

The Peace of Christ

by Thomas Watson

Thomas Watson's sermon emphasizes the profound peace that Christ offers to believers amidst worldly troubles and the importance of maintaining that peace through faith and obedience.

Scripture: Romans 5:1

Topics: "Inner Peace", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Thomas Watson preaches about the peace of Christ, emphasizing that while troubles are inevitable in this world, Jesus offers His followers a deep and lasting peace that surpasses all understanding. This peace is spiritual, purchased by Christ's blood, conveyed by His Spirit, and maintained through His intercession. Watson urges believers to seek this peace in Christ, warning that those who live and die in sin will have no true peace. He provides clear criteria to determine if one has received Christ's peace, including being engrafted into Christ, submitting to His governance, and exhibiting a peaceable disposition.

Transcript

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"I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33

These words were spoken by our blessed Savior not long before His suffering. This chapter is full of spiritual sweetness. This blessed Sun of righteousness, it seems, shone more glorious and brightly, a little before His setting. Our Savior Christ was now about to leave the world and go to His Father. He knew they would be sorrowful because of His sufferings and death. Therefore He endeavors the more to comfort the hearts of His apostles and disciples; and this is the great cordial He gave them before His death, "I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace."

Christ foretold that sufferings would befall His apostles and disciples. "In this world," said He, "you shall have trouble." The Greek word for trouble is a metaphor which alludes to grapes which are squeezed in the winepress, until the blood of the grapes comes out. So, said Christ, "In this world you will have trouble." You shall be put into the winepress and, perhaps, the blood of the grape may be pressed out. Trouble is the saints' bitter drink; it is bitter but it is wholesome. All that God does in afflicting His children

is but to make them better, and to purify them and make them white, Daniel 10:12. Is it not far better to swim through the Red Sea of affliction--to heaven; than to swim through the world's perfumed joys and pleasures--to hell and damnation? "In this world," said Christ, "you must expect, and you shall have--trouble!" But Christ, having told of this bitter pill, gives them some sugar of comfort to sweeten it and make it go down better. In the words of this text, "I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace."

First, here is the dark side of the cloud--"trouble."

Second, here is the bright side of the cloud--"that in Me you may have peace."

DOCTRINE, The Lord Jesus Christ, who is our Peacemaker, gives His sweet peace to all His people.

The peace meant here in the text, is spiritual and sacred. It is the immediate fruit and product of our justification. Romans 5:1, "Being justified by faith--we have peace with God." This spiritual peace the Lord Jesus procures by His blood, conveys by His Spirit, and maintains by His intercession.

First, this peace is PURCHASED and procured by His blood. It swims to us in the blood of Christ! The justice of God being wronged by us, Jesus Christ laid down His life as a payment price. He paid His blood, for our peace. It is His blood that cements us and reconciles us to God the Father. Colossians 1:20, "Having made peace through the blood of Jesus."

Second, Christ CONVEYS this blessed peace by His Spirit. He procures it by His merit--and He conveys it by His Spirit, John 16:7. The Lord Jesus left this peace to us as a legacy. And the Spirit is Christ's executor to see that His will is made good and that we should have this peace. And now that God is at peace with us through Christ, conscience is at peace too. If the heavens are quiet and serene, and there is no tempest there or wind blowing, then the sea is calm. So, if the great God is at peace with us, and there is no tempest in His face, then conscience is quiet and all is calm.

Third, as Christ procures this blessed peace by His blood and conveys it by His Spirit, so He MAINTAINS this peace by His daily intercession. What saint alive does not sometimes offend God and cause the fury of His anger to rise up in His face? Now when the case is thus, that we offend God and are ready to break His peace, then Jesus Christ stands up as an intercessor and speaks to God the Father on our behalf. And it is His request that God would lay aside His anger and that He would smile upon His people again. Therefore, in Scripture, Christ is called our atonement to make peace, and He is called our Advocate to purchase peace. When we break our peace, Christ pleads our case and makes up this peace again by His intercession, 1 John 3:7.

USE 1. To make some application of this, first, by way of inference, see where we must go for this spiritual peace, which is our consolation in life and death. Go to Christ for it, "That in Me you might have peace."

Cyprian said, "Peace is in Christ--as sap is in the root of the vine, as water is in the springs." "That in Me you might have peace," said Christ. This blessed peace that Christ gives is worth going to Him for; it is superior to all other peace. Peace in a kingdom is very desirable; peace is everyone's vote. Peace is the very quintessence of earthly blessings, to sit quietly under our vines and fig trees. Surely better, a great deal better--is the sounding of the lute and the violin, than the roaring of the cannon. See what a sweet promise God makes, Isaiah 2:4. He will break their swords into plowshares. All shall be peace. But what is this peace, compared to the holy peace which Christ gives to His people? This peace our Savior gives has

these two properties or qualifications, it is an emboldening peace and it is a lasting peace.

It is an emboldening peace. Friends that are at peace use a kind of freedom and boldness one with another. So we, having peace through Christ's blood conveyed by His Spirit, may be bold to make use of God's promises. There is never a promise in the Bible but a believer may pluck a leaf from, and be at peace with God through Christ. We may now use a holy boldness in prayer. We may come to God as children to their father, Hebrews 4:16. Let us come with boldness to the throne of grace. God is our Father, and He, being at peace with us, will not deny anything that may conduce to our real good. This may make us come with boldness to the mercy seat. That's the first property. It is an emboldening peace.

Christ's peace, as it is an emboldening peace, so it is also a lasting peace. Here is an eternal peace. All earthly peace, to speak properly, is a truce rather than a peace. A truce is but for a small time and it ends, yes--but this peace that Christ gives is forever. Once in Christ--forever in Christ. Once justified--forever justified. Here is a lasting peace. Isaiah 54:10, "The covenant of my peace shall not be removed, says the Lord." The peace of a believer is but begun here in this life; it is perfected in the kingdom of heaven. Isaiah 57:2, "He shall enter into peace."

Here is a godly man's privilege. When he dies, he dies in peace; and as soon as he is dead--he enters into peace. That is, he shall go to the Jerusalem above, that city of peace. Here the saints' peace is but begun; it is but in the seed, there it shall be in the flower. Here it is but in its infancy; there it shall be in its full growth. That's the first. See to what coast you must trade for this peace. Go to Christ for it. "That in Me you might have peace."

Second, see what a sad condition all wicked men are in who live and die in their sins. They have nothing to do with peace. What! Shall they have peace who make war with heaven and persecute Christ in His members? Shall they have peace who deride and grieve the Spirit of God, whose very office it is to drop peace into the conscience? What, a sinner to have peace? 2 Kings 9:22, "What peace, so long as the whoredoms of your mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many!" A wicked man is a worker of iniquity. As a man works at his shop, so he works at the trade of sin; and what has he to do with peace? And how deplorable is his case! Isaiah 57:21, "There is no peace to the wicked, says my God." And if God says it, he knows it to be true.

The wicked may perhaps delude themselves and presume that, though they go on in sin, they shall have peace. But to undeceive them, turn to one Scripture, Deuteronomy 29:19-20, "And it come to pass when he hears the words of this curse, that he blesses himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart. . . . The Lord will not spare him--but then the anger of the Lord and His jealousy shall smoke against that man."

One may as well think to suck health out of poison--as to suck peace out of sin. Sinners may be quiet and secure for the present--but it will be bitterness in the end! Guilt will sooner or later raise a storm, said Chrysostom. Sin will conjure up the winds and storms into the conscience.

I have sometimes thought it is with sin as it is with poison. There are some sorts of poison that will lie a great while in the body and not work--but at last it wrings and tortures the bowels--a fit resemblance of sin. Men drink this poison, and they may be quiet a while--but at last, especially at death, then it begins to work and then the poison begins to touch the conscience.

The great God of heaven and earth has set up His standard and proclaimed open war against every impenitent sinner. And it will not be long, if men go on in sin, before God's cannon bullets will begin to fly. God's wrath may seem like a sleeping lion--but this lion will awake and roar and tear his prey! I will only say this. I confess God may bear long with wicked men and leave them alone. He may bear long with them in respect of punishment, when He does not remit the sin. But it will be sad with the sinner at last, a sad hour at death. The body and soul must part, and Christ and the soul must part. "There is no peace to the wicked, says my God." Can they have peace who strike against the crown and dignity of heaven, who make war with Christ, God, and heaven?

USE 2. OF TRIAL.

Let us then search and examine. Have we this secret and sweet peace in our souls flowing from the Lord Jesus? You may know it these three ways, and they are three sure notes which will never fail.

1. Such as have Christ's peace in their souls are engrafted into Christ. They are one with Christ. Mark the words of the text, "In Me you shall have peace." First, we must be in Christ before we can have peace from Christ. "In Me." Then comes peace. The graft or branch must first be inoculated into the tree before it receives sap and influence from the tree. We must by faith be inoculated into Christ before we can receive of His fullness.

The wicked may presume to have peace, and that they shall have peace, and yet they are not acquainted with Christ. Do they think ever to have an interest in Christ's peace--who have no interest in Christ's person? It cannot be! A Christless soul has no more claim to Christ's peace, than a woman can lay claim to a man's estate who was never married to him. "In Me," said Christ. First you must be in Christ and then you shall have peace from Christ--sacred peace. It is a legacy which Christ bequeaths. He gives this legacy not to strangers but to His friends--such as are united to Him.

The pipe must first be laid to the spring before it receives water from the spring. So we must first by faith be united to Christ, laid to this spring by faith, before we can receive the sweet influences of peace from him.

2. Wherever Christ gives peace to any soul, there He always sets up His governing scepter to bear sway in that soul. A pregnant Scripture for this is Isaiah 9:7, "Of His government and peace there shall be no end." There must be Christ's government set up in the soul before there is peace. Whenever the Lord Jesus comes with an olive branch of peace in His mouth--He always comes with a scepter in His hand. A parallel Scripture for this is Zechariah 6:13. It is a promise of Christ, "He shall sit and rule, and He shall be a priest upon the throne." Observe, Christ as a priest makes peace--but He will be a priest upon the throne. That is, He will bring the heart, where He gives peace, into a full subjection to His laws. He will be a priest upon His throne.

Now, let us examine. Have we given subjection to Christ Jesus? Do we submit to His blessed laws? Does Christ sit and rule in our hearts as a priest upon His throne? Then all is well. There are many people who would have Christ to speak peace to them--but they will not allow Him to rule. They would have His olive branch but they will not endure His scepter.

3. If Christ has given us this blessed peace, then we shall know it by this, He has made us to be of a meek, quiet, and peaceable disposition. Wherever Christ gives His peace--He makes the heart to be peaceable. Isaiah 11:6, "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb; the leopard shall lie down with the kid." That is,

after grace is brought into a man's heart, and Christ has given him peace, this man becomes of a peaceable and quiet disposition. Now, "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb." The fierceness of the wolf shall be turned into the meekness of the lamb.

Bernard, that godly man, was a man of a peaceable spirit. And any time someone fell out with him he would say, "I will be at peace with you, though you go on in trouble." Such turbulent spirits that are troublers of the common peace are like the salamander which lives in the fire of broils and of contention; and they love to live in this fire.

Surely, where Christ gives this peace, it makes men of a peaceable spirit. It turns the briar into a myrtle tree. So by this we may know whether Christ has given us this peace or not.

USE 3. And here I will turn myself to such as are acquainted with Christ and this blessed peace.

First, have you this blessed peace from Christ? Then be not overly troubled about the afflictions and encumbrances that are incidental to this present life. It is true, our lives are full of vicissitudes and troubles. It will be so. He who does not expect some trouble, must go out of the world. Fear and grief are the two constant companions of man's life. You may as well separate weight from lead, or moisture from the air--as trouble from the life of man. Does not the text say, "In the world you shall have trouble"?

But here is that which may sweeten the troubles of God's people. Christ gives peace. Here is an antidote against your fears and troubles. And there is no antidote, like a Scripture antidote. Christ said, "That in Me you might have peace." This is a glorious peace indeed. It is a peace that will hold out in a storm and tempest. It turns a prison into a paradise. It turns our mourning into music. It turns our sighs into songs and triumphs. That holy man dated his letter thus, "Written from the pleasant garden of the prison."

David was Christ-prepared. Though the times were ever so stormy--he would lie down in peace. Psalm 4:8, "I will lay me down in peace." It was a very tempestuous time. David was fleeing from his son Absalom. Now, said David, "I will lay me down in peace." If Jesus Christ has given us this peace, this will give light to the soul when the clouds gather and you are tossing upon the waters of affliction.

Second, if Christ has given you a well-grounded peace, oh! be thankful for this great gift. No rhetoric, no tongue of angels can set it forth in all its glory. Peace of soul makes thankful music in a Christian. Though there are never so many discouragements in the world--yet he enjoys harmony in his own soul. This inward peace is the best music. That you may be thankful for this peace, consider how sad it is to lack this peace because this is the contrary of it. I argue thus:

If the devil and horror of conscience are so dreadful, then certainly inward peace of conscience flowing from Christ must be very sweet. To have conscience vex and fury is, as it is well-called, a sharp fury. Spira had that inward horror of soul when he had sinned so that he died with the fear and terror of hell in his soul. He thought judgment less than that. Now if the sting of conscience is so bitter, then the peace of conscience must be sweet.

Has God set your soul, which was once like a troublesome sea, now to be calm and peaceful? Oh! then sound your harp and violin. Admire this God; sing forth praises and acclamations unto Christ, this blessed Prince of Peace.

Last, if Christ has spoken peace, if He has dropped this blessed peace into your souls, then let me beseech you that you would be careful not to lose this jewel. Labor to preserve this peace in your souls.

Preserve your peace as you would preserve your lives. And to that end:

1. If you would preserve your peace, take heed of relapses. They are dangerous. Do not tamper any more with sin. Dare not to feed sin in a corner. Sin is the peace-breaker. Psalm 85:8, "The Lord will speak peace to His people." But what follows? "But let them not return again to folly." Let them not return again to their sins any more. There is a great deal of folly in our relapsing from a strict and holy life.

2. Would you preserve this jewel in your bosoms, this blessed peace? Then make up your accounts with God daily. Frequent reckoning keeps God and conscience friends. Psalm 4:4, "Commune with your own hearts." That is, call yourselves to an account. Make up your account, make them even, see how things stand between God and your souls. Observe whether your affections are lively. Examine your evidences and see if there is no decay in your graces, no loss of first love. Oh! keep the reckoning even, between God and yourself. That's the way to keep your peace.

3. Walk closely with God every day. Live as under the continual inspection of God's omniscient eye. Live holily. Peace and purity go together. The way to preserve our peace is to preserve our purity. Oh! keep your constant hours every day with God. Turn your closets into temples. Search the Scriptures. The two Testaments are the two lips by which God has spoken. Love the Word. Love prayer. Love the Sabbath. Psalm 119:165, "Great peace have they that love Your law."

Thus you may sweetly enjoy yourselves--and this jewel of peace will be preserved in your bosoms.

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