

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

"THE GIFT OF TRUE PEACE IN JESUS"

Big Idea: In the gift of Jesus Christ, God has secured our peace with himself and with one another.

For individual study or discussion

If we're going to think about or talk about peace, it's probably best to begin with defining the word. Everyone is *for* peace, but there are a lot of different definitions of it. Peace can mean the absence of conflict, the end of war. For a lot of people, Christians included, peace is often thought of as a feeling or a state of being. We feel "at peace" when we look at the sun setting over the valley, or (where most of us are this year) we wish we could expel all our anxieties in one shuddering breath and be filled with a sense of contentment and peace.

In his letter to the Ephesians (and elsewhere in his writings—see Rom. 5:1-2, for example), Paul asserted that in Christ we can have both peace with God and peace with all other believers. And the best clue as to how Paul defined peace is to see how he contrasts peace with what existed before the coming of Christ. Before Christ, there were those who were "far away" (v. 13). There was a "dividing wall of hostility" (v. 14). Peace means being "brought near." It means the destruction of the barrier. And best of all, it means both Jew and Gentile "have access to the Father by one Spirit" (v. 18).

- 1) The way in which we are brought near is through the blood of Christ (v. 13).
 - Puritan pastor and theologian Jonathan Edwards explained in one of his sermons that God is a "Being of infinite greatness, majesty, and glory; and therefore is infinitely honorable." Sin against God, therefore must be a crime "infinitely heinous." Is this how most people view sin and God? Is this true? How important is it to grasp this view of sin and God, both for those of us who already believe and for those who are asking questions about Jesus and Christianity?
 - In his now-famous summation of the Gospel, Tim Keller has said that we "are more sinful and flawed" than we ever dared to believe, yet more "accepted and loved" than we ever dared to hope." How might you restate this with references to enmity and peace?
 - How is Christ himself our peace? (See v. 14 and John 14:27.)
- 2) Through Jesus, those who were once enemies are now brothers and sisters, members of the same household. (See v. 19a.)
 - What will build unity in this household? What will destroy it? See also Colossians 3:11-17 and Hebrews 10:19-25 as you consider this question.
 - Why is the church so often divided (indeed, roiled with conflict)?
- 3) What is our message of peace to this world? What does it mean to "preach peace" (v. 17)?

DATE: December 6, 2020

SPEAKER: Chad

SERIES: Advent 2020

PASSAGE: Ephesians 2:13-18

Family Dinner Table

"Can't we all just get along?"

Maybe you've heard that from a parent or a coach or a teacher. It's something people say when they're sick and tired of disagreements and fighting. The arguing has dragged on, and someone tries to put an end to it. Or here's another argument-ender: "OK, guys. Let's just agree to disagree."

If the argument is over whether cookies and cream or mint chocolate chip is the best ice cream, those are good ways to bring a heated discussion to an end. But there are times when we, even those of us who are committed followers of Jesus, don't get along at all, and peace seems elusive (something, in other words, almost impossible to achieve).

In this part of his letter, Paul told the Ephesians that Jesus *is* our peace (v. 14) and that he preached peace (v. 17). And Paul reminded the Ephesians that because of Jesus' death, the great wall of hostility between Jews and Gentiles had been destroyed (vv. 14-15).

So why are there so many times when Christians *can't* seem to get along? What's the problem? And what's the solution?

How can we be at peace with everyone who truly trusts in Jesus?

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

Fellowship of Christian Athletes

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Bible Mission Global

¹Jonathan Edwards, "The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners," preached on Romans 3:19, "that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God."