

**Sunday Sermon: May 26, 2019 The Sixth Sunday of Easter**

**Sermon Text: John 14:25-27**

**Sermon Theme: Not the world's peace.**

<sup>25</sup> *“All this I have spoken while still with you. <sup>26</sup> But the Counselor, 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. <sup>27</sup> 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.*

What is something we all chase after, yet we always have it?

What is described as fleeting, but is always with us?

What is given as a gift, yet fought for?

We usually define peace as the absence of the things that make us struggle. This can be an absence of financial struggles, personal conflicts, or wars and violence. A quick search on the internet turns up a wide range of people who are quoted about peace. Authors like Emerson, Thoreau and Shakespeare, political figures like John F Kennedy and Eleanor Roosevelt, religious leaders like Gandhi and Buddha. Most of those thoughts on peace they can be summed up by John Lennon, “Give peace a chance.”

All of those people have basically the same idea about peace. If we work hard enough and have good intentions, we will achieve an earthly peace. We'll be able to find a peace with others, or within ourselves, or with the things we have, if we just work hard enough. However, it doesn't take us long to realize that even with hard work and good intentions, this type of peace is hard to find.

Maybe that's because we are looking for the wrong kind of peace. Jesus says his peace is not the world's peace. His peace is so much better because it is a complete peace that come from God and lasts eternally.

One of the things that I have always enjoyed is putting together puzzles. The more pieces the better. This was fairly easy when it was just my wife and I. We would be able to set the pieces on the table and then work on it for a few minutes and leave it until we wanted to work on it again. That doesn't happen anymore. As the family has grown we have noticed that it is harder and harder to keep all the pieces in one place.

When we get near the end of the puzzle there are always one or two pieces missing. This is very frustrating after all the time we spent on the puzzle. No matter where we look, or how hard we look, those pieces are long gone. It's hard to have worked to so long on that puzzle only to realize the puzzle will never be complete, it will always have missing pieces.

Sometimes we think of our life kind of like a puzzle. We work very hard to make our life peaceful, calm and enjoyable. We try to find the pieces of life we want, a piece here or a piece there, and then we try to fit them together so that we will have peace in our life. But that's not how life works, is it? We find that the peace of this world is not complete. No matter how hard we try, the pieces just don't come together into the peaceful picture we want. It always seems like we are missing a handful of pieces. Even worse, there are times we think the pieces we have don't fit together at all.

Often, the picture we have of what a perfect, peaceful life looks like is so far away from the reality we live with that we might begin to despair. We might begin to think that there is something wrong with us. We don't want our life, we want another person's life. We begin to covet a life that is not the one that God has put in front of us. We think that if we had the pieces that someone else has, then, our life would be peaceful and content and without problem.

The devil tries to cause turmoil in our life by having us focus on the things of this world and trying to find peace in them instead of focusing on God and his peace. The peace that the world gives is not a complete peace. We don't have to look far to see that even the people we think have the perfect lives struggle with the same things that we do. They have financial struggles, failed marriages, children who are rebellious, health issues are common, and there are struggles with greed, selfishness and self-centeredness.

The devil wants us to be so wrapped up in the pursuit of money, jobs, the perfect family, so that we miss the true peace that Jesus wants us to have. The author C S Lewis said, **“God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing.”** Let me read that again.

There is only one peace that is complete. There is only one peace that we will not lose, that we will not lose. It is not the peace found in the world or the world's things. As CS Lewis says, the peace that lasts is directly connected to our God who loves us, and to his Savior who saves us.

Our sermon text takes place on Maundy Thursday evening. Jesus is giving his disciples some final instruction before he is arrested, suffers and dies. The disciples are becoming more and more disturbed by the things that he is telling them. Jesus comforts them with these words about Peace.

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This seems like it is almost backwards: I am going to suffer and die, but be at peace. Yet, Jesus was trying to teach them that all this must happen just as God planned it would to bring the peace that God wanted us to have.

This complete peace that Jesus is speaking about is not something that the disciples were going to work for or strive for. It is not something that they would build or accumulate in life. It was something that he would give to them through the Holy Spirit.

Jesus gives us a complete peace that lasts on this earth. It is always with us, because Jesus promises that he is always with us. This peace that comes through faith clings to the promises that God has made that are sealed in the blood of Jesus and secured in the open tomb. **He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also along with him, graciously give us all things.** Since God has sent his Savior to die for us, we have the proof of God's love for all of our life, our earthly life and our eternal life. Since God has given his Son, he will not stand back and say, you figure it out. He is with us to keep us safe even now.

The peace that comes from Jesus through the Holy Spirit, the peace of faith, can change our hearts and can bring us peace with our life on earth. Paul says in Philippians 4, **I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. <sup>12</sup> I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. <sup>13</sup> I can do everything through him who gives me strength..... For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. <sup>18</sup> So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.**

The disciples were so worried about what the next days would bring. They were not only worried about Jesus, but about what their earthly life would look like. Yet, was trying to get them to look beyond their momentary trouble to something more important; he wanted them to fix their eyes on the eternity that he would give them. No matter what happened in the days ahead, Jesus was with them to keep them safe.

We may not be able to quantify the peace that Jesus gives to us in earthly terms, but there is no greater peace than taking our problems to our Lord and knowing he is taking care of them. There is no greater peace than knowing that the love of our God always stands with us. There is no greater peace than to know that our God's love is always with us. There is no greater peace than knowing that as we are going through struggles and trials that God is helping us. There is no greater peace than knowing that we have a God who forgives our sins and gives us peace of heart and mind. There is no greater peace that to know Jesus has provided us with answers to all of our questions. No matter what happens here on earth, we know that we have an eternal home that will be the final loving answer, the final peace, that Jesus gives to those who believe.

Life may not always come together in the picture of peace that we have in mind, but that's OK. Jesus is greater than the world around us. He tells us that he gives us a peace that is different from the world, it is better than the world because it is a complete peace of body and soul and it is a peace that will last to eternity. May God grant to us the faith which trusts in our Savior to give us his complete and eternal peace. Amen.