

Journey to Peace

John 14:23-29

In our “Joyful Journey” series of sermons, we come to the fourth of five themes, and it’s about the journey to peace. There can be a kind of grudging peace without joy. Can we truly have joy without peace?

At the time Jesus makes this promise of peace, he’s preparing his disciples for his approaching crucifixion, resurrection and ascension into heaven. He’s going to leave them behind, and he knows that this will cause a lot of anxiety because it’s a tearing apart of their close relationship and dependency on him. There’s very little joy in the hearts of the disciples as they hear what will befall Jesus. So Jesus wants to calm them. He says, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid” [verse 27].

1. What is peace? It sounds like a simple question. But is it? There’s a story of two painters who accepted the challenge to paint what true peace might look like. The first painter painted a beautifully quiet lake near a mountain top. Not a breeze was stirring. Not a bird was flying. Not a ripple disturbed the mirror-like waters. All was perfect silence. The second artist painted a roaring waterfall with a mighty tree hanging precariously over it. On a limb bending over the turbulent waters almost within reach of the spray, he painted a tiny sparrow sitting calm and unperturbed upon her nest. In your opinion, which painter captured the truer picture of peace?
2. What kind of peace is Jesus talking about in today’s text from John 14:23-29? The absence of warfare between nations? An end of tension that occupies our minds? The overcoming of worry? Something else? See Romans 5:6-11.
3. Would you agree that fear is the cause of the loss of peace? What else could it be?

Christians still wrestle with loneliness, sickness, disappointments and even death. But there’s a difference ... a big difference! Because Jesus promises us peace with God that comes from God, we Christians know that troubles never have the final word. There can still be a quiet peace deep within us because it comes from God and not from us or from anywhere else. “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for you are with me” is found in the Twenty-Third Psalm. It’s every believer’s confession of faith in an ever-present God.

1. If there’s personal peace between God and us through our Savior Jesus, how does that peace help us to have peace within ourselves and with our neighbors?
2. There are Christians who’ve lived catastrophic lives and yet have peace. They’re the first to say that this peace doesn’t come from their own strength but from God. Have you known anyone like this? What did you learn from them?
3. The Jews use the word “shalom” as a greeting and a farewell. The word means peace, but it also refers to a sense of wholeness or completeness. Muslims use the word “salaam,” and it has nearly the same meaning. Knowing this, how could it affect or change the way Christians share the peace during Sunday’s worship services?