

# Kings Norton Baptist Church

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2022 10 am

The fruit of the Spirit is peace

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Welcome to all.

Opening Scripture

Hymn MP 506 O Lord my God

Scripture Psalm 96 (page 602)

Prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

Children's talk Bethesda

Chorus MP 254 I am a new creation

Notices Fellowship lunch, Members mtg, Housegroup at Ina's

Prayer time

Communion prep and prayer of confession

Chorus MP 321 I'm accepted, I'm forgiven

Communion

Reading Galatians 5:16-26 (page 1172)

Hymn MP 568 Reconciled, I'm reconciled

Sermon The peace of God

Hymn MP 757 when peace like a river it is well with my soul

Closing Prayer

Close

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**You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.** Isaiah 26:3

## Exordium and Prayer

- What do people say are the most important things in life? Do a search and you hear it's: Health, family, love, well-being, purpose, time, learning, becoming the best version of yourself, chasing your dreams, etc.,
- Then there are those key places to visit such as Machu Picchu, Peru or the Grand Canyon. And while in this world you must x2 experience the northern lights, drive a super car, or go on an African safari.

One could go on - none mention finding peace with God. There was peace for me – but peace with God? No. For most – it's just not important x2.

How about you? What's the most important thing for you in life? Is it peace with God? x2 Or do you think: it's just not important, "why do I need peace? Where's the war?" who needs peace when there's no war?

Maybe you don't know what I'm talking about? And say "I have peace with God already!" The great trick of the devil is to make people think that all is fine, theirs is nothing to do. Me and God are like that <> Don't believe it!!

God holds every sinner away from him, otherwise our dirtiness would taint his perfection. Every man or women born into this world is away from God, at odds with God. We all have a natural hostility towards God, an enmity, a refusal to bow the knee, a resistance to give God his right place. God's wrath remains on every lawbreaker therefore there can be no peace, there is no peace – not until our guilt is dealt with.

Peace with God is only found through Jesus Christ. That is what he bought for his people when he died on the cross. Romans 5:1 sums it up: **"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,"** **peace with God** x2

As we think of our main text this morning Gal 5:22: **the fruit of the spirit is peace** x2 Let us ask: What is true peace? And consider: The Prince of peace, The gospel of peace, The life of peace.

## What is true peace?

Ever been in a situation when you are with a group of people, everything is fine but then suddenly the atmosphere changes.

I remember sitting in a group years ago we were all at ease chatting together. Then it became apparent that one person in the room had stolen from another, suddenly it became tense, everyone was on edge.

So with Adam and Eve, together with the Lord God in the garden of Eden, everything was perfect, literally. But then Eve took the forbidden fruit and

gave it to her husband. The moment she did that there was a change, peace had gone, and fear, this unknown fear, came in – it must have hit them like a train, and they hid from God. They forfeited that peace both for themselves – and for every man woman, boy and girl since.

Ever since mankind has been trying to squeeze fleeting pleasure and satisfaction from God's creation. Whatever you find here, you won't find peace. There remains in every heart that aching void, like a jigsaw puzzle with the main piece missing. We remain unsettled and without peace.

**David Baddiel: 'I wish there was a God. I'm desperate for that comfort'**

Peace is mentioned 250 times in the Bible. You know the word for peace. Shalom, it is a greeting in the middle East. That is the Hebrew/Arabic word.

The Greek is εἰρήνη eirene i-ray'-nay - know anyone called Irene? (Shalom and Eirene are interchangeable and the latter is employed in the Septuagint.)

The way back to the garden and to God is blocked. We are all 'out' x2

✚ **While we cannot go there – God came here.**

The OT helps us see where peace is found. In the midst of this dark world was the temple. It was a picture of holiness and peace, the wooden walls were inlaid with gold. Inside all is still no movement or draught. The olive oil lamps giving their pure light would produce a serene orange aura. Inside the holy temple, there with God, you find pure light and peace.

✚ **The problem is – no one can go there, no-one can enter.**

Nothing unclean can come near the temple never-lone go inside. Everything had to be made clean through the altar of sacrifice and the sprinkling of blood on the priests, the ceremonially clean priest alone being the only ones who can draw close to God and enter in.

Outside is defilement, the further away you go the dirtier it gets. Far from the temple and outside the camp is where the toilets where, and the dead buried. It is there, outside the city, outside the camp, at the place of the skull Jesus was crucified. Heb 13

Jesus had borne sin and shame. When he completed his sacrifice on the cross he shouted with a loud cry **"it is finished"** then he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain in the temple was torn in two - opening the way to God. Through Christ I can now enter in.

Here we see this Prince of peace, that God had promised before time began: **For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his**

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**shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.** Isaiah 9:6 **Prince of Peace.**

The Prince of peace was none other than the Lord of all Glory – He would give up his peace – to buy peace for others.

Looking forward to the cross we read of this suffering servant: **Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.**" Isaiah 53:4-5

✚ **Thank you Jesus, x2**

**Thank you Jesus Prince of peace - for the gospel of peace**

And how we all need it. Peace is not found in this world, all sin brings is disharmony, and disunity, both between people – but also inside each and every heart. So many are living in distress, the fruit of sin; thinking wrongly and acting wrong cuts across the way you and I were made, no wonder so many are toppling over in confusion and despair.

■ **Pictures on the wall at Cadbury college, images of people in distress**

I spent my early life looking for peace in this world. Did I find it? No.

✚ **Happiness and rest are what all men pursue. But the things of the world, wherein most men seek it, can never give it. It is labour spent in vain.**

Paul in Galatians 5 tells us first where it is not found and then where it is found. V.19 - 21 says **"The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God."** Galatians 5:19-21 That is not the way of peace, there is no peace there, that is the way of turmoil.

Romans 3 lists the mark of a life lived without God. and it is summed up with this phrase **and the way of peace they do not know."** Rom 3:17 Paul is quoting from Isaiah 59:8 **The way of peace they do not know. They have turned them into crooked roads; no-one who walks in them will know peace.**

**That's because sin and peace are opposites, and mutually exclude each other. That is why there is no peace for the wicked.** Isa 57:21

Some do not seek peace with God because they deny personal sin.

■ **Go and observe the toddlers in a playgroup. See how self-centered they are, see how they don't want to share. See how quickly upset**

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they are when they don't have their way and get what they want.  
There's all that attention seeking. There it is, unmasked, in the raw.

- This world is like a large-scale playgroup – we are older and we wear a good mask - but my essential nature is still the same as it was at 1.

Can you see it? Do you see it, compare yourself to Jesus, put the plumbline up against Jesus and see how you are, any area that is different - is your sin.

Failed love and obedience to God, - failed humility and love for others – all is sin. If that is you Confess it, turn from it – and seek Christ's forgiveness.

Trust Him, then you can say **“Therefore, since I have been justified through faith, I now have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,”** Rom 5:1

This peace is the gift of God through the gospel of Peace, Christ bought that for his people when he **reconciled** them to himself, by **making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.** Col 1:20

In Christ my sin, so obnoxious to the holiness of God, has been removed by the cross. Through Jesus God has a new attitude toward the repentant sinner – and he now declares you righteous in Christ – you can draw near in peace.

If you have done that then you can know the calm, the quiet, the order, which will flood the justified soul. Gone are the doubts, fears, and dreadful forebodings. **Peace is the first felt fruit of the pardon of sin.** There's a settlement of heart, There's no further contention, it's the end of hostilities.

- It is like the feeling after a long court case, a long and drawn-out battle when you come out knowing justice has been done and all is well. All is well and all the anguish, the fear, the sorrow, the worry and the trouble has gone.

You have peace in here – even when there is trouble all around.

- You could walk out of that court house to find violence on the streets yet in here there is peace.

Do you feel you are in the midst of it? up to here in it? It is the Lord you need to seek. He says if you have me **Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,**" says the LORD, who has compassion on you.

Isaiah 54:10

Picture a bird quietly perched on a post with the storm raging all around.

*The life of peace – comes from the Prince of peace*

What will you leave your children after you have gone? What's in your will for them? Christ says to his grieving disciples just prior to his departure.

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**“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.”** John 14:27

Jesus alludes to men making their wills before death. A Will is enacted at death, Jesus' death enacts His will, Christ's death unlocks the inheritance. The Lord Jesus has bequeathed true peace and comfort to his followers.

- ✚ It is a peace that passes understanding, it's indescribable, it has to be experienced to be known.

He had no earthly estate to leave to his disciples who were as it were his family, but he had *peace* to give them. **‘my peace I give you’** John 14:27 Yes, It was *his* peace that he gave them, the same perfect divine peace he always had in God. Christ gives his people a participation of his own happiness.

It is like being with someone who fully accepts you, warts and all.

- Staying with a family – and you are treated as one of the family it is a wonderful feeling of settlement, peace and rest.

And what an amazing experience it must be for a child to escape a war zone and come into the security of a loving home. What a story he or she has to tell of finding peace! **in me you will have peace.** John 16:33

- ✚ There is peace in God's family, acceptance from God my loving father.

When Jesus was coming into this world the angel declared **"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favour rests."** Luke 2:14.

At Jesus's resurrection, the first of the new creation, the new order, **Jesus himself stood** among his disciples **and said to them, "Peace be with you."** Lu 24:36

Do you know that peace? x2 Jesus's peace is so different from the miseries found this world! His peace tastes of the tranquillity of heaven, the peace of the celestial paradise, a glimpse of the glory of God to lighten our path. His ever-present help in trouble - no time, no change, can destroy. It will remain when the body dies. It will remain when the mountains depart and the hills shall be removed, and when the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll. The fountain of his comfort shall never be diminished, and the stream shall never be dried. His comfort and joy is a living spring in the soul, a well of water springing up to everlasting life.

Four mini points about this peace for the Christian.....

#### 1. You will have new battles!

To have peace with God will mean a war with myself. Some search for peace with themselves. A Christian will not have it this side of heaven. A

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Christian in kingdom of God has changed sides. Now there's a war within you, the Spirit against the flesh which is still hostile to God. Do you realise that? It is a sign of a true convert – there's that inner conflict, a battle within. If you have peace with God then you won't have peace with yourself.

To have peace with God will also mean war with the ways of the world around which are controlled by the evil one. No man or woman of God should be at home, be at peace with the world. Foolishly look to its temptations and attraction and you will lose your peace God.

#### 2. This peace is to be guarded

Beware, watch out, if you have peace then do not lose it. I don't mean lose salvation but lose that peace that come from walking rightly with the Lord.

Moment by moment peace is a precious gift that must be maintained. **Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts** Col 3:15. In other words let the peace of Christ be the rule, be the guide in our lives. Have you lost that peace? then immediately stop and ask why? What is it? - A bad thought, a look to other things for satisfaction, and suddenly you realise you have lost your peace.

- It's like being in a warm room, and someone comes in and doesn't close the door. You immediately feel a change. It gradually dawns on you there's a cold draught. You turn round to see the cause of the cold air coming in. Make sure there are no cold draughts in your walk with the Lord to chill that closeness.

**God will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.** Isaiah 26:3

In the OT when God's people disobeyed and grieved the Lord they found themselves attacked and overrun by the nations that surrounded them.

When they lived rightly, in obedience then they lived at peace with. **“My people will live in peaceful dwelling-places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest.”** Isaiah 32:2,18 That is God's gift of peace. **When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him.**

Proverbs 16:7

#### 3. Peace is to be pursued

Peter says the mark of the new believer (quoting from Ps 34:14) **He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it.** 1 Peter 3:11

We are **to be peaceable** Titus 3:2. With Christ I can be peaceable towards others – even though they will not be peaceable towards me. **If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.** Ro 12:18 Who are you currently at odds with? Have you made peace with them?

#### 4. Peace is to be offered

Jesus says: **Blessed are the peacemakers.** So let us who have peace - be peacemakers. That is to bring this gospel of peace to those still at war with God. Will they hear of these wonderful terms of peace, from your lips?

The peace that those with Christ enjoy is not only our comfort, but it is a part of our beauty and dignity. This peace comes from a poverty of spirit, a holy resignation and trust in God in all of life's circumstances.

- In 1874 a large French steamer, the "Ville de Havre," was on her homeward voyage from America, when in mid-ocean a collision with a sailing vessel took place, the steamer sinking in half an hour, with the loss of almost all on board. A Mrs. Spafford, the wife of a lawyer in Chicago, was a passenger, accompanied by her four children. On being told that the vessel was rapidly foundering, she knelt with her children in prayer, asking God that if possible they might be saved, or be made willing to die, if such was His Will.
- A few minutes later the ship went down, and the children were lost. Mrs. Spafford, however, was rescued by a sailor, who, rowing over the spot where the vessel had disappeared, found her floating in the water, and ten days later she was landed at Cardiff. From there she cabled to her husband the message, "Saved alone," x2 a message which Mr. Spafford framed and hung in his office.
- Two years later Messrs. Moody and Sankey were staying with Mr. and Mrs. Spafford for some weeks, and during that visit Mr. Spafford wrote, in commemoration of the death of his children, that hymn, with its triumphant chorus, which has become such a favourite the world over, and in the first lines of which the reference to the great grief of his life is clearly discernible:

*When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows, like sea billows, roll,  
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to know  
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

It was the greatest comfort for the bereaved parents to know that all four children had been converted to Christ at one of Mr. Moody's meetings shortly before the fatal voyage.

He could say - as you and I should be able to say: *'it is well with my soul'*. **for the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.** Phil 4:7

Let us sing "When peace like a river" No.757

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