



The tribe of Issachar understood the times and knew what Israel should do

Issachar Ministries UK seeks to be a people who understand the times, listen to the Lord and know what should be done

Resourcing for Prayer Network

Spiritual Guidelines

The Fruit of the Spirit (IV)

love, joy, PEACE, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control Galatian 5.22

'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you'

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October 2015

The fact that peace is a fruit of the spirit is so very reassuring. But although Jesus promised that he would give us his peace it is not a gift listed in Romans 12 or 1 Corinthians 12, it comes as a result of exercising the gifts we have been given! It is part of the fruit of our right use of the gifts. Neither does it bear much relationship to worldly peace! Which is why Philippians 4:6-7 says the peace of God *'transcends (surpasses) all understanding'*.

It is only God who can give us true inner peace which is the absence of conflict with God leading to a oneness with him. It is a significant part of the fruit of the Spirit and *'setting the mind on the Spirit is life and peace'* (Romans 8:6). Isaiah knew God and his promises *'You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you'* (Isaiah 26:3). Jesus promised us his peace which does not have a worldly connotation - *'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). *'I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.'* (John 16:33).

Peace in the Kingdom

We are reminded that *'the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding'* (Romans 14:17-19).

Proverbs

Proverbs 12:20 *"Deceit is in the hearts of those who plot evil, but those who promote peace have joy".*

Proverbs 14:30 *"A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones".*

Proverbs 17:1 *"Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife".*

Proverbs 29:9 *"If a wise person goes to court with a fool, the fool rages and scoffs, and there is no peace".*

Proverbs 29:17 *"Discipline your children, and they will give you peace; they will bring you the delights you desire".*

Sayings

"Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love". Francis of Assisi

"Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee." Augustine of Hippo

"God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing". C.S. Lewis

"Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding." Albert Einstein

"The day the power of love overrules the love of power, the world will know peace." Mahatma Gandhi

"Never be in a hurry; do everything quietly and in a calm spirit. Do not lose your inner peace for anything whatsoever, even if your whole world seems upset". Saint Francis de Sales

"An eye for an eye will only make the whole world blind." Mahatma Gandhi

"Peace is not absence of conflict, it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means". Ronald Reagan

"While you are proclaiming peace with your lips, be careful to have it even more fully in your heart". Francis of Assisi

Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom and his coming to earth fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy in 9:6-7 '*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and for ever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.*' At his birth the angels sang '*Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.*' (Luke 2:14) Paul reports that the early church '*enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers*' (Acts 9:31).

This message of peace was sent to the people of Israel (Acts 10:36) and they were called to '*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: 'May those who love you be secure*' (Psalm 122:6) in the same way as Jeremiah told those taken into captivity in Babylon to pray for the peace and prosperity of the city in which they were living (Jeremiah 29:7). Jesus through his blood on the cross '*reconciled to himself all things*' (Colossians 1:20) and proclaimed the one new man - peace between Jew and Gentile (Ephesians 2:14-15).

The Promises of Jesus

We are justified through faith and have peace with God (Romans 5:1). Isaiah reminds us that '*All your children will be taught by the Lord, and great will be their peace*' (Isaiah 54:13) and '*Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace*' (Proverbs 3:17).

The end time promises are significant especially in Isaiah '*All the lands are at rest and at peace; they break into singing*' (14:7). '*You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands*' (55:12). '*I will extend peace to her like a river, and the wealth of nations like a flooding stream; you will feed and be carried on her arm and dandled on her knees*' (66:12).

A covenant of peace has already been established between God and man '*I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them for ever*' (Ezekiel 37:26).

Peacemakers

We are not only to enjoy peace for ourselves but we are also called to be peacemakers. Jesus listed this in the Beatitudes '*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God*' (Matthew 5:9). James tells us that '*Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness*' (3:18) and in 2 Timothy we are told to '*Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace*' (2:22). In the lovely commissioning passage in Ephesians 6 to put on the whole armour of God, our feet need to be '*fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace*' (6:15). Jesus himself '*came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near*' (Ephesians 2:17). Isaiah foretold '*How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, 'Your God reigns!'*' (Isaiah 52:7). Psalm 84 gives a good picture of how the people of God can transform the land as they pass through.

Pursuing Peace

In order to seek peace we must turn to God and away from worldly thinking (1 Peter 3:11). We must '*Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord*' (Hebrews 12:14; Romans 12:18; Romans 14:19) and then '*the God of hope will fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him*' (Romans 15:13). All that Jesus taught us is the recipe for inner peace in Christ as '*In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*' John 16:33

'*Peace be with you and also with you*' is not only a familiar current greeting in many church circles and is often linked with the saying '*Greet one another with a kiss of love,*' (1 Peter 5:14). The Aaronic blessing in Numbers 6 is especially beautiful '*the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace*'. It was widely used in Paul's letters both as an introduction and as a benediction. David used the words to Jonathan (1 Samuel 20:42) and Jesus often used the words '*go in peace*' both to his disciples when commissioning them (John 20:21) and following ministry to seekers (Luke 7:50 and 8:48), Simeon was content to die when he knew he had the peace of the Lord (Luke 2:29). It can be linked with grace, mercy and love and comes directly from the Father when our relationship is right with him and with each other.

Peace is linked with God's wisdom - The Lord not only gave Solomon this wisdom, just as he had promised him (1 Chronicles 22:9) but he also promised '*I will grant Israel peace and quiet during his reign*'. James tells us '*But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere*' (3:17).

Concluding thoughts

'*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts*' (Colossians 3:15). '*The fruit of that righteousness will be peace; its effect will be quietness and confidence for ever*' (Isaiah 32:17). **What a promise!**

This paper comes to you as part of the Issachar Ministries Resourcing for Prayer e-mail in October 2015
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