

Peace ⁽³⁾ Between Individuals

Text : **Romans 12: 14-21**
(Also read : Luke 27: 27-36)

INTRODUCTION :

A. This lesson will be the third in our series on peace.

1. First lesson, we observed man's most basic need, i.e., peace with God.
 - a. God created man in His own image. (**Gen. 1:27**)
 - 1) Like God man is a triune being ... body, soul and spirit.
 - 2) As God is pure and holy, man was created pure and holy.
 - a) **Eccl. 7:29**
 - b) **Ezek. 28: 15**
 - b. God also created man for His own purpose.
 - 1) **Col. 1: 16**
 - 2) **I Cor. 8: 6**
 - c. God gave man limited domain over the earth and lower creatures, but retained the sovereignty of ownership.
 - 1) **Gen. 1: 26, 2:15**
 - 2) **Psa. 24:1, 50:12-14**
 - d. But, man rebels against God's ownership authority and sought His own desires.
 - 1) **Gen. 3** (*To ignore God's rule is to rule over self, i.e., to rebel.*)
 - 2) **Eccl. 7: 20, I King 8: 46, Prov. 20: 9**
 - e. A man's rebellion against God's rule makes him God's enemy.
 - 1) Sin is rebellion against God rule. **Isa. 1: 4-5**
 - 2) The rebellion of sin separates one from God. **Isa. 59: 1-2**
 - 3) Sin creates a relationship of wrath and enmity with God. **Rom. 5: 8-10**
 - f. God sent Jesus as His ambassador of peace to seek reconciliation with man.
 - 1) Jesus offers Himself to be the propitiation to atone for man's sins. **I John 4:10**
 - 2) Jesus sacrificed Himself to ransom man from captivity. **Mark 10:45, I Tim. 2:6**
 - 3) Jesus redeemed man with His holy blood. **Titus 2:13-14**
 - 4) The ministry of Jesus is to reconcile mankind to God. **II Cor. 5:16-21**
2. Second lesson, men of good will seek world peace, but it remains illusive.
 - a. Not all war is evil.
 - 1) God uses some wars to administer His justice upon nations. (**Gen. 15: 13-16**)
 - 2) Defensive wars are just, moral, required. (**Neh. 4: 11-14 -cf- II Sam. 10: 11-12**)
 - 3) A nation may make war to administer justice on an offending nation. (**Rom 13**)

- b. Unjust wars are a result of sin.
 - 1) Lust for power and dominion
 - 2) Coveting the possessions of others (**wealth and territory**)
 - 3) Jealousy ... can't achieve what they have (**Japan in WW 2 – place in the sun**)
 - 4) Hatred and revenge (**Serbia ... Muslim - vs - Christian**)
- c. There can be peace only in Christ because in Him all are unified. **In Christ :**
 - 1) All are transferred into the same eternal kingdom. **Col. 1: 13-14** (**Gal. 3: 26-27**)
 - 2) All have the same citizenship and same loyalty. **Phil. 3:20**
 - 3) All are members of the same family. **Rom. 8: 16-17**

B. In this third lesson, we will study God's imperative ... live in peace with others.

1. We will learn that God expects for us to do our very best to live in peace with all.
2. We don't just wait for peace to come, we pursue it, **but** we don't compromise truth.
3. We do not compromise our standard of Christianity to avoid conflict.

I. "Be at peace with all men" is a Christian imperative.

A. The desire for peace is a fundamental tenant of the Christian religion.

1. Christians have been "**called to peace.**" **I Cor. 7: 15**
2. We were called by "**the gospel of peace.**" **Eph. 6;15**
3. We were called to worship "**the God of peace.**" **Rom. 15:33** , **II Thes. 5:23**
4. Our Savior is the "**Lord of peace.**" **II Thes. 3:16**
5. Faithful preachers are commanded to teach the desire for peace to all Christians.
Titus 3: 1-2 **Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, 2 to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.**
6. Leaders in the church are required to be peaceable people.
I Tim. 3: 2-3 **An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not addicted to wine, not quarrelsome, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.**

B. The Christian practices peace in a very proactive way.

1. Peace is continual state, a permanent facet of the Christian's character.
 - a. **Rom. 12: 18-** "... **be at peace with all men.**" ("**be**" **as opposed to** "**do**")
 - b. For one to "**be at peace**" indicates an ongoing state, **NOT** periodic acts.

2. For the Christians, peace is a way of life.
II Cor. 13: 11- Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.
 3. Peace is the goal which every Christian actively pursues.
 - a. **Heb. 12: 14-** Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. (Cf- **Psa. 34: 14**)
 - b. The Christians pursuit of peace takes him away from evil.
II Tim. 2: 22- Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.
 4. Christians pursue whatever will create peace. **Rom. 14: 19** (**Make for peace**)
 5. God bestows a blessing on those who actively seek to create peace.
Matt. 5: 9- Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
 6. Therefore :
 - a. The pursuit of peace is part of calling on God with faith.
 - b. One who does not live a life pursuing peace is not living faithfully to God.
- C. The strong emphasis on peace distinguishes Christianity from other religions.**
1. The Jewish religion limited vengeance to exact parity, only an eye for an eye.
 2. Muslim terrorists seek to destroy all who will not accept their view of Islam.
 3. Only Christianity requires it's adherents to treat their enemies with love.
- Read & Exegete ... Matt. 5: 38-47**

II. Christians pursue it, but peace cannot be a unilateral decision.

- A. The Christian must never allow himself to be the cause of dissension.**
1. Vs. 18- “As far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.”
 2. Conflict is seldom 100% the fault of one side. (**50-50 , 70-30 , 90-10**)
 3. The Christian is responsible for correcting whatever part is his fault.
 - a. “It is 90% his fault.” That means it's 10% your fault.
 - b. You are responsible for fixing the 10% that is your fault.
- B. Some people will refuse to be placated .. no matter what.**
1. We are required to deal lovingly with unreasonable people as well as good ones.
 - a. Sometimes employers are unreasonable; they refuse to be pleased.

- b. **I Pet. 2: 18-** Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable.
- c. This alone will distinguish Christian works from those in the world.
- 2. There will be those who take advantage of your goodness.
 - a. **Matt. 5: 39-41** But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. **40** If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. **41** Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two.

* Note : **Jews hated that Roman soldiers could compel them to carry their pack for one mile.**

- b. It is better for a Christian to accept a wrong than to allow conflict. **I Cor. 6:7**
- 3. Christians are not responsible for the actions of others.
 - a. Once we have done our very best to avoid conflict, we have pleased God.
 - b. Those who refuse our peace will be judged by God for their own actions.

III. Even the Christian cannot pursue peace at any price.

- A. We cannot do wrong in order to gain the acceptance of people who do wrong.
 - 1. It is NEVER right to do wrong.
 - 2. **Eph. 5: 11-12** Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; 12 for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.
 - 3. There are some people with whom Christians just cannot be friends.

ILL.- A reforming alcoholic will not hang around with old drinking buddies.
- B. We cannot be silent because others will be offended if we stand for truth.
 - 1. Paul opposed Peter in front of the whole congregations.

Gal. 2:11- But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. (*This was unpleasant for him to do.*)
 - 2. We are commanded to rebuke those who do evil and will not repent.

I Tim. 5: 20- Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning.
 - 3. In order to be light to the world the Christians must be speak out against evil.
 - a. We must oppose things like the slaughter of the unborn.
 - b. We must never allow perverse behavior to become socially acceptable. **(drugs)**

4. Political correctness is the devil's new weapon of choice against the gospel.

C. We cannot be obnoxious or self righteous in the way we oppose evil.

1. Sometimes Christians are not opposed because of what they say, but because of how they say it.
2. We must speak with boldness, **but** do it lovingly.
 - a. **No one cares how much you know until they know how much you care.**
 - b. **Eph. 4: 15-** but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,
 - c. **Eph. 4: 29-** Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

D. Opposition can never be allowed to stop evangelism.

1. Evangelism is required of EVERY Christian, **regardless** of response.
 - a. **Mark 16: 15-16 , Matt. 28: 19-20**
 - b. Not obeying this command is to reject the authority of Christ. **Matt. 28: 18**
 - c. The early disciples understood this command to apply to them.
Acts 8: 4- ... Those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.
2. Even when threatened and punished, the Apostles refused to stop evangelizing.
 - a. **Acts 4: 20-** ... We cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.
 - b. **Acts 5: 29-** ... We must obey God rather than men. (*Being beaten caused him pain.*)
3. Opposition will even come from those we love.
 - a. **Matt. 10: 24-39**
 - b. When trying to win family members our example gives power to our words.
 - 1) **I Pet. 3: 1-4**
 - 2) Opposite ... **Titus 1:16 , 2: 3-5**

CONCLUSION :

A. We live in a corrupted world.

1. Sin causes people to live in ways that are not conducive to peace.
Titus 3:3- For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.

2. It is not always possible to live in peace with everyone we encounter.
3. It IS possible to do everything within our power to live in peace with all men.
 - a. We live quiet and peaceful lives for all the world to observe.
 - b. We don't wait for peace to come, we actively pursue it.
 - c. But we do not compromise or be silenced our faith to get along in this evil world.

B. Jesus gave us a perfect example.

1. **I Pet 2: 21-25** For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, **22** Who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth: **23** and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; **24** and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. **25** For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.
2. This is the light that every Christian is to shine in the world.

C. The Christian's quest for peace is unique among all world religions.

1. This is one characteristic that makes Christians the light for the rest of the world.
2. We must each make sure that we keep our light all trimmed and bright.

INVITATION :

Lesson Texts :

Romans 12: 14-21

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. **15** Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. **16** Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. **17** Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. **18** If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. **19** Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," says the Lord. **20** "But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." **21** Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Luke 6: 27-36

27 But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, **28** bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. **29** Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either. **30** Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back. **31** Treat others the same way you want them to treat you. **32** If you love those who love you, what credit is *that* to you? For even sinners love those who love them. **33** If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is *that* to you? For even sinners do the same. **34** If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is *that* to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same *amount*. **35** But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil *men*. **36** Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.