

EXPERIENCING *Peace on Earth*

GOD OF PEACE

3 ACTIVITIES CARRYING THE PROMISE OF PERSONAL PEACE

George Hulse | December 4th, 2016

Peace Promised

- In this world we are promised trials, suffering and persecution. However in Christ we are promised the experience of God's peace.
- Last week we remembered what Christmas is all about:

"GLORY TO GOD IN HIGHEST HEAVEN, AND PEACE ON EARTH TO THOSE WITH WHOM GOD IS PLEASED."

LUKE 2:14 (NLT)

Peace Experienced

- Bible Quiz: What precedes this phrase in the Bible; 'Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand.'
 - Clear your mind completely
 - Clear your schedule completely
 - Complete your 'to do' list perfectly
 - Don't worry, pray, and thank Him for everything

God of Peace

"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me— everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you."

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-9

Learning Peace

- Personal peace has the quality of inner calm and balance, as well as the sense of being protected. It is something 'learned as a secret' and is possessed in every circumstance once gained.
 - Nothing in all of this Christmas season (apart from Jesus;) can take it from you, nor give it to you for that matter!
 - Personal peace will not be found by releasing negative thoughts, rather it will be brought by the presence of a power greater than our thoughts— "The God of peace will be with you!" (Phil. 4:9)

- Here are 3 activities that will help you learn the secret of personal peace and carry it with you this Christmas season.

Thinking on Christmas

Fix your thoughts on what is true, honorable and right. Paul's talking about doctrine. If you want peace, think about God's truth!

- How different is this from meditation and thought control?! They say, stop thinking. But God says think deeply about what is true! Think about life's big questions- why am I here? what is life about?
- Personal peace grows out from the implications of God's truth. Christmas is about God's loving rescue and redemption of the world He so loves.

Food for Christmas thought:

- GALATIANS 4:1-7 | we are adopted as God's children
- EPHESIANS 2:14-18 | Jesus is our peace
- PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9 | experiencing God's peace
- COLOSSIANS 1:15-22 | Christ made peace with everything in heaven and on earth.

"OFF TO ONE SIDE SITS A GROUP OF SHEPHERDS. THEY SIT SILENTLY ON THE FLOOR, PERHAPS PERPLEXED, PERHAPS IN AWE, NO DOUBT IN AMAZEMENT. THEIR NIGHT WATCH HAD BEEN INTERRUPTED BY AN EXPLOSION OF LIGHT FROM HEAVEN AND A SYMPHONY OF ANGELS. GOD GOES TO THOSE WHO HAVE TIME TO HEAR HIM-AND SO ON THIS CLOUDLESS NIGHT HE WENT TO SIMPLE SHEPHERDS."

Max Lucado
GOD CAME NEAR

Thankful for Christmas

- "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand."
 - We are all going to say "Thank you" on Christmas morning more than a few times. We will have received a gift. But this passage tells us to begin saying "Thank you" to God now. Why?

We must thank Him

- Our God weaves and works everything together for our good- those of us who love Him! (Romans 8:28) He even works the trials into good for us.
 - Imagine the horrific nature of the cross and all of the terribleness surrounding it. The disciples would have winced at believing that anything good was coming from it. But it was God's ultimate act of good, our redemption from sin. God weaves good for us even in this fallen world.

"GOD SAYS, "WHEN A CHILD OF MINE MAKES A REQUEST, I ALWAYS GIVE THEM WHAT THEY WOULD HAVE ASKED FOR IF THEY KNEW EVERYTHING THAT I KNOW." IF WE BELIEVE THIS, WE WILL HAVE PEACE. MAKE YOUR REQUESTS KNOWN WITH THANKSGIVING."

Tim Keller
"PEACE, REAL SIGNS OF THE SPIRIT"

Loving at Christmas

“Jesus replied, ‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: Love your neighbor as yourself. The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.’”

MATTHEW 22:37-40

- Peace comes to our hearts and our minds. It is not enough to only think, we must also set our affections in the right place.

AUGUSTINE SAID, “ONLY LOVE OF THE IMMUTABLE CAN BRING US PEACE.” EVERYTHING ELSE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. “GOD ALONE IS THE PLACE OF PEACE THAT CANNOT BE DISTURBED.”

Augustine
CONFESSIONS