Let His Peace Rule

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Some people love contention. It's so exciting to them when things are all stirred up and people are fighting.

Never a dull moment! Phones are ringing. Facebook and Twitter are on fire. Text messages are flying back and forth. The media are hyping "the growing outrage" over the current real or apparent injustices.

"Have you heard the latest?" "Wonder what so-and-so is going to do now." "Let's watch and see if ..." "Well, I told her what I thought about it!"

Talk about fun! It certainly takes the monotony out of "ordinary" living.

To folk like that, peace is dull and boring. They want the heady exhilaration of controversy. They are drawn into it. Never mind who is hurt or destroyed so long as there is a struggle, a scandal, a personal defeat or downfall.

So long as people are willing to fight to get their way, there will be strife. So long as contention provides so much perverse personal gratification, people will be drawn into it. And all concerned will suffer its miserable consequences.

The Bible says, "What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?" (James 4:1 NIV).

Peace is no accident. It comes only where it is wanted and only to those who choose it, plan for it, work for it, guard it.

"Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it" (Psalm 34:14. Also 1 Peter 3:10, 11).

"Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace, and things by which one may edify another" (Romans 14:19).

"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3).

"Pursue peace with all men, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14).

If we are going to have peace, we must place a higher and greater value on peace than on the lesser things that disrupt it.

Peace is priceless. If peace is broken, we must not be the ones who break it. If there is strife, let it be others who force it on us. Then let us be the ones who do what is necessary, reasonable, and proper to restore it as soon as possible.

Peace is the second of the three essential qualities of the kingdom of God listed in Romans 14:17: "For the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." Righteousness is mentioned first, because without righteousness there will be no peace and also no joy in the Holy Spirit.

It is the God of peace who bruises Satan under our feet (Romans 16:20). It is the God of peace who sanctifies us wholly (1 Thessalonians 5:23) and equips (completes) us for every good work (Hebrews 13:20). As we live in peace, the God of peace will be with us (2 Corinthians 13:11). Also, the God of peace will be with us as we follow godly teaching and godly examples (Philippians 4:9).

The conclusion is clear and inescapable—if we want Satan to be bruised under our feet, if we want to be holy and spiritually mature, if we want to please God, if we want the God of peace to be with us, *we must live in peace.*

Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). He is the "Lord of peace" who wants to give us "peace always in every way" (2 Thessalonians 3:16).

He gave His peace to us. "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). He commanded us, "Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another" (Mark 9:50).

God has called us to peace (1 Corinthians 7:15). He charges us in His word: "Be at peace among yourselves" (1 Thessalonians 5:13).

So then, peace is not optional. *It is a divine command.* Therefore, whatever destroys peace is a direct violation of the Word of God. It is disobedience.

"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful" (Colossians 3:15). This is a divine order! If there is trouble, murmuring, gossiping, backbiting, and strife, *stop it.* God commands that there be peace!

"If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18). Peace is always possible if we place the importance on it that God does and we

are determined to obey Him. If the peace of God rules our hearts, we can and will leave peaceably with others so far as our part is concerned.

"To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6). Where people are spiritually minded, there will be peace. But if there is turmoil, there is carnal-mindedness somewhere. Carnality brings strife. Spirituality brings peace.

One of the Beatitudes is: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9).

"Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace" (James 3:18). If we want to enjoy the pleasant fruit of righteousness, we must sow righteous seeds (and deeds); such seeds are sown by peacemakers.

Epistle after epistle begins with the invocation of "peace from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ." Also, 2 Peter 1:2 declares: "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord." We notice here a direct causal correlation between peace and the (full and precise) knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Describing wisdom, Proverbs 3:17 says, "All her paths are peace." If we are following the paths of wisdom, we are walking in peace.

Any so-called "wisdom" that produces envying and strife is "earthly, sensual, demonic." By contrast, "the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield [to reason], full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy" (James 3:14 - 18).

"The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever" (Isaiah 32:17). If what we are doing is a work of righteousness, it will produce peace.

The fruit of righteousness is peaceable, and this "peaceable fruit of righteousness" is worth whatever chastening our loving Heavenly Father has to administer *to* us in order to produce it *in* us (Hebrews 12:11).

The reason for this is that when Jesus comes, He wants to find us "in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Peter 3:14).

It is important to let the peace of God rule in our hearts also in matters of personal guidance. Sometimes we feel pressured by people and by circumstances into making decisions when we do not feel real peace in our heart about the matter. We can become excited and make hasty decisions, allowing impulse to rule instead of peace.

If peace is not in control, take it as a warning. Better back off. Check it out with the Bible. Think. Get the facts. Seek knowledgeable advice and godly counsel. Wait on God; let Him give you a sound view of the matter, and let Him work things out His way and in His time. *Let the peace of God rule in your heart.*

"For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace" (Isaiah 55:12).

"Oh, that you had heeded My commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea" (Isaiah 48:18).

Pay attention to what God says in His word. Obey Him. Live biblically. Then God's peace will rule in your heart.

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