

JOHN

Stories Related To The Last Days Of Christ

February 10, 2019

I. Introduction

- A. **John 14:27-31** . . . “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. [28] You heard that I said to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. [29] Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe. [30] I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me; [31] but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. Get up, let us go from here.”
- B. Four topics today: (1) The peace of God, (2) Rejoicing when a believer goes to be with the Lord, (3) Prophecy encourages faith, (4) Wanting the world to know we love and obey God.
- C. Prayer

II. The Peace of God

- A. **John 14:27** . . . Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful (*or cowardly*).
- B. The peace that belongs to God and which He gives to those who belong to Him, is altogether different – in character and quality – from the peace that belongs to the world.
 - 1. The world’s peace is outward. God’s peace is inward. Paul confirms that God’s peace is within rather than without in **Colossians 3:15a**, where he says, “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts....”
 - 2. The world’s peace manages what is going on around you. God’s peace manages what is going on inside of you – if you let it.
 - a. We see the truth of this in the second half of **vs 27** where Jesus addresses what is going on inside of you by saying, “Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful (*a second and equal translation is cowardly – which is quite applicable to what the disciples would be facing in a few hours*).”
 - b. And in **Philippians 4:6-7**, Paul confirms this when he says, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. [7]

And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

3. *Continuing on with the contrast between the world's peace and God's peace:* the world's peace depends on **removing or suppressing the outward reasons or stimulants** for conflict, anger, anxiety, fear, and revenge. God's peace depends on **removing the inward reasons or stimulants** for anger, anxiety, fear, and revenge **AND** replacing them with such godly qualities as trust in God's goodness, love, forgiveness, patience, and contentment.
 4. For the world's peace to prevail, human power is required to control the people and circumstances in which we live. For God's peace to prevail within you, you must **trust in and patiently rely on** His power to protect you, provide for you, and bring good out of whatever circumstances or people you face.
 5. Where sufficient human power is lacking, the world's peace relies on appeasing those who have the power to destabilize the peace. However, no power exceeds God's power, which means appeasing those around us is never required to be at peace. In other words, we can inwardly rest in God's peace no matter how unstable the world around us becomes.
 6. The world's peace is fragile, in some cases precarious, and in many cases short lived. God's peace is like an anchor that can never be moved no matter how fierce the storm, or how strong the wind, or how high the waves.
- C. The reality is, God's peace is true peace. It is the only peace that lasts from now throughout eternity. It is the only peace that requires a power outside of you and yet dwells ever so powerfully inside of you – regardless of what is going on outside of you. And it is the only peace that is not dependant on human government or human power or cooperative humans. Rather, it is solely dependent on trust in God and obedience to God – which we can choose to do or not do.
1. We see the truth of this in the second half of **vs 27**, where Jesus says, “Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.”
 2. In saying this, Jesus is telling us what not to do, and He presents this in a way that states we don't have to do it. In other words, you **do not** have to allow anxiety and fear to rule over your heart and mind. You can make a better choice. And what is the choice between?
 - a. It is a choice between trusting God and distrusting God.
 - b. It is a choice between patiently waiting for God to act on your behalf, or becoming impatient and fearful that the worst is going

to happen – and then choosing to take matters into your own hands in order to act quickly in an effort to prevent it.

- c. And it is a choice between remaining obedient to God's word and will regardless of the circumstances, or choosing ungodly means to deal with the person or situation that is threatening your peace.
 3. Therefore, giving in to anxiety and fear is a choice on your part just like it is a choice to trust God to take care of you.
- D. We see the truth of these choices in the fuller context of **John 14**. For example,
1. Jesus gave the solution to anxiety and fear in **vs 1**, where He said believing in God – which includes trusting in the goodness, the faithfulness, the wisdom, and the love of God – this is the way to keep your heart from being troubled. Therefore, receiving the peace of God depends on you choosing to trust God.
 2. In **vs 2-3**, Jesus infers that we must wait for Him to return – which implies the idea of patient waiting if we are to ward off anxiety and fear should He not return as soon as we think He should or thought He would. Therefore, receiving the peace of God depends on you choosing to patiently wait for God.
 3. And in **vs 15-24**, Jesus makes it clear that love for God and obedience to what God says go hand-in-hand. In other words, the only love for God that matters is the love that obeys Him – which means that when we are obeying God, or at least genuinely striving to obey God – in a whole-life and whole-hearted way – we are loving Him. Therefore, receiving the peace of God depends on you choosing to love and obey God, regardless of the circumstances.
- E. The reality is, the world's peace cannot be compared to God's peace.
1. This does not mean we should not work for world peace, or national peace, or peace among the races, or peace in our homes.
 2. But the truth is, there can be no true peace and no lasting peace without fulfilling the conditions required for receiving and living in God's peace. This is why such things as evangelism, discipleship, obedience to God's commands, and confident faith in God's goodness are vital parts of seeking and making and maintaining peace in any relationship or situation.
 3. I want to conclude this first part with these words from John Owen, "See to it that your faith brings forth obedience, and God in due time will cause it to bring forth inward, unshakeable peace."

III. Rejoicing when a believer goes to be with the Lord

- A. **John 14:28** . . . You heard that I said to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.
- B. Sadly, this verse has been misused by folks like the Jehovah Witnesses to support their belief that Jesus was not and is not God in human flesh, but rather a lessor and lower being than God.
 - 1. However, it is irrational to think that John wrote his entire gospel for the purpose of showing that Jesus was God in human flesh only to discredit everything he wrote with this one statement.
 - 2. Therefore, since this verse gives me no valid reason to question the deity of Christ, I understand it in a different way.
- C. What I see in this statement are two truths for Christians to live by.
 - 1. **First**, there is unfathomable glory, incalculable greatness, and immeasurable value to dying and leaving this world in order to be with God in a way we cannot be with Him while confined to the earth.
 - a. Paul said it this way, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain" (**Philippians 1:21**).
 - b. What about you? Do you see dying as the door to the best life possible, or do you see heaven as a great alternative to hell while viewing life on earth as what you prefer?
 - c. Our view of our own death, or any believer's death, says much about our view of the value of living life here as compared to the value of being with God in His eternal kingdom.
 - d. May we value God and being in the presence of God so much that we look forward to dying and being in His presence and kingdom for eternity.
 - 2. **Second**, though we may deeply feel the loss of a loved one who is a Christian, we ought to equally feel the joy of their going to be with God where life is as God created it to be.
 - a. To paraphrase Jesus' words here in **vs 28**, "If you love someone, you will rejoice because he is going to the Father, for there is no better place to be.
 - b. Therefore, may we love God and His people, and in so doing want His good and their good to the degree that we can honestly say, "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His godly ones (**Psalms 116:15**), for only then can we rejoice at the home-going of God's people.

IV. Foretelling encourages and solidifies faith

- A. **John 14:29** . . . Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe.
- B. Jesus said a similar thing in **John 13:19**, “From now on I am telling you before it comes to pass, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am He.”
 - 1. The point Jesus is making is applicable to all of us who have read or heard one or more of the prophetic statements or promises in the Bible.
 - 2. And the point is simple: One of God’s significant purposes in telling us beforehand what will be is so that in its coming to pass our faith in who He is and what He can do will be reinforced, or strengthened, and turned from intellectual faith to a heartfelt settled conviction.
 - 3. Now I think it is important for us to understand that this principle applies to God’s prophetic statements and His promises as well as to those scriptures that tell us what we ought to be as Christians and those scriptures that tell us what we must do become the kind of Christian God saved us to be.
 - 4. And I say this because it is as we pursue godliness – according to the scriptures – that we discover, over time, that what God says works, and in working leads us to a life that is abundant and free, and as we experience this abundance and freedom we become convinced that God is good and we are safe in His hands. And in my opinion, there is no greater faith than this.
- C. However, foretelling and experiencing its fulfillment **does not** naturally or compellingly lead to reinforced or strengthened faith.
 - 1. But it can, if you will see it as another means God uses in building and establishing your faith in Him.
 - 2. And so I encourage you – in as many areas as possible and as often as you can, make the connection between what God has foretold or promises or commands, and what has come or is coming to pass, and in making that connection, see the power and love of God at work.

V. Wanting the world to know we love and obey God

- A. **John 14:30-31** . . . “I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world (*Satan*) is coming (*in the form of the religious leaders, their followers, Herod, and Pilot*), and he has nothing in Me (*nothing that he can exploit in order to derail my purpose for being here*); [31] but **so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me**. Get up, let us go from here.”

- B. There are two important truths in **vs 31** that I want us to see.
- C. The **first truth** becomes a powerful truth when understood in the light of Jesus' three previous statements about the inseparableness of loving and obeying God.
1. And let me remind of you those three statements –
 - a. In **vs 15**, Jesus said that if you love God, you will keep His commandments.
 - b. In **vs 21**, Jesus said that those who have God's commandments and keep them are the ones who love Him.
 - c. And in **vs 23**, Jesus said that if anyone loves God, he will keep God's word.
 2. All three of these statements are directed at us and clearly tell us how we are to live as followers of Jesus Christ.
 - a. But what Jesus wants us to see here in **vs 31** is that He lived the same way He tells us to live.
 - b. In fact, He not only lived that way, He wants us, and everyone else in the world to know – by observing His life – that His love for God and obedience to God were just as inseparable and just as active as our love and obedience are to be.
 3. In other words, Jesus lived what He taught. He asks nothing from us that He did not require of Himself. He lays no burden on us that He did not bear Himself. And He wants the world to know this.
 - a. He wants the world to know that He denied Himself, took up His cross, and obediently followed where God took Him – just as He tells us to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and obediently follow where He takes us (**Matthew 16:24**).
 - b. And though He was the Son of God, He wants the world to know that He served His family, His disciples, the needy people around Him, and finally all mankind by going to the cross – which is everything and more that He asks of us (**Matthew 20:24-28**).
 4. And one of my favorite examples of this comes from **1 Peter 2:18-23**, where Jesus is held up as our example of how to deal with unreasonable, unjust, cruel, angry, hurtful people.
 - a. Here we see that what God asks of us is nothing more than what He expected from Jesus and what Jesus did.
 - b. Let me read just **vs 23**: “While being reviled, Jesus did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.”
 5. I believe Paul's words in **Romans 8:29** reflect the truth that Jesus lived the same way God tells us to live, which is why **vs 29** says that

it is God's pre-determined plan for us to be conformed to the image or likeness of Jesus Christ – because in His humanity, He was and is what we can and ought to be.

6. May we believe we can be like Him, and may we hunger and thirst to be like Him.

D. The **second truth** from **vs 31** is equally important because it brings a healthy balance to the popular emphasis on Jesus coming to earth for us and dying for us – as if we are the important ones and the focus of His love.

1. Of course, we are loved by God, for Jesus said that “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (**John 3:16**).
2. And Paul said that God demonstrated His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (**Romans 5:8**).
3. However, God's love for us as made evident through Jesus Christ is only part of the story.
 - a. The other side of the story is stated here in **vs 31**, where Jesus makes it clear that He went to the cross for the love of God – a love which was demonstrated by His obedience to God.
 - b. And so we gain a proper balance when we humble ourselves before God, and in so doing make Him and His son, Jesus Christ, the focus of our attention even as we speak and sing of their love for us.
4. In other words, a balanced view acknowledges God's love for us while at the same time being grateful that Jesus obediently went to the cross out of love for His father.
5. If you understand this balance, then you can understand how God can be our example of loving our neighbor as ourselves, and Jesus can be our example of loving God.

VI. Conclusion

- A. With these thoughts in mind, let us share in the bread and cup of communion. And as we pass around the elements, think about what you want the world to know about how you live and who you live for. And examine yourself as to whether you live up to what we expect and ask others to live up to – not just in kind but in principle.