

Peace John 20:19

by John Nelson Darby

Jesus' words 'Peace be unto you' signify the gift of peace to those who know they are lost and have been saved through the cross.

Scripture: Isaiah 26:3, Matthew 11:28-30, John 14:27, John 20:19, Romans 5:1, 2 Corinthians 5:18-19, Ephesians 2:14, Philippians 4:7, Colossians 1:20, 1 Peter 5:7

Topics: "The Power of the Cross", "Peace in Christ"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the profound peace that Jesus offers to His disciples, who were in fear and confusion after His crucifixion. He explains that true peace comes from recognizing our lost condition and the necessity of a Savior, which is fulfilled in the cross of Christ. The resurrection of Jesus is pivotal, as it assures believers that their sins are forgiven and that they can experience lasting peace. Darby highlights that the peace Jesus speaks of is not merely a comforting word but a declaration of victory over sin and death. Ultimately, he calls for a deep understanding of the cross and its implications for our salvation and peace.

Transcript

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." It is a great thing to say with authority, "peace," and a great thing for the heart to feel the power of these words.

The Lord had said before, "My peace I give unto you"; and this too is the portion of believers now; but the disciples had not peace without: witness the doors shut on account of the Jews. They thought it had been He who should have redeemed Israel; but now they were in much confusion of heart, and great fear of those without.

They still trusted in the Saviour, in a sort, though He was not returned, and therefore they were in dismay as regarded their hopes, and they feared because of the Jews. God might sustain their hearts, but there was nothing to rest on as a present thing.

Now to this point the soul must be brought - to see no hope but in Christ, even though at the same time Christ may not be found.

The Spirit of grace, speaking to the sinner, convinces him of his lost condition; but the power of grace alone can give peace in the knowledge of sins forgiven.

It is to be remarked here that the disciples had leaned on Jesus as the Messiah; their thoughts had been that He should have redeemed Israel (that is, lead them on to comfort and blessing). There was this character of trust in Messiah, through whom, while with them, they lacked nothing, for He gave them power and blessing; but to the disciples at that time all this was gone. Jesus on whom they rested, to whom they looked for support and strength, was not there; and to them that knew Him not as risen, everything was gone. So we may hear of Jesus' name and His love, and this may please and attract the mind when the Lord is working in grace; but, at the same time, it is like the disciples resting on a living Saviour, but with no knowledge that we are lost. Jesus may have so attracted our minds, that the world may appear to us but loss, and nothing but Jesus valuable; and we may say even as the disciples, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life"; but this is not seeing that we are lost, or knowing the power of the resurrection.

177 The convincing of sin is a time of most special distress: the world gone, Jesus lost as to sense and appearance and not found again; but it is when in this state and condition Jesus reveals Himself. And how? Saying, "Peace be unto you." And this is not simply blessing and strength to the weak; it is not supply to need that suits the lost: there must be a Saviour for the lost. A man in want may go to the world for supply, and will do so undoubtedly if he be unregenerate; but if a soul feels itself lost, nothing will satisfy him till he finds a Saviour.

And here the value of the cross comes in. The cross is not only the image of our lost condition, but all that belongs to us is there expressed, as borne by another, and here the case of a sinner is met. We may have been before looking for supplies from Jesus to meet our supposed need, but the discovery of our being lost is only met in the cross. The natural man may see it a happy thing to have his sins forgiven; but to see the power and the effect of the cross, the wrath borne, the cup drunk, to see the curse laid upon Jesus, meets the need of those who have a sense of what is due to sin. The heart that knows what it is to be lost responds to this, a new light breaks in on the soul in the perception in Jesus of what sin has done; had we to learn it in ourselves, it could only be everlasting destruction. And what is the sense of a curse passing on the head of that blessed One, if it was not for us? It does not merely draw our affections, but the knowledge that we are lost is forced upon us in the death of Jesus. What sense is there in the Son of God in the grave, if not for us? A sinless person in life and conduct, "the brightness of God's person," and perfect as man; what relation has this to us? what bearing has it on our souls?

I speak not now of grace or supply to the believer, but what meaning is there to our souls in the cross of Christ? what sense is there in the death of Christ, if you are not lost? - lost by all the evil, the sin, the vileness, the transgression that required nothing other than the blood of Christ to blot it out. If your condition is not that to which the blood alone is the answer, let it alone; but if it be, there is One on whom the judgment of God came for sin - One in whom all is accomplished for us, and there it ends. The knowledge of this by the Holy Spirit brings the complete sense of ruin, but with it the perception of being saved, for the knowledge of our being lost, when fully known in Jesus, brings with it the knowledge that we are saved; and then come those blessed words, "Peace be unto you." But the poor disciples, with the power of Satan round them and Jesus gone, is the state of those who do not fully understand the power of deliverance in the cross.

178 The Lord said of Job, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him?" The candle of the Lord shone upon them; but in the character of Job, it is revealed to us that none can stand in the presence of the adversary. The comforts of the Lord are first of all withdrawn from Job, and then an evil disease cleaves to him; yet in this he sinned not, nor charged God foolishly; but afterwards we see him entirely broken down in the presence of the adversary. He was a man whom God could point out as having none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man; yet could he not, with Satan as his adversary, stand before God; and this causes him to make himself more righteous than God, and to curse the day on which he was born. Yet what is the result but the opening of the lips of Job to say, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Not so Christ; He was one who stood before the adversary in the presence of the Lord. And the resurrection proved how unfailing His service was; and we learn in the sorrow and the suffering of His righteous soul, and in His death, what sin is. The Lord coming under the title of death which Satan had against us, bearing our sins. This is what the cross is. The suffering went on in the soul of Jesus when sore amazed in the garden; it went on in the soul of Jesus when He said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" In the weight of the wrath upon Him, we learn what the cross was; and if you feel that you are lost, you will know the meaning and the value of it.

It is not a crucified Saviour now, but a risen One who speaks to us, the giver of all victory to us over all that was against us, having delivered us from suffering under it; and consequently the word "peace be unto you" is the authoritative expression of one who knew the ruin, and yet could say "Peace," because in the full knowledge that everything was done that could bring peace to the soul, for He had risen from the power of sin and death, having met the adversary to the face; and what could a risen Saviour say but "peace"? Could He speak of wrath when He had borne the sin and the curse, and was risen over it all? What could He say but this? And it is a risen Saviour who does say "Peace" to those who, though they have no peace, yet know the meaning of the cross. What the cross shewed the requirement of is finished for ever, and therefore to those that believe it is "peace," "peace."

179 The first person whom the Lord addresses after His resurrection is one out of whom He had cast seven devils; but grace had won her affections. She was drawn to Jesus, though looking indeed for the living among the dead, but still she was looking for Jesus; and the Mary He singled out to reveal Himself to was the one in whom the full energy of evil had been shewn out; and to her the blessed Lord spoke that one word which revealed at once to her, that He who had died was alive again - Mary - giving her a hope that was beyond destruction, because Jesus lived beyond the grave. Jesus, He whom her thoughts and affections were set on, was alive for evermore; and all her hopes rested in the endless life of Him who died for her. What could be darkness to her if Jesus was alive? The darkness had been gone through, for in Jesus' death she had tasted it for a time; but He was risen for evermore, and the riches of God's grace through the power of Christ, we find now first revealed to one who had been possessed with seven devils.

And if the Lord speaks "peace" to the soul, what is the meaning of it? This gives it power, that it is not a mere passing word of kindness, but peace, eternal peace, because peace is made by His having borne our sins, by virtue of what He accomplished on the cross. It is on this ground He says "peace"; and if you see that in this sense He never speaks "peace," till He is risen, you see that "being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." "Much more then, being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him," Rom. 5:1, 9. Have your souls known this peace? and have you known what it is to be lost? Not merely acknowledging the need of a Saviour, or looking for supplies from Jesus, but knowing that what was due to you was borne by Jesus?

180 It presses too keenly on the heart and conscience to look at the cross unless you can say, It is peace.

The careless heart of man cannot bear to look at the cross except he be at the foot of it, acknowledging his need of it; for he has to measure himself by the wrath poured out on Jesus. But if your back is turned on the cross, there is none to give peace. The cross may cause us shame when it leads us to see what sin is; but itself, it is the power of God unto salvation. Haste then to God who beseeches you to be reconciled. And may the Lord, in the riches of His grace shew you the vileness of sin, and that Jesus has drunk the bitter cup of wrath but is now the risen Saviour; that you may enter thus life of peace through Him who, in that He died, died unto sin once, that he who lives might live unto God.

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