

LAMPLIGHTER

MAY 2008

THEME: JESUS SAID...“PEACE”

JOHN 20:30, 31

“Peace be with you.” Luke 24:36

Dear Friends of Jesus,

As a nation at war, there is a great deal of unrest among us. A debate continues to be waged as to when our soldiers should come home and how long will we be committed to policing the unrest in the mid-east. While even one casualty is too great a cost, when will the loss of the lives of American men and women be enough? But this is not the only absence of peace among God’s people.

Peace! What is it that man craves most? It is peace: peace with God, peace of mind, peace of soul, peace of conscience, peace from the terrors of sin, peace from the fear of death, peace from the dread of judgment. O my soul, the Lamb of God has brought peace. He has taken away the sin of the world. “Grant us Thy peace.”

We learn, from the Word of God, that apart from Jesus we cannot have true and everlasting peace. Yes, apart from Jesus we cannot have peace with God, peace of soul, peace from the terrors of sin, peace from death, or any other peace. We are by nature enemies of God. Paul reminds us in his letter to the Philippians in chapter 3, verse 18, “For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.” Admittedly we live much of our lives as enemies of God. We rebel against him. As a matter of fact, we become our own worst enemies for how many of our own problems are the results of our own rebellion? Like the Apostle Paul in Romans 7, we live in the tension of being both sinner and saint. We become the disrupters of our peace, and we bear the burden of guilt and fear or the absence of peace.

The Good News is that Jesus came to establish peace through the sacrifice of his blood. In Romans 5:1, we are told; “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,” Jesus came and brought us peace through his work of redemption in the forgiveness of our sins. The forgiveness with which we are clothed and fed through the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper is gifted to us by God’s grace and favor. Paul says in 2 Thessalonians 3:16, “Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.”

God gives us peace! Often we think that peace is something we can achieve through our own efforts. We believe that we can accomplish peace through compromise. If we each give a little, then the cost of peace is not too great for either party. We can live with that result, but true and everlasting peace is found only in Jesus.

With His example at the forefront of loving the unlovable, forgiving the unforgivable, accepting the unacceptable, we strive and make every effort to live in peace and harmony with one another. Paul exhorts us to live this way again and again in (1 Th 5:13 NIV) “Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.” (Rom 12:18 NIV) “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.” (2 Cor. 13:11 NIV) “Finally, brothers, good-bye. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.”

Paul, like ourselves, realizes that many things disrupt our peace – our flesh, our world, even Satan himself, but be of good cheer Christ has overcome the world. He stands in the midst of the disciples, who were locked in the upper room for fear of the Jews and gives them His peace. In the midst of all our fears, challenges, or conflicts, Jesus offers us His same peace as a gift to us.

(2 Pet 3:14 NIV) So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.

Close with prayer, the Lord’s Prayer, Benediction, and Song – #108 “Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”