

Tom Machacek - The Gift Of Peace

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The title of our thoughts this morning is the Gift of Peace. The key text for our thoughts this hour is found in John 14:27, and if you ask Sister Nancy, that's one of her favorite verses and that's one of mine too. So let me just share that verse with you to start off with Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you.

Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled neither let them be afraid.

I want to preface this special talk today with a question.

Have you ever seen a person or couple demonstrating this love, love, peace spoken of by Jesus? What gives them such strength to be calm and reassuring when tackling a new source or service for the Lord? And have you not seen how their example draws others into this service? The overall result is the Lord's blessings showering to all involved, no matter how much or how seemingly little they may have to offer. I see this example of peace and trust in the Lord as Brother George and Sister Florence served with their lives and energy.

May we reflect upon these two brethren and many others who have had peace of God with them as we consider the background of our Lord's wonderful gift. Well, back to our topic. Jesus spoke on many different subjects and provided many words of encouragement on his final night with his disciples.

One of the hardest revealments made by Jesus was that he must lead them. They, especially Peter, must have wondered who would lead them now unto life. Yet Jesus assured His disciples of his return one day.

To add to their fears of who would lead his disciples, Jesus told them that the work that he began must continue and they will be able to do Greater Works. John 14:12. You can imagine the disciples must have wondered how they, the students, could ever be teachers. Yet Jesus assured them that they would not be alone. If they loved the Father by doing his will, and if they love one another, then the Father and He would be with them.

He would guide these humble students to be very able teachers. How Jesus answered their concerns by informing his disciples of God's spirit and blessings would be given to them to understand God's plan. First, for the development of additional disciples for the Lord and second, for mankind's future restoration.

Jesus knew as his disciples grew in grace and knowledge to let their light shine out in this world, they would need an aid in their trying experiences. Jesus bequeaths his peace as a gift to his disciples. However, have you ever been around someone who exhibits peace while the world around them seems to be in turmoil? What gives this person the confidence to be at peace? Did they have absolute control of the problem.

No. Yet they had enough knowledge, experience and trust in their decisions and actions to be calm. When we read of the experiences of Peter, Paul and others, we can see this peace residing in them. How did they learn to demonstrate this peace of Christ?

Well, let's look at some examples of how Jesus demonstrated having internal peace to make a storm a calm.

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One example that may come to your mind first is when Jesus and his disciples were crossing the Red Sea and a great storm rose up. What was Jesus doing? Sleeping.

What were the disciples doing, including those who experienced storms on the sea? Well, let's turn to Matthew the eighth chapter, and let's read that. Matthew, the eighth chapter. We're going to start with verse 25.

And they went and woke him and saying, save Lord, we're perishing, and he said to them, why are you afraid, O man of little faith? Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm, and what did the disciples understand or see? Verse 27.

The men marveled, saying, what sort of man is this that even the winds and the sea obey him?

Jesus knew his time had not come because God's spirit revealed the timing and purpose of God's redemptive plan. Truly, Jesus time was in the hands of his Father. This understanding gave him peace because he knew he had more to do. The disciples saw how this meek, humble man took control of the storm and calmed not only the waters, but also their fears. If Jesus had such powers with the wind, then he could also protect them from man's power.

Yet they needed to learn to have faith in Jesus.

When Jesus healed someone, they normally thanked God for showing mercy upon them to remove their affliction. How about when Jesus healed the 10 lepers, when nine of the 10 did not make any acknowledgment to their physician after realizing the miracle while traveling back to see the priests, what did Jesus demonstrate when only one returned to thank Him? Well, let's turn to Luke 17 and read verses 15 to 19 to see what happened. Luke 17 starting with verse 15.

Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice, and he fell on his face at Jesus feet, giving him thanks. Now he was the Samaritan. Then Jesus said, were there not 10 cleansed? Where are the 9?

Was no one found to return to give praise to God except this foreigner, and he said to him, rise and go your way. Your faith has made you well.

Jesus had peace because the 10 had enough faith to be Asked to be healed. He also knew of the self serving, unappreciative hearts of his fellow Jews. Yet Jacob's children's hearts will have an opportunity to be healed in the future. Even though only the Samaritan demonstrated greater faith in this Jew's powers, Jesus knew that a day would come when all Gentiles would be made whole. Yet there's one thing for sure of this whole story.

Jesus knew that all 10 were walking witnesses of the power of God's redemptive plan.

The disciples saw a wonderful example in Jesus when handling this and similar experiences. They were to show love and mercy toward the thankful and the unthankful. They were to do good to all mankind, especially to their fellow disciples. They should not expect praises to themselves, but to God, whether given at the moment or later in silence.

Lets look at another example. How about the time when the Pharisees used one of their lawyers to ask Jesus a trick question which is the great commandment in the law. Consider the strength and peace when Jesus gave his answer in Matthew 22:37 40. Matthew 22:37 40.

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And he said to them, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment, and a second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.

The educated Jews judged others by their understanding of the letter of the law. Jesus knew that the written law was a guide to help raise them to God's two key standards. That is Love God in his will and second, to love all your fellow man as or more than yourselves. Yet Jesus had peace knowing that he came to save the meek and the present day proud that both will have an opportunity for the forgiveness of sins and learn obedience.

The disciples saw the importance of being long to hear, slow to speak and looking to be guided by the Spirit to answer worldly questions with reason which is hard to debate.

One last example is dealing with the death of Jesus. Very good friend Lazarus, you know this story well, but think about this from the disciples perspective. We know that Martha and Mary tried at Jesus for not coming sooner. When Jesus approached the tomb and saw all the people weeping, Jesus demonstrated peace even while tears came to his eyes.

Let's turn to John 11 and read verses 40:44. John 11:40 44.

And Jesus said to her, did I not tell you that if you would believe, you would see the glory of God? So they took away the stone and Jesus lifted up his Eyes and said, father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. I knew that thou hearest me always. But I have said this on account of the people standing by, that they may believe that thou didst send me, and when he had said this, he cried out with a loud voice, Lazarus, come out.

The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages and his face wrapped with a cloth, and Jesus said to them, unbind him and let him go.

Truly, death has been mankind's greatest enemy, and with the loss of a loved one goes our peace.

I know this truth, this hard truth, as I know you experienced the same.

Yet Jesus demonstrated peace and trust and his father by returning Lazarus to life again show the hope that was in himself of that great day.

Like Jesus, we weep while waiting for the resurrection day.

For the disciples, the raising of Lazarus must have given some peace. Would they have peace when they received a report that Jesus tomb was empty?

As we have seen, as we can see from these examples, God gave his son, his ambassador to this world knowledge, understanding of his plan for a ransom to satisfy justice and the return to mankind to a righteous condition. With such trust in God's wisdom and power, Jesus had peace and demonstrated this peace to his disciples.

Yet peace is not an object to be handed over like gold and silver. Jesus learned and demonstrated this internal peace. How might the disciples learn to gain such peace?

Well, the words of Apostle Paul in Philippians the fourth chapter provide maybe a clue to this question. So let's turn to Philippians the fourth chapter, and we're going to read verses four to

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seven, Philippians four, starting with verse four. Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say rejoice.

Let all men know your forbearance. The Lord is at hand. Have no anxiety about anything. But in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

And the peace of God which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Apostle Paul was sharing how we can develop peace by looking at Jesus. Perfect example. First, Jesus did not have peace in this world. The but he had peace in his heart and mind. His peace was not in the wisdom or knowledge of this world.

It came from God in his words to his Son. Jesus constantly communicated with his Father for understanding, for guidance and presence through each experience, and how did Jesus rejoice? Jesus exhibited peace through his gentleness, sympathetic heart and confidence in God's overall plan, and what is the source of our peace?

We read in verse 7 of Philippians 4. The answer is the peace of God. Well, this answer begs the question, what is the peace of God? And what is Jesus peace?

Remember when we were concerned earlier, the traits of someone demonstrating peace during chaos? That person had knowledge and experience, or that person had some level of understanding how to handle the situation. If a person exhibits this level of peace, imagine the level of peace God has. He is the divine planner of the stars and the planets, and his laws of physics would keep the heavens in complete control.

He developed a plan for plants and animals to one day exist on earth.

Even though God had inner peace, he was still alone. So God's great plan included the creation of angelic and terrestrial beings to love, to share and communicate with him, starting with the Logos. Would we have or would we be at peace if we had to develop and accomplish such a grand plan?

Yet God desired for his creative beings to learn to have peace. The first to receive this lesson would be his only begotten Son, the Logos. This peace comes from understanding and faith in the One sharing how this plan would be implemented. Remember, the disciples gained some knowledge from Jesus, especially in a boat on a very rough sea. The disciples had little peace because they had little faith.

When we grow in grace and knowledge, what will happen to the level of peace within us? It should grow also.

The Logos had faith in His Father's plans, and God trusted His Son to carry out his plan perfectly. Yet the first test for the Logos peace was when one of the angelic beings, Lucifer, desired to have Eve and then Adam break God's commandment. These two humans were about to take an action that would result in their deaths. Did the Logos stop Lucifer?

Did the Logos tell Eve and Adam what would happen if they broke this law? Truly, chaos would break out and these perfect lives would be lost. Peace on earth would come to an end.

To me, this first test for the Logos shows how later Jesus could exhibit peace and greater meaning, give greater meaning to Apostle Paul's words in Hebrews 5, 7, 10. Hebrews 5, 7, 10.

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In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard for his godly fear. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through the things which he suffered, and being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him. Being destined by God as a high priest after the order of Melchizedek, God must have shared his plan about the experiences needed for both the angelic beings and mankind to learn about good and evil.

And to be obedient, the lessons were needed to help the creation understand the effects of sin and how it would result in chaos and death. These lessons would have little long term value unless they would be part of the individuals who restitution work back to perfection. Yet God's justice must be satisfied first, requiring a perfect life to redeem Adam, and this ransom is the foundation point of God's plan before any restitution can begin for mankind.

Also, let's consider Apostle Peter's words in 1 Peter chapter one.

First Peter chapter one. We're going to read verses 18 to 21.

You know that you were ransomed from the feudal ways inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest at the end of the times for your sake. Through him you have confidence in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory so that your faith and hope are in God.

This foreknowledge must have given the Logos peace to trust in His Father's plan without fully understanding the means by which the ransom would be paid to also not stop man's fall from grace.

Such trust Jesus had in His Father.

When it came time to pay the ransom price, Jesus had peace. While he and his disciples ate their last Passover meal together, he was at peace to invite his disciples to follow in his footsteps to their crosses when he offered them to eat of this bread and drink of this cup.

Didn't you feel this peace during our recent memorial service?

Brethren, let's spend the remaining time examining how and why and when the peace of God would be available to Jesus disciples.

When Jesus and His disciples were on the Mount of Olives, the disciples rested while Jesus prayed. This would be their last time for peace for a while. Shortly thereafter their shepherd would be taken away and the disciples his sheep, would lose their source of peace.

Did the disciples level of peace return when the women reported Jesus resurrection?

I don't think so when you consider that they ran with hope to see the tomb, but it was empty.

Where was Jesus? They returned home quickly for fear of being arrested and without any evidence of their risen Lord.

Did the ten disciples receive their promise peace when Jesus entered their locked room? Well, they may have had a little peace, but they were probably more confused about how Jesus appeared

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even when they watched their source of peace ascending unto the heavens. Did peace enter into their hearts? No. Even the angels said to them in Acts 1:11.

Acts 1:11. O men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the heaven? This Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.

A part of the reason for delaying the gift of peace is found in Hebrews 9, 16, 7. Hebrews 9, 16, 7.

For where a will or a bequest is involved, the death of one who made it must be established. For a will takes effect only at death. Since it was not enforced as long as the one who made it is alive. While Jesus was still alive as a man, the request could not be given. That peace that he promised could not be given to his disciples.

Oh, why not? After Jesus death on the cross, Jesus was dead. Why didn't they receive the peace then? Well, God has a timing and, and a purpose for all things done for the good of his plan, including the giving of this gift of peace.

Well, let's return to John the 14th chapter, and we're going to read a few more verses. This time from John 14. We're going to start with verse 25.

These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name. He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. You heard me say to you, I go away, and I will come to you.

If you love me, you would have rejoiced. Because I go to the Father. For the Father is greater than I, and now I have told you before it takes place.

So that when it does take place, you may believe. I will no longer talk much with you. For the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me, but I do as the Father has commanded me. So that the world may know that I love the Father.

Rise. Let us go hence.

Previously, in verse 27, we spoke of giving them peace. But these additional verses bring two more elements to the purpose and timing of this gift of peace. The first element is the gift of God's spirit. To do what God will. Help them recall Jesus words and lead them to understand the purpose of God's plan for mankind.

With this understanding, the disciples can develop into good teachers to answer one of their questions, and the second element is that the timing must be after Jesus goes away.

Let's expand upon these things that Jesus was talking about and let's turn to Acts the first chapter, starting with verse three, for some additional information about the delay. Acts chapter one, starting with verse three.

To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, and appearing to them during 40 days and speaking of the kingdom of God, and while staying with them, he charged them not to

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depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which he said, you heard from me. For John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy spirit.

Jesus spent 40 days from his resurrection to his ascension, teaching his disciples more details about God's plan in short, meaningful lessons to meditate on between each session. He also told them to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the blessing of God's Spirit for a number of days.

Now reading in the second chapter of Acts, starting with verse one.

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place, and suddenly a sound came from heaven like a rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting, and there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributed and resting on each one, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

What did Peter tell those gathered at Pentecost? Continuing with verse 37.

Now, when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said to them, repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.

Not only did the disciples receive the blessing of God's spirit and the beginning of peace, but all who loved God in a appreciated Jesus ransomed sacrifice would receive this, and this blessing was not only for those gathered at that, but it was, as Peter said to your children and to all that are afar off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him, that you and me, you and me.

My dear brethren, those called to be the bride of Christ are blessed to be guided into God's word by his Spirit, and we greatly appreciate the words of the seven messengers with their meat in their due seasons, especially now during this age's harvest, and with this understanding comes the peace of God. The peace that Jesus had which he wanted those who loved the Father and loved him to be blessed with. Why?

I think the answer is simple. But the question still is. Why? Why did Jesus want to have this peace given to his disciples?

Jesus needed and appreciate the peace that he had while he was tried and tested.

If we are also being tried and tested, will we need a true source of peace?

I ask you, what are you doing with your gift of peace? What are you doing with your gift of peace? Is it on the shelf until you come upon a troubling time when it's knocking at your door and then I'll go find my gift of peace?

Or are you holding this gift very close to your heart and watching how this gift grows greater and greater as we grow in grace and knowledge?

We should not be like those who have little faith. Knowledge and experiences develop great faith which results in greater peace.

Not as the world gives do I give you.

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The world can't give you peace, but God can give you peace.

Brethren, all the houses of this present world are shaking, except only one will remain standing. Because of its firm foundation, our level of study and meditation may have a direct correlation with God's spirit working with us to gain knowledge or wisdom. Also, the time we spend exercising the knowledge gained by witnessing may determine the level of God's peace within us. Our faith will be thoroughly tested during these end times.

Remember this Forewarned is forearmed.

At this point, I want to return to my opening comment about examples of those who demonstrate God's peace dwelling in them.

Truly, Brother George and Sister Florence individually and collectively exhibited such trust in our Heavenly Father as one example, and I'm sure I know I take away anything from Brother Tom's but one example this comes to me is how the Lord brings together different parts of the body to do a task in developing a video production for this cause.

It's not simply drawing the story together, developing all the slides to illustrate the story, the music to move the hearts and minds, or the words spoken of the story.

The story for today is a reflection upon the effects of Brother George's and Sister Florence's trust in the Lord and their peace to bring together brethren to generate a public presentation and then their organizational skills to show this wonderful message of hope and understanding for the world to see and to hear of God's truth and hope.

Now, this video moved many brethren all around, not just the United States, but the world, and I remember our class supported this wonderful blessing and coordinated a showing at our local high school auditorium.

A couple years later, working with our South Bend brethren, we had a showing at a South Bend, Indiana auditorium which over 500 attended.

During these presentations we felt the peace of God working alongside the Chicago Brethren Another example.

Many individuals make printing of books, literature or the news as their vocation or part of their daily task to feed their families. However, some individuals make printing part of their advocacy to serve the Lord. When asked what is in your hands, they are the ones who reply, it's not much Lord, but guide me as you will to serve you.

Twenty plus years ago, Sister Nancy and I saw an opportunity to modify our vocation and expand our advocacy. What gave us the confidence to offer to help at the press?

We saw that it was the truth, a printed truth that aided us to be set free from the world's errors and misguidance.

How can we better help others than by assisting of printing truth materials? Did we have experience in video productions or printing? Did we trust in the Lord and those serving Him? A big yes.

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A little faith develops a little trust. With time, wonderful instructions and examples, we gained skills and sweet fellowship with those working in the vineyards. The lessons we gained during these years were valuable and we are glad for the opportunities and patience, especially the patience of others to learn. With every piece of learning literature, print it. We would say this could also set someone free.

The world may wonder what Brother George and Sister Florence gained with their lives when serving the Lord. They gained much more than this world's gold and silver in the Lord's eyes. Their service touched so many lives with truth and hope, not only those called during this age, but also for many more in the age to come.

Truly, we have a wonderful example when we reflect upon the lives of these special individuals, don't we? It's so many brethren working so many different ways to provide a hand to help share the truth. What gives us this peace? To take on this task, I would like to close with Apostle Paul's words found in Philippians the first chapter. Let's turn to Philippians the first chapter.

Philippians 1, verses 3 to 6 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy. Thankful for your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now. I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Brethren, let not your hearts be troubled, but let the heavenly peace fill your hearts. May the Lord add His blessing.