into a false peace.

First. He gets them to make a false estimate of the character and deserts of sin. When God's Spirit wakes them up, puts before them their sins, convinces them of their heinousness and enormity, Satan comes and

helps them to reason, and search for excuses. They say, as these Jews did by Ezekiel, 'If we pine away in our iniquities, how should we then live?' They charged their sin back again upon God. They began to excuse themselves. They said His way was unequal; and when He charged them with wearying Him, they said, 'Wherein have we wearied Thee? When He charged them with robbing Him, they said, 'Wherein have we robbed Thee?' they made excuses for themselves in their sins.

And, Oh, the multitudes that do so now! People want to make it out that they are dying for want of light. I say no. I won't allow my God to have that reflection cast upon Him. They are not dying for want of light; they are dying for want of honesty.

This spirit of finding excuses is most hateful in the sight of God. In the Old Testament, all the way through He is continually reproofing this spirit, and threatening His backslidden people with chastisement because of it; whereas He tells them, if they would confess and forsake their sins, they should be forgiven.

But we will look at one or two texts in the New Testament. Revelation ii. 5: 'Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.' Now, do you see the everlasting principle on which alone God can pardon sin laid down in the last utterances of the New Testament, as well as all through the Old, is repenting and forsaking of sin, and not excusing and covering it up?

Now, some of you are convinced that you are wrong, but the Devil is trying to get you into a false peace. He is saying, 'Well, but you were once right'; and so were these Jews. He is saying, 'You are a Christian'; and they were Israelites. 'Well, but you know you are the children of God'; they were the children of Abraham, and they said they were the children of God; but Jesus Christ said, 'The works of your father show whose children you are.' Whose works are you doing? My friends, don't let Satan deceive you, if you are LIVING IN SIN, no matter what Church you are a member of, no matter how long you have been a professor. Let the Holy Spirit search you; take God's way; don't begin to excuse yourselves. You can get quietness that way perhaps, but peace never! Would to God that every soul quiet in sin were awakened by an earthquake, like the jailer, if nothing else would do! They say they have peace, but all the elements of everlasting warfare are ready to break out in their bosoms at any moment. Judas had quietness when he sold his Master. There does not seem to have been a blush of shame, or even a tremor, in receiving the thirty pieces of silver. But wait! All the elements of war were in his bosom; and when the bitter consequences of his crime came upon him, his conscience was touched as with the fires of Hell, and he went out and hanged himself. Do you call that peace? No; he was in a state of torpor until the full measure of his guilt burst upon him; but that was not peace. Do not confound quietness with peace.

Another method by which people get false peace is stifling their fears and convictions. They not only excuse sin, but they resolutely resist what God Almighty is doing to enlighten them. Multitudes of this class come to our Salvation Army Meetings. God only knows how often I weep over them, and say, 'Who hath believed our report?' They come, and we see by their faces, and by what they say to us, and the letters they write, that God is stirring their souls and making them realize that something is WRONG WITH THEM; but instead of going down under the searching of the Holy Spirit, and saying, 'Yes, Lord, here cut it out and make me right,' they stifle conviction, and say, 'Oh, no, no! it cannot be so bad. I am frightened by hearing those people; they are such extreme people!' Or, 'I have been harrowed up with bereavement, loss, or trial. I shall get all right by-and-by.' Anything but confession and renunciation of sin.

Ah! my friends, you may succeed. in stifling your convictions. You may bury them in your own bosom, and go on for a while, perhaps a long while, but death will open the floodgates of Hell on your poor soul. Oh! the deathbeds that our people are called to visit are enough to make the angels weep--people who have been burying their iniquities in their bosoms, instead of confessing and forsaking them, and getting saved over again--backsliders, who once knew God, many of them would get off their beds and hang themselves, if they could but get out of their misery.

There is only one way to deal with sin; and that is, out with it, forsake it, and get it washed away. 'I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord: and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.' Now, sinners or backsliders you both have to come to it. My friend, if you go down to Hell an unconquered, unrepentant, unpardoned sinner, on your soul will rest the responsibility.

Another false method by which sinners and backsliders try to get peace, is that of adopting false views. They say, 'I am not to look at myself, but at Christ. 'I have nothing to do with my feelings or dispositions; I am to be saved by believing THE WORD. True, I am not living in obedience to God, but then WHO IS? Nobody even professes to do so, except a few enthusiasts and fanatics. Salvation is not of works, and I am clinging to the cross, so I must be right. Certainly I don't understand what that inward "kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" means; but I belong to the Church, I take the communion and read my Bible, and pray morning and night.' And so, while the Holy Spirit is trying to awaken such people to their dangerous condition, they are trying to heal their hurt slightly, and crying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. Are there any of this class here? My friend, there is only one way for you to find true peace, and that is to put away the occasion of war! Where there is sin, there must be conflict and misery. God Himself cannot give peace to a soul holding on to sin, nor does He ever propose to do so. It is 'your iniquities' that 'have separated between you and your God'; and before you can be restored to Him.

They must be repented of and put away. Give up trying to make yourself believe that you are right, and just get right! then your peace will flow as a river. Suppose that you were trying to believe that you were heir to some estate, and you go to a friend who is a lawyer, and say to him, 'I think I am all right; I feel sure I am the heir. I have read the will, and I believe I am the person intended; I often feel quite comfortable about it, but at times I get nervous and fearful, and I think that, after all, perhaps I am mistaken.' Your friend would say, 'Well, but have you not got some proofs?' And if you said, 'No, I have no deeds, nor any evidence to show that I am the heir,' he would say, 'Then it is the height of folly for you to be building your hopes on the inheritance. But once make good your title, and then you need have no more misgivings.' Just so spiritually look to your ground of claim. Get your title clear, and then you will have a well-founded, permanent peace, which neither man nor devils can take away. God does not leave His real people without an assurance of their saintship. He sends 'the Spirit of adoption into their hearts, whereby they cry, Abba, Father.' And they 'know that they have passed from death unto life.'

Another false method for trying to get peace, is putting off the reckoning day. I heard a lady say not long since, 'The fact is, I have given up the struggle, and I hope somehow or other I shall get right when I am dying!' Poor woman! that is an awful experiment--a forlorn hope indeed! You need to have all the powers of mind and body in full play when settling your accounts with God. Dying pains and distractions will be poor circumstances for making your peace with Him, even if you were sure of the opportunity; but the people to whom God has been showing His way of peace for years, and who have refused to obey, are not the people who get right when they are dying. Their hope is more likely to be cut off like that of the hypocrite, and their lamp to go out in darkness.

Then you say, if none of these are the right methods for getting peace, what is? God's way is always effectual, and this is to put away sin. No power can give peace to a guilty being, except by taking away his guilt. Confess and FORSAKE YOUR SINS, and cast your guilty soul on Jesus and then He will give you HIS peace, which will abide with you forever. Amen.

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