

Fruit of the Spirit: Peace

Galatians 5:13-26

10 May 2020 | Grace Bible Church Corinda | Scott Wilson

TEXT

¹³ You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. ¹⁴ For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."^k ¹⁵ If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

¹⁶ So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

¹⁹ The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ 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.

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

[The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ga 5:13–26.

OUTLINE

Big Idea - We are PEACEMAKERS because Jesus first gave us PEACE

- Walking in Peace when you don't feel peaceful
- Walking in Peace by loving others

Introduction

When Coronavirus isolation was ramping up, there was a rush on certain things. Shops ran out of things like hand sanitiser, baking goods, and of course, toilet paper. Then, people started to think about how they were going spend their days. Gym equipment became scarce and there were lines outside bike shops.

Like many others, perhaps you thought a puzzle might be a good way to pass your days in isolation. So, you obsessively work on these 1000 pieces, you find your corners, find your edges and pick a section and get to work, pick another section work on it and eventually, after a day or two, you get to the last 50 pieces, then 20 pieces, but there's something wrong. There's a piece that should have a bit of yellow with a bit of blue and all you have left is bits of grass. Anxiety starts to set in as you casually look on the ground around you. But there are no pieces anywhere to be found. You decide to finish what you can, all the while hopeful that you'll see some blue and yellow in your sea of green. NOTHING. You complete 999 pieces and you start the search. Under the lounge cushions, behind the bookshelf, you peek around the edges of the rugs, there is a certain franticness in your voice as you interrogate the children, and urgently look under things that haven't been looked under for a long while.

There is no peace in your mind and heart until you find that missing puzzle piece. But when you find it, that sense of accomplishment is heightened. Much like the puzzle in front of you, you feel complete and content. Peace is restored.

The last couple of weeks, we've diving into the fruits of the spirit. Ben started us off with love, and last week Michael brought a message on joy. And if you hadn't worked it out yet, today, we are focusing on one word in the bible, PEACE.

And the word peace has been used to describe a variety of different situations in our context. Things like no war, famine or drought, unity between two people or countries, a time in your life where the worries and anxieties of today aren't there. Some people might think about that first coffee, a nice run, the open road or a good book on a rainy day.

I don't think that any of these things are the wrong view of peace, the problem is that they are all fleeting. They might happen for a time or moment, but before long, the complexities of life take over. This leaves us with a view of peace that is more about situations and moments, rather than fullness and completeness. It means that we have to keep on searching for that next hit of peace, and, for many, that search never seems to stop.

This doesn't really line up with the gospel message which is, the good news that Christ Jesus came to make us right, or Justify us, by grace back into relationship with God.

So, before we move any further let's get a more concise idea of what the bible is talking about when it comes to peace.

What is Peace

In the old testament, the concept of peace is the word shalom. In the garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had shalom with God. There was peace and unity in their relationship. This peace was broken when they disobeyed God and let sin enter into the world. Then when we get to the New Testament, this peace is, once again, restored through Christ. Our broken relationship with God, caused by sin, is restored through Jesus' life death and resurrection. As Christians we have peace with God.

Peace is intricately weaved into the salvation story. Jesus said this in John 14:27

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 afraid¹

The peace Jesus offers is different to worldly peace.

But in Galatians 5, where the Fruit of the spirit is found, Paul is telling us to walk in peace. It's not just something that we receive through Christ but it's also something that we must do. We often talk about the fruit of the spirit being virtues. And the sermon on the mount tells us.

⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers,

¹ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Jn 14:27.

for they will be called children of God.²

We need to seek unity, rest and restoration as we walk in light of the peace that we have received through Christ. Pastor and theologian, Tim Keller, in his definitions of the fruit of the spirit, says that peace is.

“Confidence and rest in the wisdom and sovereignty of God more than your own.”

He’s saying that peace is relying on God in all things. Because when we do this, we know that God is great and therefore we don’t need to be in control. So, with confidence we can trust in the God that loves and cares deeply for us as we go about the everyday stuff of life. It also changes how we interact with those around us. See if we are to love our neighbour as Gal 5:14 tells us then we should want that peace not just in our own lives but in theirs too. See how our peace in salvation is tied into walking in peace. We are peacemakers because Jesus first gave us peace.

As we look at walking in the spirit today, and focus in on peace, the big idea is just that,

We are peacemakers because Jesus first gave us peace.

We are going to look at

- **Walking in Peace when you don’t feel peaceful.**
- **Walking in Peace by loving others.**

Walking in Peace when you don’t feel peaceful.

Now, I got to be honest with you, two or three months ago, when the topics were being divided up for this series and I was assigned peace, I thought God was having a laugh, because I don’t feel like I’m in a very peaceful stage in my life. I mean, I run a small business, have church commitments, trying to work out how to be a student for the first time in 20 years, and we have 4 young children that don’t seem to understand the concept of inside

² [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Mt 5:9.

voices, conflict resolution without parental intervention and we are in the mist of having the 10,000 conversations Paul Tripp says is necessary to see heart change in our children's lives. Peaceful is not the first thing that comes to mind. There are a few others that pop into my head well before peace. But, hectic, crazy, busy and chaotic are not listed as fruits of the spirit. I checked a few times.

The wild thing is, that over the last month or so, a lot has changed... not for the better. The world seems even further from peace than ever before. Many of us are waking up and going to bed **NOT** focused on the only thing able to bring peace to our hearts and minds in the midst of chaos, but rather, we are focused on the chaos itself.

So, how do we walk in peace when we don't feel peaceful? When the chaos feels suffocating? And I'm not just talking about this whole world pandemic thing. I'm talking about when life gets busy, when your mind is overwhelmed, when the to-do list gets too long, when children are disobedient, when you feel as the Psalmist says in Psalm 42 'downcast and disturbed'. Having peace in all situations and all mindsets feels a little like trying to walk uphill on an icy road. You might make some progress, but before long, you slip and you have to start again. We need a firm foundation if we're going to get anywhere.

Our relationship with God through Christ is that foundation.

Family, peace is not just a part of moments in your day or times in history but peace that is centred in Christ is able to transcend beyond that. Because when we put our faith in the giver of peace, Jesus, we are transformed from the heart out. It means that our peace is not something that leaves us, nor can be taken from us, because it is interlaced within the very nature of the gift given through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Romans 5:1 puts it like this.

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ³

³ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ro 5:1.

I want you to understand that this kind of peace is fundamentally different to the fleeting peace that you might experience during that first coffee of the day. The peace that we have through salvation is lasting. It's actually eternal because the giver of it is eternal. This is the kind of peace that is able to transcend our circumstances. It means those pockets of peace that we might experience in our lives aren't all there is, but rather point us to the greater peace of living lives in relationship with God through faith in the grace of Christ, Jesus.

On the flip side.

It is possible to seek after the wrong kind of peace. Peace that doesn't point us to the real peace we have through the Gospel.

Let me entertain a scenario for a moment.

In pursuit of peace, you take up exercise, and one of your gym buddies encourages you to a Yoga class and that seems to help. You strengthen your core and find rhythm in your breathing. And all this talk of peace is rubbing off on you and you find yourself trying really hard to take some of these principles into your life.

For a time, it helps, but you still feel like there's more to it.

After getting a new instructor, your yoga sessions become more and more about the spiritual side and finding your inner peace. You're starting to be able to get into a peaceful state quicker.

But a voice in your head is telling you there's more peace to be had.

After talking to a yoga friend, you decide to follow in their footsteps, and before long, you are hopping off a plane in Tibet, ready for your 2-week yoga immersion retreat where the line between exercise and spirituality becomes one for you.

It's amazing. But...

When you get back, the high of the trip diminishes every time a work deadline is put in front of you, or you're stuck in traffic and late for a meeting, and the grind of parenthood is slowly zapping your mountaintop peace away.

Doubt sets in. What am I missing, what am I doing wrong, I feel like a failure! And now, feeling like peace is actually an unattainable thing for you, you spiral into a hole of anxiety, worry, and eventually, depression.

This might sound a little crazy and not everyone will make it all the way to Tibet and Buddhism, but the emptiness of fleeting peace is a real problem. In that situation, peace was never fully satisfied. A false religion and false good news left this person always wanting more. But when they failed to fix themselves, the let-down is unfortunately, and tragically, way too common in our society.

When our peace doesn't have a firm foundation, we too can slip as we seek fleeting peace, as opposed to the lasting peace found in Christ. So, I want to encourage us to nurture our foundation, make sure that we have our feet firmly planted as we walk in peace. We can do this by deepening our relationship with God. Get to know, like and enjoy the God that saved you by reading, listening to, and engaging in His word, by responding in prayer and repentance.

Philippians 4:7-9 has this to say about the lasting peace given through Christ.

⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. ⁴

When we seek to imitate Jesus, we became more and more confident in His lasting and forever peace. It helps us to deal with the anxiety and worry as we trust in his sovereign plan. Instead of giving God part of our lives, we give it all, because we trust in the wisdom of God in all our circumstances. And we learn to walk in peace even when we don't necessarily feel peaceful.

⁴ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Php 4:7–9.

This lasting peace is not something that we should keep to ourselves. We get to radiate that peace back out into the world as ambassadors of it.

Which brings us to our second and final point.

Walking in Peace by loving others

You see family, when we are enjoying the real peace that we have through the love of Christ, it can't, and shouldn't, be contained. We are to radiate what's inside of us out into the world.

We do this whether we like it or not. If you're frustrated, joyless, and full of hate in your heart, then chances are, that is what you'll send out. In a similar way, if you listen to music, watch movies and tv shows, read articles that are contently pushing an agenda contrary to the word of God, then don't be surprised when peace feels distant.

Friends, Jesus calls us to something more in the sermon on the mount in Mat 5:9

*⁹Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.⁵*

We should not just have peace because of Christ but we should be peacemakers as well. This requires us to first be aware of what is shaping us. It is hard to be a witness of the peace that is in you though Christ when you or your thought life is full of bad language, pride, adultery, immorality, drunkenness, sexual impurity and the like. What you watch, what you fill your head with, will affect your ability to be an effective peacemaker.

See, being a peacemaker means that we must we must walk in peace by loving our neighbour. Remember before we get to the Fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5 this section is set up with these in verse 13-16

⁵ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Mt 5:9.

¹³ You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. ¹⁴ For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." ^k ¹⁵ If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

¹⁶ So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh⁶

See, when we are walking in peace and we are loving those around us, it means we care about how our actions will affect others, it means that what we want for ourselves, we should want for others, it means that we should point those around us to what is good, pure and right. It means that we should be generous with our time, treasures and talents.

When we love others, we should want peace for them as well.

We should share the truths of Christ's life, death, and resurrection so that others might know this good news, too, and have real and lasting peace. Jesus is building his church through the testimony of faithful peacemakers.

Is that you? Is the peace that you have through salvation in Christ a beacon of light to those around you? Love your neighbour by telling them of this good news and peace you have.

God wants us to be a part of this incredible work. He wants us to witness the life changing effects of Christ's love transforming people's hearts. He wants us to be ambassadors of that peace he has given you. Salvation is not ours give but we do get to share the message of its goodness.

The other way we need to look at being a peacemaker has more to do with the way that you interact with those around you. Your behaviours, attitudes and mindsets.

I want to be clear, they are not separate things. You can't have one without the other. If we have real peace, and we are telling others of that peace, then we should be living lives that

⁶ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ga 5:13–16.

reflect and radiate that peace out into the world. That means that your behaviours, attitudes and mindsets should be shaped by peace.

As Christians, we should strive to be ambassadors of peace and reconciliation during conflict resolution. We should point people to hope and peace when chaos is all around us. We should be peaceful and understanding when driving on the road or dealing with people that are difficult or annoying. We should bring peace into our homes by dealing with sin in our lives.

Some of you might be feeling pretty good at the moment, because you think that you are naturally, a calm, patient, relaxed and conflict-avoiding person. You consider yourself peaceful. You don't get bothered by much at all. Global pandemic? No worries. Someone calls you out about sin in your life? That's fine, they're entitled to their opinion. You don't have enough money to buy groceries? Whatever. It'll work out, it always does. Look, if that's you, that doesn't mean that you are walking with the fruit of peace. It doesn't automatically make you a peacemaker. Because you are not actually loving your neighbour. You're kind mooching off them. You don't have sympathy for them. You don't respond or repent when you're in the wrong. That's not love, it's apathy, and laziness. You aren't radiating peace. You're probably causing a huge amount of anxiety and stress to those around you as they pick up the pieces in your life.

Some of you go too far the other way. No one is remotely calling you peaceful. Let's just say that you're a little cautious... you like things done a certain way. I mean, you're happy to delegate, but you micromanage every detail and you are constantly causing people around you to doubt themselves and fear failure. See, you seek peace in your life by controlling every detail at the detriment of your neighbour's peace.

I know that these 2 types of people are extreme, but chances are, you relate to one more than the other.

We're called to be peacemakers. This 3rd type of person has confidence in the sovereignty and wisdom of God in their life because of the work Christ has done and is continuing to do.

This person encourages others in their relationship with God. They want to see loving, compassionate, resolution to conflict. They know that God is in control and they don't need to lord control in everything. They are understanding and reasonable, slow to speak, slow to anger, quick to listen, quick to love. They know that they aren't going to get it right every time, and they don't expect perfection of others. They know that forgiveness is a free gift that cost Jesus his life. That is peacemaker. Someone who's heart is graciously, lovingly, and willingly being transformed by the spirit of God who helps them live Christ-centred lives.

I want you to know that this is only possible when we become fully reliant on the work that Jesus has done in us, through his sacrifice on the cross. We can be peacemakers because of the peace that we have been given.

I know there is tension, I know that we are continually struggling with the flesh and the realities of living in a world that's fallen. But there is something much bigger going on and I think it's a good way to close. We have talked about this tension of sin pulling us away from peace. Often we feel like there is something wrong, that there is something missing, but as Christians we know that we can have peace indwell in us because of the work Jesus did on the cross, but we still feel this tension at various times in our lives.

The reality of living in a world that's full of sin means we can't escape the weight of that sin nor its effects. We don't have to look far on the news, social media or Netflix to see the result of sinful actions and effects of sin in the world. There is little peace in this world and Christ is our only hope of peace both in our heart and for the world.

The unrest that we feel in this world is because it's not meant to be like this. Sin is not the intended purpose of the world and God is preparing a place right now where the union and peace that we have in Christ will be in everything. Let me close with these words from Johns Revelation 21:3-5 Which gives us an expectation and hope of this world.

Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' ^u or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!"⁷

⁷ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Re 21:3–5.

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Home Group Questions

1. What are some of the common ways that our society thinks about peace? Are there problems with these views of peace? Discuss why or why not.
2. What do you think Jesus mean in John 14:27 when he says, 'my peace I give you'?
3. Tim Keller's definitions of peace as a fruit of the spirit is, "*Confidence and rest in the wisdom and sovereignty of God more than your own.*" Where do you typically get your 'confidence and rest' from?
4. What might it look like for you to NOT trust in the wisdom and sovereignty of God?
5. Do you think it's possible to have lasting peace without being a Christian? Why?
6. What does it mean to be a peacemaker?
7. How can you love your neighbour while walking in peace?
8. Think of someone you witness to about the peace you have in Christ and as a group pray for opportunities to do so.