

True Peace and Rest with God

Ps. 94:19 – “In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul.”

This verse shows a man who is at peace with God, and who knows the comforting reality of God in his life, whose heart and mind is constantly on God, and able to hear God. How are we to come to this condition? We must know where we started, how we came to Christ, and then continue on growing in him.

1. **Unregenerate man has no peace – he is a child of the devil, alienated from the life of God, in fact, an enemy of God.**

Isa. 48:22 – “There is no peace, saith the LORD, to the wicked.”

As stated in the last lesson, a wicked man can experience superficial peace (not living in war time, relatively good marriage and job, financial security, etc.), but has no conception of true peace of the soul, peace with God, and a clean conscience.

Col. 1:21 – “And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, ...”

Before our conversion, we were alienated from God, and enemies to true righteousness, no matter how “religious” or morally commendable we were in the eyes of the world. We were “without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12).

2. **Through the blood of Christ we have regeneration (the new birth), a new heart, justification, cleansing, forgiveness, redemption, adoption, and access to the Father in prayer.**

Col. 1:20-22 – “And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard ...”

Isa. 53:5 – “But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”

We can be at peace with God, only because Jesus bore the chastisement or punishment of our sins.

Jn. 14:1 – “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.”

While this was spoken to his disciples who were upset at what he was telling them in the upper room, it can also speak to the soul who believes in God, but has not been born again. Belief in the existence of a “Father” God does not save. It is only by believing on the Son that we receive life.

It can also apply to born-again Christians who are experiencing grief, turmoil, doubts, and fears. We are invited specifically to believe on Christ, not just “God” in general. See him as the real and ever present source of life, comfort, and peace, even in the midst of tribulation.

3. **Because of this we now are at peace with God.**

People commonly ask if someone has “made their peace with God”, but it is really the other way around. He is the one who took the initiative to turn our wicked and warring hearts to him, and made a way for us to be at peace with him. He gives us the grace to believe, and regenerates our hearts.

Rom. 5:1 – “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Eph. 2:11-18 – “Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, ... at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both [*i.e., Jew and Gentile*] one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.”

4. A result of this peace is rest, whereby we can experience true peace of the mind and soul.

It is possible to be saved, confident that our sins are covered by the Blood of Christ, and so not fearing ultimate damnation, yet still not be living in rest. Our spirits can be in turmoil because of the cares and troubles of this life.

Heb. 4:1 – “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.”

Heb. 4:9-11 – “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”

This peace can only come from abiding in the Vine (Jn. 15), eating and drinking of his body and blood, and dwelling in the secret place of the Almighty. We must be able to say truthfully that we know him and that he knows us, or our faith is vain. It is only through Christ that we can ever know peace.

Jn. 14:27 – “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.”

This relationship of faith allows us to live above fear and anxiety. It allows us to pray in faith, knowing that we have a Father who hears us in Christ.

Phl. 4:6-7 – “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.”

This peace allows us to overcome stress, and to sleep.

Ps. 4:8 – “I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.”

Ps. 127:2 – “It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.”

5. This rest is imperfectly found in this life, but should be a daily goal.

Now we struggle through life and yet find rest in prayer, in the scriptures, in the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, and even in the comfort and encouragements of other saints. We should see God’s rest as a goal for each day. Sometimes it is easier than others, and it is not a one-time accomplishment. We must maintain that peace through daily abiding in Christ.

6. The sabbath was given as a picture of this rest.

As God created the world in six days and rested (ceased) on the seventh, he tells us to honor the sabbath also. As Christians this is not a matter of law, but is still something to be honored. We should not just rest our bodies, or use the day in vain pursuits and entertainments, but use the day to seek rest of the soul, in seeking God.

7. There will be perfect rest after this life.

The sabbath is also a picture of our laboring through this life, to be able to enter into our final rest in the next.

This is largely what Hebrews 4 and 10 mean. It is warning us to hold fast our profession and not to give up or backslide in unbelief. There is a reward to the righteous, and we must labor through this life to enter fully into perfect rest in the next, when we will be with him, and see him as he is.

John Wesley was on a ship to Georgia in 1736 when a terrible storm hit, terrifying him and the crew, but there was a group of Moravian missionaries on board who calmly sang through the storm, with no apparent fear of death. This became a major eye-opener for Wesley. They did not fear death because they knew they were in God’s hands.

Ps. 23 – “The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and they staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.”