

NEAR TO GOD IN PEACE

Ephesians 2.13: Message 16, Our change in Christ means peace with God!

Theme: The great change (our peace and nearness with God vs. enmity and distance from Him) is brought about by Christ Jesus, our “Peace Offering.”

Remember the time past: (v11-12) Before Christ we had no hope (we lived in *despair*: deprived of hope).

But now: (v13) In Christ Jesus our relationship to God and our eternal destiny are *very different*.

- (v11-12) We've seen our need for a change.
- (v13) Now we are going to see how God made that change that we need so badly.
 - ✓ We who were God-haters, enemies of God, and far from Him...
 - ✓ We have now been made nigh (near) unto God in Christ.
- Just how did God bring about this change (this reconciliation between enemies)?
 - ✓ (v8-9) We looked at this before, focusing mostly on our part: We appropriate God's grace for salvation through faith in Christ.
 - ✓ (v13) Now we are going to focus more on God's part—on Christ's work in bringing us near to God.
 - ✓ (v14a) And then we are going to jump ahead and look at the first part of the next passage because it is just too good to pass up!

I. (v13) Christ Jesus paid the price of our enmity with God.

A. The price to be paid was blood and death (and they are not the same).

1. (Rom 5.8-9) We are saved by the blood and the death of Christ (both).
 - a) (v9) We are justified by His *blood* and therefore saved from the wrath to come.
 - b) (v10) We are reconciled by His *death* and therefore we are no longer God's enemies.
 - c) Things different are not the same: Christ's *death* is different than His *blood*, and *both* are essential in God's plan for our salvation.
2. Christ *died* for sins because God established the death penalty for sin.
 - a) (Gen 2.17) This was clear from beginning, before man ever chose to sin.
 - b) (Ezek 18.4, 20) God states it very clearly: The person that sins, that person must die.
 - c) (Rom 6.23a) God has not changed His mind: What you earn by sinning is death.
 - d) Therefore: (Rom 5.8) Christ died for us—He did in our place.
3. But the *blood* is also necessary for our salvation.
 - a) (Heb 9.22) Without the blood, there is no remission (pardon, forgiveness, taking away) of our sins and our guilt.
 - b) (Lev 17.11) The *blood* is what makes *atonement* for our souls.
 - (1) *Atonement*: A term that means “at-one-ment.”
 - (2) Without the blood, there is no peace with God (no reconciliation, no friendship, no atonement), only sin and enmity.

- c) (John 20.11-17) Notice the implications of the importance of the blood in Jesus first encounter after His resurrection: He told Mary not to touch Him (was ascending to the Father). Why?
 - (1) (Heb 9.12, 24) Because He was going to the presence of the Father in heaven where He would present His blood and finish the work of our eternal redemption.
 - (2) If Mary, an unclean sinner, had touched Him, she would have contaminated the blood that Christ took into the Most Holy Place (the presence of the Father; in picture: Leviticus 16).
 - (3) (John 20.27) After Christ presented His blood and obtained our eternal redemption, He returned to spend 40 more days with His disciples and now He says, “Touch me!”
- d) The blood that Christ shed on the cross is important, therefore...

B. Do not let anyone take the blood away from you!

- 1. Christ died for us, yes. But He also shed His blood for us.
- 2. (Col 1.14) So, firstly, don't let anyone take the blood out of your Bible! Our redemption is through (by means of) the blood of Christ!
- 3. Secondly, don't let anyone tell you that the blood is just a metaphor for Christ's suffering and death.
 - a) It is not! Christ suffered and then He died (two separate things), and then after three days He resurrected, and when He came out of the tomb, He specifically commanded and warned Mary to not touch Him because He was ascending to the Father.
 - b) The Book of Hebrews shows us why: He was ascending to the presence of the Father in order to present His blood and “finalize” the work of our redemption and reconciliation.
 - c) (Acts 20.28) Part of the price Christ paid for us and for our sins (for the enmity between us and God) was His own blood.
 - d) Don't let anyone take the blood out of your Bible, and don't let anyone tell you that the blood Christ shed was just a metaphor for His suffering and death.
- 4. And now, because Christ paid that price (suffering, death, blood), we who were far off can be brought near because we have peace with God rather than enmity. We have peace because...

II. (v14a) Christ Jesus is the Peace that ends our enmity with God.

A. Our Problem

- 1. (Rom 5.8-10) Without Christ we were “far off” because we were God's enemies—we were God-haters (He is light and we were darkness).
- 2. (Rom 5.1) We were “far off” because we had no “peace with God.” Christ is that peace, and without Christ there is not peace with God, only enmity (we were enemies).

B. Our Peace: It came by sacrifice...

- 1. Christ is our Peace because Christ became our sacrifice for peace—our “Peace Offering.”
- 2. Leviticus 3, and the peace-offering, is a beautiful picture of what Christ has done for us.
 - a) (Lev 3.1) The peace-offering had to be perfect, without blemish: Christ Jesus was the ultimate, perfect peace-offering because He was without sin.
 - b) (Lev 3.2a) The sinner who offered the peace-offering had to personally lay his hands upon the sacrifice's head.
 - (1) It was a public admission of guilt (the need for peace with God), repentance (the desire to turn from the enmity with God), and faith (that God would accept the sacrifice).
 - (2) It was a picture also of the transferring of sin from the guilty sinner to the perfect, innocent sacrifice that was to take the place of the repentant sinner.

- c) (Lev 3.2b) The innocent sacrifice must *die* and his *blood* shed and applied to the altar (*both* elements are present and necessary: death and blood).
- d) (Lev 3.3-5) The offering is burned as a sacrifice to God, and when it was totally consumed in the fire, it became a “sweet savour unto the Lord.”
 - (1) Christ *is* our Peace because He became our Peace-Offering. He sacrificed Himself for us, in our place, so that He could make peace between us and God.
 - (2) (Eph 5.2) His sacrifice was a sweet-smelling savour to God. It brought Him pleasure!

Conclusion:

God knows our condition (Eph 2.11-12) and, because He is *kind*, it brings Him great pleasure to *change that condition* (Eph 2.13-14a).

- God wants us *near* to Him, not far from Him. Remember: He is Omnibenevolent (all good, always).
- God wants us as His *children*, not His enemies.
- And He Himself paid the price for that (for our reconciliation) in the suffering, death, and blood of Jesus.
- We can have peace with God, but only in Christ (for He and He only is our Peace).
- If you have Christ, you have peace with God. If you do not have Christ, you *can* have peace with God!

The practical application for us Christians in all this is simple:

- God in Christ has brought us near to Him (we are made nigh in Christ; that is our *position*).
- So, we *can* draw nigh to Him each and every day without concern—with confidence!
 - ✓ If you have Christ, you have complete *peace with God* (now, and forever). That will never change because that peace (that reconciliation between enemies) was obtained *by Christ*, not by you.
 - ✓ You may now draw near to God (who is love, who is kind, who is omnibenevolent) at any time, *because of Christ* and His work for you (suffering, death, blood).
 - ✓ So, do not let sin and failure, or feelings of falling short, keep you from God! Let all of that drive you to Him in greater and greater appreciation for what He has done for you in Christ Jesus!