“Transformed by Fire” - The Fruit of the Spirit - Peace

Galatians 5:22-23/ Mark 4-35-39 / Is. 26:3

7/18/21

Today we want to continue to see how to be “Transformed by Fire” by looking and the fruit of…Peace… a fruit that also needs to be growing, & producing in our hearts and lives for the Glory, and betterment of His Work & Kingdom…

We’ve looked at the fruit of LOVE:

* How we’re to produce Agape Love, and that love is patient, kind, humble, unselfish, forgiving, truthful & never gives up

A couple of weeks ago we added Joy to the inventory:

* We saw the difference between the world’s definition of joy vs. Gods Joy
* Believe (KNOWING) that God is with us, no matter what the outcome of the situation = REJOICEING (JOY)
* Possessing this Joy is a choice
* Joy is not to be found in a fallen world; it is only found in true fellowship with God which makes joy overflowing & complete!

***Read Galatians 5:22-23: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-control***

These days, with the pandemics, political debates raging on, and everyone trying to figure out what normal is anymore, it’s understandable that a lot of individuals feel out of their depth and are searching for some “Peace & Quiet”.

Though it is all too easy to fall into the trap of feeling overwhelmed by all the busyness that surrounds us or trying to keep up with our minds that run wild each time our heads hit the pillow, there is calming relief that we can experience if we allow hearts to produce this Fruit of Peace.

**What is Peace? – Meaning: freedom from disturbance**

Have any disturbances in your life?

I once heard a story where a teacher asked some students to draw a picture of what they think peace looked like. One student drew a picture of a large field. Another drew a picture of a sunset. But one student drew a picture of a huge, raging waterfall, with gallons of water crashing on the rocks below. Does that sound peaceful to you? What made the picture peaceful was that above the waterfall, there was a bird sound asleep in its nest! Even though there was danger below, the bird knew he was safe in the tree branch that held him – he was at peace.

There are a few types of peace…

* **There’s peace with others**. Some people would say that peace is the opposite of war, when there is no fighting or violence. There is peace in our homes when nobody is arguing or fighting.
* **There is peace with God**. When Adam and Eve started out in the Garden of Eden, they had peace with God. They walked with Him and spent time with Him (Genesis 3:8a). But when Adam and Eve chose to sin by trusting Satan instead of God, the peace that they had with God was broken (Genesis 3:10). The Bible says every person has sinned (Romans 3:23), and every person has lost the peace that God wanted to have with him or her (Isaiah 57:21). But God wanted to restore the peace we had with Him, so He promised to send a Savior to restore that peace (Genesis 3:15). The Savior that God promised was Jesus! God fulfilled His promise when He sent Jesus, His Son, to earth. The prophet Isaiah called Jesus the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). Anyone who believes in Jesus is made right with God; their peace with God is restored! - “There is peace with God through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.” – Acts 10:36b NLT
* **There is** **peace within our own hearts**. This is something we deal with every day, so this is what we’ll talk about the most today.

It’s been said that Peace is not the absence of conflict but the presence of God no matter what the conflict

**How to obtain the fruit of Peace & cause it to thrive in your life:**

We can only have the true peace of God in our hearts when we choose not to worry, become upset or angry for unjust reasons, or live-in fear. These types of positions grow stress, tension, and anxiety in our hearts. The direct opposite of peace. This type of peace we’re looking to grow is something that people may be able to see on the outside, but we definitely know it’s there on the inside.

When we aren’t producing peace, we can feel of out of whack, edgy, or tense. We think about all the things that can go wrong (that may not even happen). Our minds don’t shut down & races; our heart beats quickly, our blood pressure goes up and we find ourselves physically, emotionally, and sometimes spiritually sick because we lack the Peace that God provides.

* Gods desire for His people is not to live this way, but to be filled with the “peace that passes all understanding” in their hearts and minds.

During His time on earth, Jesus restored peace everywhere He went.

* One day, after Jesus had been teaching parables to a large crowd, He and His disciples were on a boat crossing the Sea of Galilee. Suddenly, a huge, wild, raging storm appeared! The disciples of Jesus were terrified, but Jesus was so calm that He was asleep in the bottom of the boat. His disciples woke Him up because they were TERRIFIED (Full of fear) that they would drown in the storm
* Mark 4:38 “He got up and ordered the wind to stop. He said to the waves, **‘PEACE! Be still!**’ Then the wind died down. And it was completely calm.” (NKJV - And the wind ceased and there was a **great calm**.

God loves to give us word pictures. Calming the raging sea was a picture of what Jesus can do to a person’s heart. Sometimes in life, “Suddenly, a huge, wild, raging storm appears within our lives and hearts and we become totally afraid, terrified, anxious, or worrisome. Completely paralyzed!

* The disciples felt this way in the boat. These were professional fishermen and were so overwhelmed with fear that they didn’t know what to do. It’s not like this was the 1st “storm” they’d encountered. But for some reason, they were sure that they would drown in this storm.
* Jesus not only calmed down the storm outside, but He also brought peace to His disciples within their hearts.

When He was about to leave His disciples, Jesus told His followers, “I am leaving you with a gift – *peace of mind and heart.”* (John 14:27a NLT)

* This peace stays with us even when we something upsets the “normal” in our lives. For instance, what if you lost your job, and you didn’t know how you would pay your bills or buy food for your family? That would be a pretty scary & worrisome situation – I know, I’ve been there.

But here’s what we need to take home with us today...God does not want us to worry about it.

You know what brings His peace…? Trusting Him with EVERYTHING in your life!

Today I’d like us to apply Romans 8:28 to our hearts. This is a very famous, but often misused verse. In case you didn’t know, and you needed a promise from the Lord today to hold onto this verse is a promise from God, and doesn’t God ALWAYS keeps His promises?

* **Romans 8:28 *“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”***

Ok, I need your help today...Repeat it after me. “We know” – “that in all things” – “God works for the good” – “of those who love Him.”

Let’s break this down:

* **We know**. – *We are aware of through observation (Seen it), inquiry (asked about it), or information (read it in the Word.*
* Does this mean we guess; we suppose? Maybe? No, we know! We are 100% certain, and no one can tell us different. We know that we know…
* **God**
  + Who? You or me? Your family, friends? No, not because of us, but God; The creator and ruler of the universe and source of all life & all authority; the One who still is in control of everything in and above the earth!
* **Causes all things**
  + How many things? Some things? A few small things? NO! All things. Good, bad, easy, hard; the mountain’s tops and the valleys
* **To work together**
  + What can God do? He can do anything! He is so powerful that when He spoke the Universe appeared. He spoke and the sun rises daily in the east and sets in the west. He spoke and man was given breath. He is all-powerful. When He works, watch out! Can anything stop God’s work? Can you stop God’s work? NO! There is NOTHING, repeat, NOTHING HE WON’T DO TO WORK THINGS OUT FOR YOU! And what He works in is done perfectly!
* **For the good**:
  + Is God good? Psalm 100:5 says, "For the LORD is good; His loving kindness is everlasting And His faithfulness to all generations.” Are the things He does good? Has He God been good to you? Everything He does is very good and the plans He has for you are good…Even in the hard times.
    - *“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11)*
* **To those who love Him & are called according to His purpose**:
  + This is the part many leave out. Who is this talking about? Everyone? No, this promise is only for those who love Him and are called to His purpose. Those who are His. It is for each person who trusts Him! It is for every person that has accepted Him, lives for Him & loves Him!
  + Now God is going to work everything out according to His plans concerning the world and all of its affairs, but this specific promise is for the Christian. This means that any and everything thrown from life or the enemy, God will work out for your good, because He is good. He is going to take care of you through it all!

Let me make this even easier for you to understand.

* I know that “EVERYTHING THAT I GO THROUGH” in my life, (whether good, bad, whether easy or difficult, whether sunny or stormy,) “WILL BE WORKED OUT PERFECTLY AS IT IS WORKED OUT FOR MY GOOD ACCORDING TO GODS BEST FOR MY LIFE,” *as long as I “TRULY LOVE GOD AND HAVE ACCEPTED HIM AS LORD AND SAVIOR.”*

Our all-powerful, all-knowing God is in control. He won’t let anything happen to one of His kids and leave you hanging! That is not what’s best for them.

* So, even if we lose our job, you do not have to worry about it. You can have peace knowing that God is working out the situation in the very best way for you & your family! Maybe He has a better job waiting for you. Who knows…Oh wait! God does!

God wants us all today to learn to trust Him more than maybe anyone of us have ever trusted before. I may think I know what’s best for me, my family, etc., but God KNOWS what’s best for me, my life, my family, etc.

* There are no surprises for God. No situation slips past Him. If I am worrying – if I don’t have true inner peace – truth is, it’s because I don’t believe that God is able to take care of me and my problems. Or I don’t believe that God wants to take care of me. If I am worried, I am I believing the promise of Romans 8:28.
  + Daniel – the lion’s den
  + Paul – on the shipwrecked island

When I trust God and trust His promises, I won’t have to feel uneasy, anxious, stressed. When I trust God, I can know His ways & thoughts are higher than mine, & I will begin to experience the true fruit of HIS peace.

Closing:

You relax on a plane, even though you don't know the pilot. You relax in a ship, even though you don't know the captain. You relax on a bus, even though you don't know the driver. Then why don't we relax in life knowing that God is in control?

If you were to pick up a hamster, you know that he’s afraid because he squirms and shakes, and his little heart is racing. We wish he knew that there’s no way anything was going happen to him. In fact, he’s way safer in my hands than if I let him down to run around on his own. On his own, he could get lost or stepped on, or an animal outside might grab him. If he would just trust me, he could relax and have a fun, peaceful ride while I carry him around.

Do you see how we are often like this little hamster? We worry and fret over things in our lives, to which a lot of these things are truly out of our control, while the entire time we should just relax because God is literally wanting to carry us in the palm of His hand THROUGH the storm.

* Remember, Jesus was sleeping peacefully in the boat during that raging storm. How? Jesus trusted His heavenly Father. Jesus knew that His Father had Him in the palm of His hand. Just like Jesus, we can have that peace when we trust that God is in control of everything.

**Key Verse: You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in You, all whose thoughts are fixed on You! – Isaiah 26:3 NLT**

*Want or need Gods Peace?* Ph. 4:6-7 has the answer…

***6 Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done. 7 Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.***

Nothing in this world cannot give peace because it doesn’t know the One who is Peace. People are searching in the wrong field for the fruit of peace.

**TRUE PEACE comes from KNOWING, BELEIVING, & TRUSTING that God has our best interests in heart and is in control of those interests.**

Do you need the fruit of God’s peace in your life today? Do you know the One who is Peace and will work ALL things out for you?

Is worry, anxiety, stress running your heart and life today? Aren’t’ you over how those things make you feel, live, and even treat others?

Why not leave those things at the altar today and let God take control and fill you with the Peace that passes ALL understanding?

Don’t leave today without it.