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John 14:23-31 – *My Peace I Give You*

Preached at Trinity CRC

February 7, 2021

John 14:23-31

²³ Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. ²⁴ Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

²⁵ “All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁶ But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

²⁸ “You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. ²⁹ I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. ³⁰ I will not say much more to you, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold over me, ³¹ but he comes so that the world may learn that I love the Father and do exactly what my Father has commanded me.

“Come now; let us leave.”

The Word of the Lord. (**Thanks be to God**)

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.”

“Do not let your hearts be disturbed or thrown into confusion...”

“Do not be afraid...”

“My peace I give you.”

This is not a rosy scene we’ve opened up to this morning.

My guess is that Jesus is not stoic in his delivery of these words...

He’s not emotionless or stone-faced.

He very-well may have been choked up...

Maybe there were tears in his eyes as he said these words:

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.”

And rightfully so...

Because this is an intense scene.

Jesus is meeting with his disciples—

His closest friends—

On the night before he is to die.

His disciples have every reason to be troubled, distraught, and afraid...

Because he has just told them that his departure is imminent...

It's going to happen...

Tomorrow!

Of course their hearts are troubled!

Of course they're afraid!

They're probably thinking:

“What happens to our future now?”

“He was our hope for a new life.”

“Who is going to care for us now?”

“Who is going to love us like he loves us?”

“Who will lead us in his absence?”

“He is our best friend!”

There is sadness.

There is pain.

There is confusion...

All of the same things that *we're* feeling right now.

And into this tense scene—

This scene full of tears and despair—

Jesus says these audacious words:

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.”

How can Jesus say such a thing?

Doesn't he know how bad it hurts?

Doesn't he know how troubling it *is*?

Doesn't he know how confused we are?

Doesn't he know that we *are* very afraid!

Where do you turn in troubled times?

Where do you turn when it all becomes too much?

When your life fills with anxiety, fear, confusion, and sadness...

Where do you go for peace?

Our world offers ways for us to have peace:

Peace of mind can come in the form of an RSP;

I find peace of mind knowing that health care is provided here in Canada;

Some of us find peace of mind in owning firearms...

Especially where I come from;

Some of us find peace in time...

“Time heals all wounds.”

Right?

For some peace comes from distraction or avoidance...

Just pushing whatever is bothering us to the side...

And focusing on something else.

The other night Kristi and I sat on the couch to finish a movie...

And I was able to set all of the thoughts from the week to the side...

It was nice to have that space.

The peace offered to us by the world is good...

These are helpful ways of managing.

But, what do these ways to peace have in common?

They don't last.

As soon as our movie was over, I hopped in the shower...

And the thoughts and the feelings from the week—

The feelings I was able to distance for 30 minutes—

Came rushing back over me.

Peace offered to us by the world is limited...

It's circumstantial:

Retirement accounts fluctuate;

Weapons can be taken away...

Or bad people have bigger weapons;

Distractions only work for so long;

And time doesn't heal all wounds.

The peace we experience today—

Based on something given to us by the world—

Can be taken away from us in a moment with the changing of a circumstance.

Why is this?

Because the world itself is not a peaceful place.

We yearn for and want to strongly work for peace...

But peace is not something the world has every firmly possessed...

As evidenced by broken treaties, wars, broken relationships, divorce, addictions, a spike in mental illness, death, and on and on.

How can the world give us something that it does not possess for itself? (Scott Hoezee)

That would be like me trying to give you a million dollars that I do not have.

All that the world can offer is temporary, circumstantial peace.

For Jesus' disciples the circumstances have changed:

Jesus is about to be taken from them.

For us, circumstances have changed:

Joanne has been taken from us;

Larry has been taken from us;

Tara has been taken from us;

Isaac Mattieu has been taken from us;

John has been taken from us;

Our freedom to meet with loved ones has been taken from us;

Our freedom to go wherever we want has been taken from us.

Where do we turn in troubled times?

When we're confused, upset, distraught and afraid...

What do we do?

Where do *we* find peace in a world that does not possess peace?

Jesus speaks these words to his hurting friends...

And he speaks them to us:

“Peace I leave with you;”

“My peace I give you.”

“I do not give to you as the world gives.”

“Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

Jesus gives us his peace.

When the world falls short—

When life overwhelms us and we have nowhere to turn—

Jesus says, “*My* peace I give you.”

Let's talk about Christ's peace...

Because we're in desperate need of it right now.

First, where does Christ's peace come from?

Where are its roots?

Does Jesus just create this peace out of nothing?

That wouldn't be too reassuring, would it?

The peace of Christ is rooted in the relationship between the Father and Son.

Jesus says, “If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father.”

“You would rejoice if you really understood where I am going...”

Jesus has been living as one of us for 3 years.

He humbled himself in the incarnation...

Leaving his Father’s immediate presence...

Leaving all of the glory, majesty, love, joy, and peace that are found in it.

The Son leaves his place in heaven to come down to earth...

Where there is fighting, disease, corruption, and death.

But now, finally, in his death...

He will return to where he belongs in the Godhead...

To this relationship of perfection...

Where the Father and the Son share a perfect love for each other.

From eternity the Trinity has existed in perfect relationship:

No backstabbing;

No false motives;

No jealousy;

No anxiety or worry;

No fighting;

No one upmanship...

Just pure and perfect love, and joy, and peace.

Jesus says, “this is where I’m going...”

“This is what I’m about to step back into.”

“Rejoice for me!”

And this is the utterly amazing thing:

We’re invited in.

“We will come to them and make our home with them.” (14:23; 14:2)

“My Father and I, we will make our home in you.”

When Jesus says, “*My peace* I give you...”

This is not a peace that he creates for us...

It’s a peace that he’s sharing with us...

A peace that he invites us into.

It’s the same peace that exists between the Father and the Son...

Let that sink in...

The peace that we’re given...

Is the same peace that exists between God the Father and God the Son.

No wonder why it’s called a peace that passes understanding (Phil 4:7)—

A peace that is beyond our comprehension—

Because its roots are in the relationship between the Father and the Son.

This peace then...

Is something that cannot be taken away...

It is rooted in eternity and remains for eternity.

Look at Jesus.

Here is a man facing the darkest day in human history—

He is about to be tortured and crucified...

He is about to be ripped away from his friends and family

He is about to experience separation from the Father—

And yet *he* is the one offering peace.

Jesus knows what he’s about to face...

And yet he still has peace...

Because this peace is deeply rooted.

This isn’t some superficial peace that asks us to ignore the troubles of life...

Jesus isn’t asking us not to feel.

In John 16 Jesus acknowledges that we *do* face trouble in the world...

It is not easy...

There is pain...

There is loss...

But these cannot touch the peace that he himself *has*...

Even as he walks to his own death.

And these troubles cannot touch the peace that Christ *gives*...

This peace is too deep;

It is so securely anchored in the Godhead...

That no circumstance...not even Satan himself can touch it.

Satan has no claim on Christ...

Which means he has no claim on Jesus' peace...

Which means he has no claim on our peace.

When Harold sent a message after Joanne passed away saying:

“We are at peace.”

My wife, their mom passed away...

But, “we are at peace.”

This is only a peace given by Christ...

A peace that no circumstance or evil can touch.

It doesn't ignore the pain or pretend like it's not there...

But the peace meets us where we're at in the pain.

The Spirit that Christ leaves us—

That unites us to the Father and the Son—

Grants us this unspeakable peace in the midst of our darkest circumstances.

So how do we attain this peace?

Many of us are looking for peace right now.

How do we get it?

First, look to Christ, because it *does* belong to him.

“*My peace I give you.*”

This is his peace to give...

We don't have to work for it...

He gives it to us...

And Jesus is not stingy.

“*Anyone* who loves me will obey/follow my teaching/word.”

“My Father will love them, and we will make our home with them.”

There is not a limited amount of this peace to go around...

It comes out of God's abundance...

So he gives it in abundance.

The Holy Trinity dwells within those who love Christ and follow his word.

You want the peace of Christ—

The eternal peace of the Father and Son—

To characterize your life?

Love the Son.

Follow his teaching.

What is Christ's teaching/word?

Is it the law of morality that tells us to do good?

Yes, but it is so much more.

It is his teaching concerning everything that he has said about himself...

Who he is and what he will do.

He is the Son of God come to live among us;

He lived a perfect life;

And gave it up for us who did not;

When we were separated from God...

Jesus stepped up and died for our sins.

Trust and believe that in him is forgiveness and life...

Trust and believe that he is the owner of peace and is inviting us in.

Love the Son...

Commit yourself to the Son.

Follow his leading.

Be swept up in the wonder of the Son of God coming to us.

Be in awe that he loved you first and was willing to give it all up for you.

Be amazed that his Spirit is in this place right now...

That if you trust in Christ...

His Spirit and his peace are with you right now.

The peace of Christ belongs to Christ.

“Anyone who loves me will obey/follow my teaching/word...”

“My Father will love them, and we will make our home with them.”

Second, stop looking to the world for something it cannot give.

As we said earlier...

The world offers us helpful, temporary peace...

But its roots don't go deep and it doesn't last.

The peace that we need must come from outside of this world...

It has to come from outside of us...

We will not find this peace looking at us.

Stop looking to places where this peace is not found.

Third, ask for it.

“Present your requests to God and the peace of God which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” (Phil 4:6-7)

Make your request known to God...

Acknowledge that he holds the peace...

Acknowledge that you are his child...

And that you *need* his peace.

This asking takes many different shapes:

I was talking to one of you this past week...

You said you were cleaning the house...

But the thoughts and the memories became too much...

It was overwhelming.

So you sat down and prayed...

You turned to God's word.

Prayer is one way of asking for peace.

Memorizing Scripture is another way...

Recalling a Scripture that brings comfort during life's anxieties...

The one we just quoted from Phil 4:6-7 is a good one.

It doesn't have to be in major life crises that we're turning to God either...

He doesn't have a threshold of hardship that we have to reach before we can ask for peace.

Kristi was in Subway the other night...

And it was taking forever.

She was getting upset and impatient...

So she started humming a hymn.

She said it was hard to be angry while humming the song...

That there was a peace with her.

I know many of you turn to music most readily...

May this be your call for help or peace...

In life's tragic moments—

Or in life's on-going frustrations, fears, and anxieties—

Turn to God's peace in song.

Bring your hurts, fears, anxieties, and pain to God—

Ask him for his peace—

In whatever way is comfortable for you...

Just make sure that you're asking *Him*.

These are some hard times that we're going through.

But the Lord knows.

He knew that his disciples would face trouble in the world.

He knows that we're facing trouble in the world.

But he has left us his peace...

The peace of Christ.

May we all know it in this hour.

Amen.