

Ray Luke - Peace

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Thank you very much. Dear Son Jesus, thankful to thee that a portion of the merit of his sacrifice has been poured out on us and that Thy spirit guides our lives.

We are thankful to Thee for the robe of righteousness provided to cover our filthy flesh. We thank Thee at this time for this little class, for the provision made here today to provide for us a feast of fat things by these servants provided. We are thankful to the gracious God for the privilege of fellowship and love, the privilege of coming away from the world for a short time. We do love thee, gracious God, and want to please thee in all things. Ask thy blessing on Brother Ray as he breaks more bread of life to us.

We thank thee again for thy love and guidance and wonderful Son Jesus, in whose precious name we thank Thee. Amen.

Brother Ray has given me as his subject one word which we hear a great deal of today. The word peace.

I suppose one could approach that subject from quite a number of different standpoints, and I don't really know what Brother Ray has in mind, but the subject of peace is a very important one to us, no matter what standpoint it is approached from. So we'll let Brother Ray Luke tell us what he has in mind about peace at this time. Right.

Thank you, Brother Bill. While many of our brethren from Jersey City are here in person, I have nonetheless been asked to convey the greetings of the corporate Ecclesia in the form of a scriptural text. Psalm 73, 25, 26. Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.

My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. This is the message of Jersey City from their hearts to yours. I thought we might just dwell somewhat on that subject of peace. It is a very current topic, as rather Bill did indicate. Indeed, every newspaper headline, every radio bulletin, and every telecast announcement seems to be concerned with the conditions over in the Near East.

And truly we know that we are in the time when they shall say peace, peace. But there shall be no peace, that we are merely in the era in which there is but a crescendo of violence which will culminate in that great final cataclysmic overthrow, Armageddon, that will destroy all the vestige of authority and of power, reduce to rubble the elements of society and organized governments, and in its place will build thereupon the kingdom of God. Oh, we as Bible students look so much forth to that time, when thereafter there shall then after that period of fire, there shall be heard that sweet spirit, small voice, and how through the telescope of God's word, Bible students have been proclaiming this prophetic vision for nigh a hundred years now, and how each day as we proclaim it, it becomes more real, more vital, more up to date and more stimulating to us as we meditate upon these wonderful things.

And while we don't want to be caught in a snare of trying to interpret God's dealings in the everyday affairs and the headlines of man, but nonetheless we are all quite concerned with what is happening in the Near East. For we know that that is the arena in which the final phase and the final drama of this era of sin shall come to pass. Now, we don't want to try to prognosticate or try to

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go before the Lord, but I'm sure each of us, as we heard of the outbreak of hostilities and the interruption of that very shaky ceasefire, each of us as Bible students were wondering just what implication does this have on the prophetic vision? And we don't know. At least I don't know.

All we can say is that we are watching to see how the Lord overrules it. There might be some general guidelines that we could pursue and know that it is merely our thinking, our speculation, perhaps the use of our best consecrated judgment on the limited data and information available to us. But you know, I couldn't help but feel that the events during the past week in which the President heart beset with his own internal problems and with the corruption within his own party, how the President did take a position which was a rather severe, could have been a severe confrontation very similar to the Cuban Missile Crisis, took a position which was an alert in order to keep out of the near east forces which he felt would be, once there, difficult to dislodge. Now, I thought as that happened, and indeed for him to have taken such a strong position, I couldn't help but wonder that perhaps this action was taken because the time had not yet quite been ripe for the armies of the north to come down and to get a toehold and physically to have the borders of Israel in threat, and so as it were to hold back these winds of fury, the Lord overruled that this matter of state would be accomplished.

And therefore this confrontation, at least for the moment, seems to be abating, and yet we do not know how quickly these conditions are being ripened and brought to pass, because all we know is that there is lightning events that can occur at a moment's notice and we have to merely just be attuned to what the wisdom of the Lord might be. All we can say is that with that lightning thrust and the manner in which the Lord is overruling the circumstances up to this point, that perhaps there is a need for, if not further expansion of territory by Israel, if not a trade off with territory one on the west side of the Suez for perhaps a little more territory at the expense of Syria towards the Golan Heights or down more towards Euphrates, we don't know. But one thing we do know, that the things and conditions are coming to a culmination. One thing we do see, how Israel is so bereft of help and of assistance.

It's interesting to note that in all of American allies in the Western Hemisphere, all of the NATO alliances turned against America when we asked for a little help in our supply route so that we might be able to give Israel some armed support and encouragement. It's just as though Israel is already in point of isolation and that America seemed to be the only one that showed any help. Even in the deliberations at the Security Council and the General assembly of the United Nations. We seem to get to the point now when, with the crisis of oil perhaps being coming to a culmination, when American policy might be influenced and Israel will have to stand alone, and if it comes to that point of crisis, then the time might be right for the final culmination and invasion of Gog and Magog of that area. So, brethren, we are seeing before us at every hand these scriptural prophecies being fulfilled and how it does make our hearts laddened, and how we rejoice as we see it.

Oh, as we see this all coming to pass, we should touch so lightly the things of this earth, esteeming them only of trifling worth, that as we see everything crumbling about us, we are to thank God. As we had our discussion this morning about getting a higher level of life, having more income, having good jobs and having a better standard of living, all this is of minor importance. It has no relevance whatever. As we see the culmination of all things, we ought to be so divested of all these ambitions and just seek to live from day to day, doing with our might what our hands find to do, and know that as we do live hourly in his presence and in the providences of his direction in our lives, that he will cause everything to work together for good.

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And if we can only keep that in mind, and that is, I think, one of the prime intent of prophecy, help us to know that we're so near the very end of things, that we will thicken our consecration pledge that we will sacrifice everything to its achievement and that there'll be nothing that we'll want to hold back here. Are we all living in such a way that if five minutes from now we should have to surrender everything that we own, our homes, our families, our positions, our title, everything else, would we be able to say, lord, I'm ready? Do you really feel as though you are at that point of unreserved consecration and so cut off from the things of this flesh, of this world? That's the way Lord wants us to live. That's the way we ought to conduct our affairs, even though we know not what the Lord will require of us from day to day, except in each moment of life to be faithful to that which he has committed us.

And thus, as we see the lack of peace, and I will say that for definition, when we think of peace, it doesn't merely mean that there is tranquility. Peace is not always a mean of a perfect inertness. From definition of a Christian peace is a heart reliance, a soul satisfaction, an assurance of faith. Sometimes, in the midst of the most excruciating, difficult, and awesome trials and experiences, the peace that Jesus said, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you.

The peace that is promised to the new creation is a peace, a rest in him, not a peace a and a rest in externals. Indeed, the Father did assure and promise peace and this rest of faith in all those who would be in harmony with Him. Remember how the prophet Isaiah assured Israel that truly, if they had kept his commandments, he would be certainly at one with them, and that they would truly have the peace in him. He said, oh, that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments. Then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.

O Israel, if only you had listened, if only you had obeyed. O then your tranquility, then your serenity would have been just like a river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea. I was rather intrigued by the imagery. Now I'm constantly just amazed by the depth, the profound beauty of these words of the Bible, how each word is just like a cameo or just like an etching that is just carved out and is so pregnant and so fraught with beauty and with depth, and I thought that peace, as a ritter and truly there is a him to that effect, is certainly a wonderful analogy and something which I think all of us as Christians should seek to have peace as A river and righteousness as the waves of the sea.

That this shall be a reality is assured further by the prophet Isaiah in the 66th chapter. In the 12th verse, after he talks about the deliverance of the church. After he assures us that the church will be completed, and then the blessings will come to Jerusalem. The 12th verse, Isaiah says, for thus saith the Lord.

Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glories of the Gentile like a flowing stream. Then shall ye sup. Ye shall be borne upon her sides and be dandled upon her knees. We, dear friends, I submit, do have peace like the river.

Now I would just like to draw a little analogy, perhaps to a river, and to the peace which we should have. In the hopes that you and I would see and might experience more fully. That state of oneness with God. That state of utter resignation.

That state of utter submission and acceptance. That no matter what happens. That somehow it is well with my soul. Oh, yea, though he sway me, yet will I trust Him. Naught can shake that inmost peace.

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May we always have that sensation. That when he causes a storm. Who shall make us afraid? Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them, nothing shall stumble them, nothing shall hearken and bring them away from their calling and their purposes in Christ.

And thus, what is there in a river that is comparable to peace? Why is it, then, that I say it makes this parallel? Well, I submit, dear friends, that a river starts as a very simple little stream. Perhaps a little mountain brook high up in the hills where it is away from the gays and from populated centers, and just as that little begins to flow down.

By the law of gravity and by the law of hydraulics. Under very consistent and very ordained natural forces, how that little rivulet begins to then gain momentum, and perhaps gain additional little streams. Until it begins to then grow and prosper and flow. Or how our experiences are so similar.

How we all can look back to the time when we were apart from God, away from his kin, and how we were groping after him. If perchance we might find Him. How we heard that beautiful. Oh, that precious scripture.

That God so loved the world. That he gave his only begotten Son. That whomsoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life, and as we saw that ransom sacrifice. We began to realize now the basis upon which God was relating to man.

That this was the only communication, the common denominator. That God had with man, and this was the only link that one might find unto God, and as we began to realize the import of that relationship and as we began to see that glorious sacrifice of Christ and to witness that life and the beauties inherent therein and the way of life which he pointed to, how we began to seek after a God who made such a glorious provision on our behalf, and then as we sought righteousness, as we sought more his peace, we began to realize that relationship with him was that of faith.

And therefore because of our faith, we were then able to draw nigh unto him. Oh, and how our hearts did stir within us as we read. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. As we began to get further acquaintance and awareness and plumb the depth of the implications of these texts, it was just like those little rivulets joining forces and how it began to build up in our hearts and how we expanded in our love to our God, and then we began to see our reasonable course, we began to see our reasonable service and then sought what is the Lord's will concerning me?

And how we then took the route of consecration. Oh, indeed it was so wonderful as we look back in our own personal experiences and how we would commend you all who are here to think of what God has meant to them and what their responsibility is to him, knowing that consecration is always in order, knowing that he will not cast out, but rather he cannot use one's consecration at the moment, he will keep that in reservation for whatever purpose his wisdom and his time features has in store for it. But the heart that is really seeking to show appreciation and the heart that is balanced will want to seek more of God's peace and to reach out unto him and to render to God the worship of which he is worthy, and then as the river begins to gain momentum, oh, we see as one consecrates their lives unto him. Oh, and as we think of the pleasant places that we were led to thereafter, how we came to conventions, how our hearts were thrilled with the sweet fellowship of our brethren, how the truth was so vital and so new each day we just awakened with a quick and we just sought to eagerly serve in whatever way we could, and how zealous were we in order to let the world know about this glorious faith and truth and how nothing mattered.

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And now this was that one thing, and how we sought more the Lord's precious promises. We realized now we had to focus, we had to consecrate, we had to make certain that this one thing we did and how those scriptures were so Specific and so meaningful. We knew that a double minded man was unstable in all his ways. That no man can serve God and mammon.

That if we are to be the friends of the world, we would be enmity with God. That we had to choose this day whom we would serve. That we had to seek first the kingdom of righteousness and all other things shall be added unto you. We felt, as Paul did, this one thing I do. We were determined to know how nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified.

O, how it was God first and self last, and how he who laid his hand to the plough and looketh back is unworthy or unfit for the kingdom of heaven. How all of these just seem to not only grip, but just so enthrall our hearts, and still I trust, dear brethren, do, and how as we then sank more into the will and purpose of God, we were just as that river flowing past the pleasant, the high places.

As that river, spouting in yon high mount, begins its course towards the sea. It passes through the pastoral scenes, the beautiful countryside, perhaps the birds and the flowers and the trees, and all of the beauties of nature spread about, and how that rose making all around life and vitality because of its life giving strength. So, dear friends, how this peace and our consecration is so much a part of us.

But then, as in the natural river, so this peace flows not only in the pleasant places, but also the river churns through the spirit cities. It churns through the populated centers, it churns past the industrial areas, and there we find that the waters formerly clear and beautiful, become murky and sometimes polluted. Oh yes, our lives is that way. That as we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we're now then put to the test.

We're not merely hothouse plants, but rather after we have come to maturity, the Lord will test us according to our capacity to develop in us those qualities which Brother Burns was talking about. Which can only be determined by suffering, can only be gained through the crucible of fire, only be refined through the furnace of affliction. As we then go through some of these experiences of life. It is not at the expense of peace, but well, where as the waters pass by these centers, the waters are broadened and they are deepened, and oh dear friends, we have those experiences as we interact with the world of mankind.

As we are in our jobs, as we are in our daily experiences within our home and in our neighborhood, wherever our ken might be. How the Lord is to Going, giving us sometimes the pollutions of life to test us. But just as there are those ordinances in various localities where the pollutions are regulated and the amount of sewage that may be dumped into the waters have to be within a certain quality. So we are assured that whatever happens to us that is regulated by God, that all experiences for our good, and nothing shall happen to us which we are not able to bear, that the Lord puts a limit to whatever trials and experiences that occur. Oh, what an assurance that is, dear friends, that the pollutions of life cannot overwhelm, that truly he gives us the means whereby we can filter out some of the contamination that will come to us.

Oh, how the filter of God word is so assured to us that truly, as we receive the difficulties and the scorn and the privations of life, how we can just retreat into our closets and there, in the intimate repose and in the intimate relatedness with our Heavenly Father, find grace to help in every time of need. How when the tenderest relationships are severed, how when we are misunderstood, how in spite of our every sincere effort, somehow nothing seems to fall into place, and how when our heart

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sometimes seems to be torn asunder through misunderstanding or perhaps through our own mistakes and miscalculations, how we can repair to that intimacy with God and know that this means of prayer can restore to our soul the balance and the equilibrium without which we would fail, and truly, as we consider the filter of God's word, how as every experience of life will have its instruction for us in his word, if we are but perceptive to see it and to recognize it, if we are able to really understand the purposes of our trials and to recognize that he is in all things, how lightened and how of light afflictions would seem to be, the things that would overwhelm and flood us, and then, too, as the river is flowing, it is showing its purposefulness, sometimes along the way there will be a dam that will seem to back up, so that in our damning experiences of life, when we would like to go forward, somehow the Lord says, no, you must back up so much, and we seem to be concerned, or sometimes disappointed, because we look at it from our own limited perspective.

And then we have to say, nonetheless, dear Lord, not my will, but Thy will be done, and the Lord puts obstacles in our way so that as we back up we may be able to perform additional responsibilities and blessings which otherwise, if we plunge headlong onward, we could not see. Or sometimes he puts the obstacles before us, and then, as we then back up A lake might form which overflows other areas, which would be a glorious opportunity. Otherwise not seen.

I often think of St. Paul when in his zeal he wanted to go northward into Turkey, into Bithynia. But then this man of Macedonia said, come over here. The road to Bithynia was blocked, it was dammed up, and Paul, in his eagerness to be of service in his missionary work, spread the gospel.

Then not north into Haitian Minor, but westward towards Europe, and then there was the fertile territory of the truth, and so sometimes the Lord will block and dam and sometimes seal off and we might want, and sometimes we would feel a disruption of our tranquility and peace. But if only we will let go and let God manifest to us where and whether and how truly we will see how the wisdom of God is infinite.

And then too sometimes the damning up is for the creation of power, and how sometimes he allows us to become side trite, allows us to become setback for a while, so that we might be better prepared for a medicinal work. Then two the waters are for life sustaining power. Oh, I think as one sees the river Jordan as an example, how that river flowing from the Sea of Galilee down in its serpentine twisting fashion to the Dead Sea, how it is so lush on its banks, how there you see nothing but fertility and growth and life and vitality, and just a mile or less beyond you see nothing but the arid desert, parched desert.

So we dear friends, should be that way in the deserts of life. But we should be there even now for the healing of the nations, for the blessing of those who might come in touch with us. Remember how Paul says that we are now as ambassadors of Christ, saying, be ye reconciled to God. Even now we have the privilege in our limited way of ministering, even now we have the privilege of saying to those about us come into harmony. This is the truth.

This is the requirement that God has for all mankind. Now if you are able to see this and accept this, you will be blessed above all others, and so as our waters begin to go out to others, it is for irrigation, for blessing, for them to get the strength and to get the nourishment and to feel the coolness and the vitality of this life giving truth, and then too we find that the rivers is a means of transportation, and the only reason why it is an effective vehicle for transportation is because it allows a minimum of friction.

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It is because water flows that a barge can be floated down the river and carry tons of cargo simply because it skims the surface, and the water's just copeland it along with its buoyancy. Oh brethren, is our character, our faith, our peace of such equality that those who are around us see the friction free life, that there are less and less of the irritations, that there is not a heating, there's not a roaring away, but rather those who are traveling along with us and those who come into contact with us see that we have been with Jesus and have learned of him, and that Spirit of Christ with that ameliorating oil of the truth, benevolent spirit is spread and made felt by those who might come in contact with us. We should be more and more dear friends, friction free.

And then too our river has a very unusual process of evaporation that goes on as the waters are flowing. There is the interaction with the heavenly body, the sun, now as the heat radiates upon it, there is the flow of water from the river in terms of vapor going to the sky and getting into clouds, and then the clouds in turn with their heavy laden moisture dumping upon the arid land in the form of rain, and the rain in turn coming back to feed the river. Oh, we see the that cycle of blessing, we see that natural consequence, and so with us, as we have this peace of God that passeth all understanding, there should also be under the impact of the rays of God's blessing, we should be giving of ourselves, evaporating ourselves, spending ourselves day after day so that we might be a blessing to others, and as we bless others, we ourselves are watered.

How this is a replenishing cycle and we can only gain by giving, and we thrive in sacrifice, we are joyful in surrender, we can do nothing but gain. Whatever we do as unto the Lord, can never produce a deficit or a failure. When calamities to the flesh occur, do we always see it as a part of this evaporating process? Can we always accept all things as from him always seeking to note?

Yea, though I cannot trust you, Lord, I'm sure going to try to trace you. Can our spiritual radar pass through the clouds and the thickening storm about us and always know that beyond them there's always that sunshine? Can we say, I know not where his islands lift their founded palms in air, I only know I cannot drift beyond his loving care. Do we really feel that? Brethren, now I am just expressing almost extemporaneously what I believe is implicit in these words.

What should be the attitude of heart? What is the spirit in which the sonnet conveys these words when he says that if we are in relationship to him, then our peace is Like a river. Oh, dear friends, as that river passes in its meandering course, it is under definite laws, and while it may seem to be of very little purpose, nonetheless its course and its program is definitely decided by hydraulics, thermodynamics and law of gravitation. Whatever else the physicist tells us about.

And so it is with our lives, everything has purpose. Nothing is accidental, nothing is casual. But if we live in the center of his love and in the center of his purpose, then each day we can start with a radiance and know that whatever is in store for me, it has purpose and it has goal behind it, and do we live then with this sense of direction? Do we set out for ourselves on each day the assurance that we are going to go one step further in our heavenly course, in our spiritual flow towards the ocean of God's love, towards the glorious state of infinity and of immortality?

Do we really see all things in that light? If so, dear friends, I will wager that we would be much more assured that we are truly his and he is ours. We would comport ourselves with a dignity that is above all man. We would have a real sense of being in the center of his love, and that every thought, every word, every act, every desire would be of greater import and of more meaningfulness to us. What are some of the things that will add to this peace?

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Because this peace, then, is not a static condition, but rather it is something that we have to work at. It is something which requires a diligent, constant effort to maintain. For example, Paul says in the 14th chapter, chapter of Romans, in the 19th verse, let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace and things wherewith one may edify another. We've got to follow for the things which make for peace. I was interested to know my study of history at one point that following the First World War, when the Big Four got together, there was Wilson, Clemencio, Orlando and Lloyd George, as I remember them.

And they were setting apart the Versailles Treaty, and as they were talking about dividing up the spheres of influence in Europe, I think it was Wilson who said, gentlemen, we are talking about creating a peaceful world. But the things that each of us want cannot possibly make for peace, and thus it is in world councils of today. They all talk for peace, but they do not want the things which make for peace.

The giving up of sovereignty, the relinquishing of spheres of influence, the trusting of other nations and the willingness to mutually survive. Every man is thinking of his own interests, and thus the same law of peace obtains in this house of God and in the church of God follow after the things which make for peace and things wherewith one may edify one another. I say, friends, there are areas which do not make for peace. There are conditions which we see in every ecclesia and within every Christian which would produce somewhat the friction which ought not so to be.

I'm thinking for example of the hypersensitivity and sometimes the hyper critical natures that we all are prone to as human beings. How sometimes we judge others by ourselves and how we often expect the brethren to be in our own image. I think our dialogue this afternoon and the symposium is an example of that. How easy it is to say that because of my experience it should be this way. Because of your experience it might be another way.

I think the Lord gives us the guidelines. The Lord makes our relationship in a highly personal way. We are to be thoroughly consecrated and make sure there is no deception about that. But he might lead you in a way which might be somewhat different from mine, and thus to expect that the Lord would have each of us undergo the same experiences in the same way at the same time is a little bit unrealistic.

Excuse me, I have a rather urgent pronouncement. There is a blue Plymouth parked across the street with Pennsylvania license 01741R. I don't know if it belongs to anyone here or not, but it has somebody blocked in. I understand the gentleman is getting quite impatient. So this is any of your cars?

I don't know if it belongs to anyone here or not. A blue Plymouth, PA license 01741R. Please move the car right away.

And I think, Dear friends, the 140 and 4,000 are made up of a very unique, highly individualistic groupings, and that each of us has got to get our unique kind of training and preparation. Because when we are installed in that glorious Melchizedek priesthood, the Prophet, the priest and the King. To all of the 20 or 30 billions of world of mankind, with all of the different experiences and nuances and backgrounds and training and head shape and experience, someone has got to be in that 144,000 capable of relating to each one of those billions upon billions of the world of mankind and being able to empathize and to enter into their kinds of experiences. Remember this is how Jesus qualified himself to become the high priest of our profession.

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He was made perfect by the things he suffered, and as Paul, Paul expresses it in Hebrews, that he experienced the same things as we have, yet without sin, so that he might be a sympathetic high priest, and so this church for us has got to experience the myriad of experiences of the church so that we can lift them up that highway of holiness during that glorious mediatorial work in the kingdom. Therefore, little wonder then that he leads you in different channels and through different ways that he might lead myself, and no two individuals are the same could not possibly be the same in their makeup and in their points of view.

Therefore, if we come to expect others to see things the way we do or have an image of what others should be, we might perhaps. Perhaps being expecting more when we aren't. I remember once where a brother was leaving town and he was going to take work somewhere else, and because he had some responsibility in one town that he felt there was greater need in another, he was severely rebuked and criticized by his sister, who felt that truly her image of him as a brother and living up to his responsibility was marred. Now, I know the brother was in tears.

He didn't mean to offend or to hurt, but he honestly felt that this was the Lord's will for him, and as subsequent events proved, he was right in that assumption. But for one to feel that because I can't quite understand why you are taking such a move, therefore you are not correct or you're not being faithful is what I mean by trying to see others in our own image, and then, too, I think an area of friction amongst the brethren is the matter of the understanding of present truth. Now, you know the apostle Peter links very closely the understanding and knowledge of God with this piece.

Because there cannot be peace with God without the knowledge of God. Remember how he expresses it. Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. The grace and this peace can only be exercised through our understanding and comprehension of his will and our conformity unto that will and our development therewith. Sometimes we place upon our brethren yokes, which perhaps is a little bit unreasonable.

I have said this before, and I think it is so true that today there are controversies raging throughout this nation and throughout the church causing divisions and splits and acrimony and hard feelings. Sometimes only because of words and definitions, sometimes only because of hobby horses that some brethren might be pursuing, sometimes only because of personality, and I say, dear friends, this ought not so to be. This kind of friction has to be eliminated if one would be consistent with the knowledge and peace and love of God, and if we find ourselves at ought with our brethren, let us first ask, what might be wrong with me?

Should we not question ourselves first and analyze our position and really throw you under the law before before we assume that there's something wrong with the other party? Or might it not be even better to suspend any judgment and wait until we see where that position might lead to and get further data before we begin to label this brother as going out of the truth or make issues or take positions that cause ruptures and disruption within the church? This matter of divide and rule has been Satan's trying rule. Oh, I say that there are going to be divisions in this time in which we live. This is the day of temptation, of course.

But let us make sure, dear friends, that these divisions are on the basis of unmitigated truth and purity of doctrine, and not on any other extraneous or superficial or minor points of view. It might seem as though Brother Luke has a hang up on that particular aspect. I know I've mentioned this more than once from the platform, but I do feel, dear friends, that a part of us of our calling is to show our brethren our respect for their positions, and until they have proven themselves unworthy of that respect, let us not discard them so readily, let us not label them, let us not turn our back

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which so easy we do if they don't agree with a position or an assumption, and then we suddenly feel as though they have gone out of the truth. I'm not saying that anything goes.

I'm not saying that we ought not to strictly adhere to that faith once lived under the saints. Of course we should now be the first one to earnestly contend for it. But I am saying that let's make sure that what we're contending for has truly principles of truth involved, not simply our concepts or our ideas regarding it. Oh, I have seen brethren at loggerheads over points which I have felt would be a matter of opinion or a matter of understanding, a matter of sometimes verbiage, and yet they seem to be poles apart. Well, this is not like the waters, the rivers of waters, which is the peace of God that passeth all understanding.

Learn, dear friends, sometimes the fiction comes in having our own wish in matters. I like the way the Apostle Paul expresses it in 1st Thessalonians 5:13, when he says, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake, and be at peace among yourselves. Oh, dear friends, if we can appreciate peace be at peace with ourselves here where and who can we see when as we consider the admonition of the Apostle Paul in 1st Thessalonians 4, we go on to James 3:18 which again speaks of the need to make peace and to have those things which will add for peace. The fruits of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace. Oh, I just love that the fruits of righteousness are sown in peace of them that make peace.

Now, as that river flows towards its destination, towards the ocean of God's love, it will fertilize, it will irrigate, it will produce the fruitage, and as we do so, dear friends, that righteousness will be sown in peace, because we are peacemakers. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall see God. As that peace then so fills our heart, so enables us then to surmount the trials of life, and as we then go closer to our haven of rest, as that river approaches the ocean, there comes the tides that seem to sometimes block and seem to push against the flow of waters.

Then comes that wind that would seem to chop its surface. There are times as we then go on in our spiritual way, and especially as we reach our maturity and as we're standing at that mark and getting those crucial final trials so that our faith structure might be crystallized, how then the woes of life just seem to flood upon us. The tides seem of ebb and flow and the winds would just seem to overwhelm. But yet in that state, as one flows in the love and in the faith and in the peace of God, we're able to transcend even all of this. Until the Lord says, then you have reached your haven of rest.

Come now into the infinite love of my family, and then you will be prepared now to continue your work of watering, continuing your work of making fruitful and irrigating and giving life giving waters to the thirsty and parched. You will then become part of this glorious work that is shown in Ezekiel 47, in Revelation 21:22. These waters of life that come out of the sanctuary and just fill the desert, or come out from under the throne of God, and there it is for the healing of the nations.

It's only because we are then identified with this peace of God, and that peace is ours, that we will then be identified with that work of making peace between God and man as a part of that great at one ment work, and for that cause have we been called, and this is the whole purpose of the offering for sin, the great sin offering of this gospel age. Just so then, that the benefits of this rest ransom work might be made available to the world of mankind through the medium of this channel, which is the church. We've often used that Illustration that Brother Russell uses in his explanation of the relatedness of the ransom to the sin offering.

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Namely, the well of water that is sunk beneath the bowels of the desert and that well shaft that is sunk therein so as to bring that life giving water up to the desert floor so as to supply the needs of the famished traveler, and that well shaft is the church being developed during this gospel age. The reservoir of God's grace, the infinite love that went into the provision of this ransom sacrifice will be testified to all man in due time, and when that due time has arrived, when that church class has been selected, when this streams of water has been fully gathered together, then that well shaft shall be sunk, and that work of ransoming the world of mankind to be at one shall then enter into its great and glorious work.

Oh brethren, we all run a part of that. That's why we came here to be in convention. To get our spiritual charge, you might say, to be able now to go out this evening so that during the days to come tomorrow and during the week you go forth with a more peaceful atmosphere, with a more contented spirit, with a more resigned heart, to allow the Lord to do of his goodwill and of his pleasure, and if today this convention has permitted you to gain a greater acceptance and a greater awareness of your responsibilities as it relates to marital status, to education, to your employment, to your house of living, if it has gained greater understanding of the great work that is going on in prophecy today and of the need for suffering which we must endure in order to be rounded as new creatures in Christ Jesus. If this is added to your spiritual armamentarium and stir, oh brethren, it is good for us to have been here.

Now that you have received of this, go out and perform it. The Ecclesia here organized a convention so that you might be filled and refreshed. Your speakers came with an idea of giving you nourishment. Their responsibility ends now. Your individual responsibility begins.

May the Lord add his blessing.

Thank you very much, Brother Ray. We wish to also thank all three of the speakers who have served us today. We thank you for the time and effort you put into the preparation of your service, for coming here and serving us. We also like to thank all of you for coming to the convention. Though there wouldn't have been a convention without you.

If we had just three speakers, nothing else, there would have been no convention. So we thank all of you for being here, and Brother Ray, in his closing remarks has expressed our thoughts very well. We hope it has been a spiritual benefit for you. To have been here.

I'd like to repeat an announcement I made earlier. There is a lady's pin up here on the front table, which someone has evidently lost. The owner may claim it right here.

We invite you to stop back at the dining room after the close of the convention for a light snack. We don't have a full meal prepared to serve you, but you're welcome to share the food that is left, have a cup of coffee, perhaps a sandwich and a piece of cake. So feel free to stop back for whatever food is left there for you.

We'll close this part of the service by singing hymn number 198, and brother Luke will offer the closing prayer, and following that, we'll rise and sing number 64, God be with you till we meet again. First we'll sing number 198 Sam ra sa Ra Ra Our dear gracious and blessed Father. How thankful are we that as we come unto Thee after this brief but sweet day of fellowship, that truly our hearts are stirred and our lives are quickened, and how Thou has been so good and kind to us in every way, how Thou hast allowed us to come apart from the world for this little while, and to sit at feet of Jesus and to learn of Him. We want to thank Thee for the guidance that Thou hast given us,

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for the blessings that attend our way constantly. We also want to be certain that we might use them wisely and treasure up every opportunity of being with our dear brethren.

May that constraining love unite us more fully each day, help us to introspect and to see more our own limitations and weaknesses and failures, and to appeal for the cleansing blood of Thy dear Son, for our strengthening and for Thy forgiving enable us to take all experiences as families. Thee seeking to learn the best from it, and discarding that which is of no assistance, may we daily seek to grow in the inner man, recognizing that all that we have here is simply loan to us that we might demonstrate to men and to angels, and unto Thee of our unreserved, unqualified consecration unto death. Oh, our thoughts and prayers go out for all Thy dear people everywhere. We know how blessed are we, and we thank Thee so much for the opportunity of fellowship. But we know that there are some of Thy dear people, whoever they may be, and where they might be we may not know.

But whoever they are, we ask Thy special blessing upon them. How we wish that they could be with us in person, but we know they are with us and spirit, and that we are constrained and bound together at the feet of Jesus through prayer and through mutual love, and we therefore would ask thy blessing upon them, keep them in their needs, sustain them in their experiences, and grant them the constant assurance of thy peace, and may we all seek to love one another more. May we all seek to grow in grace as well as in knowledge of the our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, until we come to the maturity which will then permit us to be invoked with the crown of life.

Bless and keep, we ask, and may thy kingdom soon come, and how our hearts yearn for that glorious day. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Satan.

Jesus. Sam.