

Sabbath School Today **With the 1888 Message Dynamic**

The Fruit of the Spirit **Lesson 4: “The Fruit of the Spirit Is Peace”**

Sometimes the Lord calms the storm.

Sometimes the Lord lets the storm *rage*—and calms His child.

How is it with you? Are you calm while storms rage all around you? Or do you spend your days trying to find peace in a turbulent world? The world looks for peace in an external sense. How am I being treated? How well do I get along with my spouse, my children, my parents, my boss? But true peace is not found in these things. Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). The world does not have true peace. True peace means to avoid letting our hearts be troubled. True peace means freedom from being afraid, for perfect love (*agape*) casts out fear (1 John 4:18). Storms can rage all around us. Some may even come our way and slap us directly in the face. Paul says in Romans 12:18: “If it be *possible*, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men,” because sometimes we have to meet the storm head on, externally. But when you do have to meet these storms, how is it in your heart?

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” Having said this nearly 2000 years ago, I can only conclude that God has *already* given us His peace. We don’t have to look for it. We don’t have to manufacture it. When you consider that the word of Christ has inherent within it the power to create what it says (Genesis 1), God created peace in us simply by making the statement. So, *let* it happen, *let* not your heart be troubled. Let God’s strength and courage wash over you. Yield to the power of God. Back off and *let* Him have His way in your heart and life.

Have you ever thought about the things that bother us? Often, years after the fact, we may remember having a passionate discussion with someone, maybe with our spouse. We remember very well having the discussion, but when the question is asked about what the subject was, no one can remember! However, when a *big* issue arises, such as losing a job over Sabbath observance, for example, our hearts are at perfect peace. The reason for this dichotomy is our own selfishness, for when we go our own way we become defensive and are actually willing to defend to our spiritual death the most trivial of pursuits. On the other hand, when we are acting within God’s will, He gives us perfect peace, even during the storm. “Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them” (Psalm 119:165). We need to let God choose our battles for us.

The world does not have true peace. So how do we obtain such a precious commodity? How do we avoid letting our hearts be troubled? How can we obtain courage and freedom from fear? Let’s allow E. J. Waggoner, one of the 1888 messengers, answer this, for he says it so very well:

"Grace to you and peace from God the Father" [Galatians 1:3]—this is the word of the Lord and therefore means more than man's word. The Lord does not deal in empty compliments. His word creates, and here we have the form of the creative word.

God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light." So here, "Let there be grace and peace to you," and so it is. God has sent grace and peace, bringing righteousness and salvation to all men—even to you, whoever you are, and to me. When you read this third verse, do not read it as a sort of complimentary phrase or mere passing salutation, but as the creative word that brings to you personally all the blessings of the peace of God. It is to us the same word that Jesus spoke to the woman: "Your sins are forgiven." "Go in peace." Luke 7:48, 50.

This grace and peace come from Christ, "who gave Himself for our sins." "Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Ephesians 4:7, KJV. But this grace is "the grace that is in Christ Jesus." 2 Timothy 2:1. Therefore we know that Christ Himself is given to every one of us. The fact that men live is an evidence that Christ has been given to them, for Christ is the "life," and the "life" is "the light of men." This life-light "enlightens every man." John 14:6; 1:4, 9. In Christ "all things hold together." (Colossians 1:17), and thus it is that since God "did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all," He cannot do otherwise than with Him freely "give us all things." Romans 8:32. "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness." 2 Peter 1:3 (*The Glad Tidings*, pp. 10, 11).

So, what do we have to worry about? Check out 2 Corinthians 5:19, "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, *not imputing their trespasses unto them*; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (emphasis added). God has nothing against you. Might we have something against Him?

What is peace?—Most people have the idea that it is a sort of ecstatic feeling. They think that peace with God means an indescribable heavenly feeling; and so they always look for that imaginary feeling as evidence that they are accepted with God.

But peace with God means the same thing that it means with men: it means simply the absence of war. As sinners we are enemies of God. He is not our enemy, but we are his enemies. He is not fighting against us, but we are fighting against him. How then may we have peace with him? Simply by ceasing to fight, and laying down our arms. We may have peace whenever we are ready to stop fighting.

"Peace with God."—Note that when we have peace with God we are not simply at peace with him, but we have his peace. This peace has been left on the earth for men; for the Lord has said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." John 14:27. He has given it to us. It is ours, therefore, already. It has always been ours. The only trouble has been that we have not believed it. As soon as we believe the words of Christ, then we have in very *deed* the peace which he has given. And it is peace with God, because we find the peace in Christ, and Christ dwells in the bosom of the Father. John 1:18.

Peace and Righteousness.—"Great peace have they which love thy law." Ps. 119:165. "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." Isa. 48:18. Righteousness is peace, because our warfare against God was our sins that we cherished. God's life is righteousness, and he is the God of peace. ...

Peace and Feeling.—The question is asked, "Can one have peace with God and not have a feeling of peace?" What says the Scripture? "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." What brings the peace? The faith. But faith is not feeling. If it were necessarily the case that there must be a certain feeling with peace, then if we did not have that feeling we should know that we were not justified; and then justification would be a matter of feeling, and not of faith. ... Peace that depends on feeling will depart as soon as we begin to feel tribulation. But nothing can make any difference with the peace that comes by faith. "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; *I have overcome the world.*" John 16:33. (*Waggoner on Romans*, pp. 93, 94 (emphasis added)).

—Craig Barnes