

Topic: **“Two Priceless Gifts”**

March 18, 2007

Text: St. John 14: 25-31

Type: Textual

Introduction

As Jesus continued to prepare his disciples for his quickly approaching experience of the cross, he reminded them that **obedience** to what he commanded was the true sign of love for him. (14:15); he assured them that he was not going to leave them as orphans (v.18); he stretched them to believe that his departure to the Father was going to be a positive development that was really intended to make them glad and to free him up from the limitations of this world (v.28). It was also going to allow him to be restored to his glory. Then finally Jesus reassured them that the prince of this world had no hold on him, no right, no claim or power (v.30).

All of this, Jesus said, was to encourage them not to give in to heart trouble and fear—both of which have the power to discourage, depress and defeat anyone. Of course what Jesus cautioned his disciples about, also applies to us today. Consequently, when we are tempted to give in, and give up, when negative situations press in upon us, Jesus still says: ***“Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”*** Rather “Trust in me.”

But due to the melancholy mode that the disciples would obviously have been in, Jesus understood that something more than “a pep talk” was needed to lift their spirits. Therefore in verses 25-27 we read of two priceless gifts (or bequests) that Jesus promised to leave with his disciples. The departing Jesus promised **the Holy Spirit** and **His peace**.

“All this I have spoken while still with you, but the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things I have said to you.”(v.25) The first gift is referred to as the Counselor (NLT and NIV) or the Comforter (KJV) or the Friend (The Message). These are all different names for the Holy Spirit, and each appropriately speaks of a unique function of the third person of the Godhead. So whatever we choose to refer to the Holy Spirit by, we come away with the clear impression that help, encouragement and confirmation, just to mention a few qualities, are functions of the Spirit. (The Alpha retreat—Holy Spirit emphasis)

Understand that Jesus had no worldly fortune to bequeath his followers, but he gave them gifts that can't be bought—the presence of the Holy Spirit and, the presence of peace. First let's talk about the Holy Spirit.

How many defeated lives would buy the power of the Holy Spirit if they could? How many distraught souls would buy the peace of Jesus, if it were for sale? But these **cannot** be bought. Rather Jesus gives them as gifts to us his people. In speaking of the Holy Spirit Jesus says two basic things about Him.

First of all the Holy Spirit will teach us all things—a wonderful promise that is fulfilled everyday in our lives. Right up to the end of our lives we must be learners. We are all students when it comes to the things of God. And as we lean and depend on the Holy Spirit for guidance in all areas of life, we prove that this promise has been fulfilled, and continues to be fulfilled in our daily lives. The Christian who feels that he/she has nothing more to learn is someone who has not even begun to understand what the doctrine of the Holy Spirit means.

Jesus also promised the disciples that the Holy Spirit would help them remember what he had been teaching them. This promise alone ensures the validity of the New Testament. The disciples were eyewitnesses of Jesus' life and teaching and the Holy Spirit helped them to remember several experiences without taking away their individual perspectives. This explains why even though the accounts or stories told in the four gospels are slightly different in content, they are nonetheless accurate in the point they set out to make. That's the Holy Spirit at work. And... he gives us the confidence that the gospel accounts are authentic records of what Jesus taught and did (1Cor. 2:10-14)

Of course this doesn't negate the fact that we all have the liberty to think things through and even to come up with our own conjectures, but all our conclusions must be tested against the words of Jesus. Bible commentator William Barclay, shares this insight with us: **“It is not so much the truth that we have to discover; Jesus told us the truth. What we have to discover is the meaning of that truth.”** And here is where the Holy Spirit again comes in and keeps us from arrogance and error of thought.

When we allow the Holy Spirit to have his way in our lives He also keeps us right in matters of conduct. (Illus.) We all at some time or the other have

been tempted to do something wrong and have been pushed to the very brink of doing it, when suddenly, back in our minds come a saying of Jesus, a verse or a Psalm, the words of someone we love or admire, or some teaching we received when we were young. And in that moment of real temptation these past spiritual thoughts flash into our minds and stop us from heading into sin. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. He "...reminds us of everything;" even of things that were said to us long ago, and then convicts us so we don't give in to sin. I believe this is probably what the apostle Paul is alluding to in 1Cor. 13:10—"***And God is faithful who will not let you be tempted beyond...***" God does this through his Holy Spirit.

The second priceless gift that Jesus bequeathed to his disciples and consequently now to us is **his peace**. Not just peace—but his peace. "***Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give you as the world gives. Do not let your heart be troubled and do not be afraid.***" (v.27)

In the bible the word peace, (*shalom*) never means simply the absence of trouble. It doesn't even refer to those who call themselves peacemakers. The peace which the world offers us is the peace of escape, the peace which comes from the avoidance of trouble and from refusing to face things—the easy non-confrontational way out. This is the peace that itravel2000.com offers when they give us a reduced price on our winter get away vacation package to "Canada's 13th province—Florida." For at best, the peace that the world gives is unsatisfying, unsettling and transient.

But on the contrary, this is what one Christian commentator said about the peace that God gives. Jesus left his peace "as the heritage of his disciples upon earth, and implants and maintains it by his Spirit in their hearts. But many a legacy is "left" that is never "given" to the designated person; many a gift destined that never reached its proper object. But Christ is the Executor of his own Testament; so the peace he "leaves" he also "gives. Therefore all is secure." And so in contrast to the world, the peace Jesus gives is sincere, substantial, internal, and eternal. In a nutshell, it is no respecter of circumstance.

In essence, it is the end result of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives which is a deep, lasting and genuine peace. Unlike worldly peace, which can also be defined as an absence of conflict, God's peace is confident assurance in any circumstance. When everything that can be shaken seems to be shaking around us, his peace ministers a calmness to our spirits. With Christ's peace we have no fear of the present or the future, which is why Jesus can

realistically say to us “*Don’t let your hearts be troubled*” but rather trust in me.

Whenever we speak of biblical peace, we are often reminded of Paul’s recipe for worry and anxiety that he gives in Philippians 4:6. There he reminds us that we should be anxious for nothing. But instead allow prayer, petition and thanksgiving run their course during those moments. And in the midst of those very real crises, Paul says that “the **peace of God** which transcends (or surpasses) all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. There it is again, the God kind of peace. Folks we need to be honest with ourselves and admit that sin, fear, uncertainty, doubt, and numerous other forces are at war within us. We need to acknowledge that these have the power to make us anxious. But, more importantly, we also need to be assured that **the peace of God** moves into our hearts, during those situations and lives to restrain these hostile forces and offers comfort in place of conflict. Jesus says in John 14:27, he is willing to give us this peace **if** we are willing to accept it from him.

After Jesus had revealed to his disciples that he would bequeath these two priceless gifts to them, he informed them that he will not speak with them much longer. And the reason he gave was because the prince of this world was coming, but in Jesus’ words he said: “*he has no hold on me...*”

Isn’t it interesting that although Satan was unable to overpower Jesus, he still had the arrogance to try? How much more us sinful beings. We need not be ignorant of his devices. But understand folks that Satan’s power exists only because God allows him to act. God is humoring him for a time. As we obey Jesus and align ourselves with God’s purposes, we diffuse Satan’s power over us as well. But all of this hinges on our obedience to God.

Conclusion

The two parting priceless gifts that Jesus left his disciples—the Holy Spirit and his peace, have since also been passed on to us. I pose two questions to us today in closing: How effective is the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives today? And do we know and have experienced that peace that Jesus gave to his disciples? And if not Jesus wants to bequeath them to us today.