

Greetings Redeemer family,

This week we continue in our series on the Fruit of the Spirit, this time looking at the fruit of Peace. Peace is an odd thing in our world today. As a country, we're 7 years into a "War on Terror," yet it was quiet in my neighborhood when I woke up this morning. It's been decades since I've been in a serious, physical fight with someone else, but I can quickly lose my temper with other drivers on the road. I can walk by over a hundred people during the course of my day, and be totally unaware of the deep anxieties and fears that plague each one of us.

Peace, it seems, is a fleeting thing at best. So what does it mean for us to be a people of Peace, who serve a God of Peace?

Our call to worship this week comes from Romans 5, and is a reminder of the definitive, objective peace that we have because of the work of Christ – our Prince of Peace – on our behalf.

*Therefore, since we have been justified through faith,
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
Through Him we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand,
and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.*

According to Romans 5, the proper response to the peace we now have with God is to rejoice in worshipful thanksgiving to our great and glorious God.

*Most holy, most glorious, the Ancient of Days
Almighty, victorious; Your great Name we praise*

Our second song is a reminder that we are called to praise God in the midst of every circumstance of life – because His character and wisdom are unchanging. He is the same: yesterday, today, and forever. He is a solid foundation for the peace of our souls.

*Blessed be Your name
In the land that is plentiful
Where Your streams of abundance flow
Blessed be Your name
Blessed be Your name
When I'm found in the desert place
Though I walk through the wilderness
Blessed be Your name*

*Every blessing You pour out
I'll turn back to praise
When the darkness closes in, Lord
Still I will say*

*Blessed be the name of the Lord
Blessed be Your name
Blessed be the name of the Lord
Blessed be Your glorious name*

It is the peace of Christ which alone can give us the ability to praise God in the midst of hard circumstances. He graciously offers this power to all who would call upon His name. He then grants us the privilege to be people of His peace, carrying His compassion to a world in need of reconciliation.

*Everyone needs compassion
Love that's never failing
Let mercy fall on me
Everyone needs forgiveness
The kindness of a Savior
The hope of nations*

*Savior, He can move the mountains
My God is mighty to save
He is mighty to save
Forever, Author of salvation
He rose and conquered the grave
Jesus conquered the grave*

Because the feeling of peace is so often fleeting and unwieldy, it is easy to think that Peace is just a nice add-on to the Christian experience. We're tempted to believe that it is something that some people get and others don't. The writers of the Westminster Catechism saw things differently. They saw the blessings of God being offered to all believers in increasing greatness.

*Q. 36. What are the benefits which in this life
do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?*

A. The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.

We close our service this week with a sweet reminder of the definitive peace that we have with God because of the work of Christ. One of my favorite lyrics in this regard comes from "Mercy Speaks by Jesus' Blood":

*Peace of conscience, peace with God
We obtain through Jesus' blood
Jesus' blood speaks solid rest
We believe and we are blest
We believe and we are blest*

My prayer this weekend is that you would be reminded of the power of Jesus' blood – that it would speak a solid rest to your soul. A rest that cannot be moved or shaken or broken by the changing winds of this world. This perfect peace is completely won by our eternal King by His finished work on the cross. I pray that we would believe this, and experience the blessings of being His own.

Because of Christ, we must and shall go free!

Tim Sharpe

Worship Director

Redeemer PCA, Lynchburg, VA