

Peace

John 20:21 "So Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.'"

Sunday, April 11, 2022 at The First Congregational Church of Marshalltown, Iowa

- Introduction

There's a joke about peace involving Charlie Brown and Lucy. "In the Peanuts cartoon Lucy says to Charlie Brown, 'I hate everything. I hate everybody. I hate the whole wide world!' Charlie says, 'But I thought you had inner peace.'" Lucy replies, 'I do have inner peace. But I still have outer obnoxiousness.'" The next story may explain peace better.

There once lived a king who announced a prize to the artist who would paint the best painting depicting peace. Many great painters sent the king several of their best art pieces. One of the pictures among the various master pieces was of a calm lake perfectly mirroring peacefully towering snow-capped mountains. Overhead was a blue clear sky with fluffy clouds. The picture was perfect. Most of the people who viewed the pictures of peace from various artists thought that it was the best among all.

But when the king announced the winner, everyone was shocked. The picture which won the prize had a mountains too but it was rugged and bare. The sky looked very angry, there were lightning. This did not look peaceful at all. It looked like the artist has mistakenly submitted his painting depicting storm rather than peace. But if anyone looked closely at the painting, he could see a tiny bush growing in the cracks in the rock. In the bush a mother bird had built her nest. In the midst of the rush of angry weather, the bird sat on her nest with peace.*

I would add that the peace that Jesus gives is like the peace the mother bird would give her chicks if they were in the picture. Like the Spiritual Gifts of 1 Corinthians 12-14, it is what we give more than what we feel.

- Peace

meaning of the word

When we read the passage in John's Gospel, we find the disciples in hiding behind locked doors, in fear for their lives when Jesus appears among them, and three times blesses them with the word "peace." The word means health, strength, confidence, comfort, prosperity and overall well-being. Its presence stills trouble in the heart and diminishes fear. Earlier in the book, shortly before His crucifixion, Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14:27) Peace is not the absence of storms but the confidence when one knows that the storm will be overcome.

- How are we supposed to experience peace in violent circumstances?

That begs the question, how were the disciples supposed to experience peace in such violent circumstances? They seemed to have a rough time during the crucifixion, but the presence of peace came with the presence of Jesus. I think, when the Lord spoke peace as a blessing over His disciples, it was not so they would always feel confident and happy, but that they would be a peaceful and peace-making influence on other people. Maybe the question should not be, "do I feel peaceful" but rather, "do I make other people around me feel peaceful?"

- Sent-peace in the context of mission.

Jesus gives us a clue about how to go about being people who make peace when He tells that that, "as the Father has sent Me, so I send you." It would not be the last time Jesus commissions people gathered to Him, (cf. Matthew 28:16-20 and Luke 24:44-51 and Acts 1:3-11). In this case, Christ's choice of words is telling. When He said, "as the Father has sent Me, so I send you", the "send" regarding the disciples is present tense. He is sending the disciples right now. In the case of the Father sending Jesus, it is in the perfect case, in that the Father has sent Jesus and is still sending Jesus. It is an ongoing matter. So if Jesus is still sent to us, yet what is He doing now? He is seated at the right hand of the Father interceding for us. Being sent into this world to pray for others is being sent. If there is more to it in your case, the Holy Spirit will reveal it to you.

- Application: Think like a "sent" person.

The application is to learn to think like a "sent" person.

Can someone think of their life as "being sent" when they have been in the same location all their days? Jesus never wandered far from His home. You may not have been sent to some far country, but you have been sent to earth. Your life, then, has purpose just as it is. You were sent here to pray for each other and to be agents of peace for each other. No small purpose considering that Jesus, who is still sent to us, fulfills His purpose seated at the right hand of the Father by praying for us. Being a person of prayer may seem like an insignificant purpose to some, but what is insignificant to the world can be significant to Christ. Myles Monroe once pointed out that the woman who anointed the feet of Jesus for burial before His crucifixion fulfilled her purpose in life by that one act. A small purpose to us, but important to Jesus. He said wherever the Gospel is preached, this episode would be shared in her memory. Small things, done by prayerful people, can have important consequences in the eyes of the Lord.

- Conclusion

Jesus walked into a room with a locked door, filled with fearful people and said, "Peace to you, as the Father has sent Me, so I send you." In doing so, I think He granted them, not always peaceful circumstances, but the call to be people who make life peaceful for others, and demonstrated the way to pursue that is to be people of prayer. Prayerful people who are agents of peace may not seem important to some people, but they are of vital importance to the Lord.

*<https://alltimeshortstories.com/meaning-of-peace/>