

I. Intro

A. Today we are going to be thinking about peace – as in: inner peace, peace of mind, a settled heart. A non-anxious soul. Inner quiet. Contentment. Some of the things captured by the Jewish concept of shalom.

B. We are thinking about this for two reasons. The first is because our quest for peace drives us.

1. We may mistakenly think that what we want is money or power or a certain job or a certain degree. But not really. It turns out that we want those things because we think that if we had those things we'd have inner peace. We think that if we only got married or had kids, or joined a certain club or bought a certain house – that we'd be content.

2. The reality is: what we - what you and I - really want is to be content. To be at peace. And we only want these other things – titles or homes or money or relationships – because we think that if we had them, we would be happy, settled, not anxious.

3. But we could have all those things and not have a settled heart – and, well, not be settled. Or, we could be settled without those things. And the self aware person realizes that they'd choose the latter.

4. You should understand that I can not only show you the person who has what you think will make you happy (the house, car, job, whatever) who is not happy. I can show you people who do not have it and are content and I can show you people who believe that if only they had what you have right now, they would be happy – they would be settled. Content.

C. So the first reason we are looking at this is to better understand ourselves. But the main reason we are looking at this – the main reason we are talking about inner peace - is because Jesus does. In fact, he promises it. In his very last words to the apostles before his death, at the end of John 16 - in what theologians refer to as the Farewell Discourse – Jesus talks about peace and contentment.

II. This is week ten of our nineteen-week series on the second half of John.

A. This march through the last week of Christ's life is mapped out to align with Lent and to take us through Easter.

B. We started at the end of John 12 with an overview. Since then we've looked at:

1. Love and service.
2. Jesus washes the disciples' feet. Judas betrays Jesus
3. Jesus has made promises and offered assurances.

C. Today's passage is didactic in nature. The Gospels have both:

1. narrative sections - where a narrator (in this case, John) is telling us what is happening, and we learn from events, from what happens and how people respond.
2. and there are also teaching (didactic) sections – where we listen to Jesus teaching – either via a parable or a sermon or his conversations with his disciples or others.

a) The letters we get from Peter, Paul, James and John are pretty exclusively didactic. The Gospels are a mix of narrative and didactic.

3. The Farwell Discourse – John 14 – 17 – is a lot of teaching from Jesus:
4. It is here that we get the last words he says to his disciples before his death.
 - a) For three years he had been saying, “my time has not yet come.” Now he is saying, “the time is now. This is it.”
 - b) As an aside, the Farewell discourse continues through John 17, where we listen in on Christ’s prayer with the Father. But they do not get to hear that.
5. So, what we are getting here at the end of John 16 are the last things Jesus says to his disciples before his death.
6. You can think of it as the briefing a general gives to the troops before they go to war.
7. In this case, it is very pastoral. It is obvious that he cares about them and he is going out of his way to make it clear that he loves them and will care for them.
8. And he has also made it clear that things are going to get bad – be hard. Two weeks ago I tried to drive that point home.
9. Today we get a bit more of it, but against the broader context that even in the midst of hard they can have peace.

III. John 16:16-33

A. **Jesus went on to say, “In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me.”** He is referring here to his death and resurrection. Of course, they do not know this.

B. V:17 - **At this, some of his disciples said to one another, “What does he mean by saying, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me,’ and ‘Because I am going to the Father?’” They kept asking, “What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We don’t understand what he is saying.”** The kids in the backseat want to know, “how much longer?”

1. As background, several of the prophets – Hosea, Isaiah and Jeremiah¹ – all used the phrase, “In a little while” when they were talking about the coming judgment and the deliverance of Israel.

2. It’s a phrase that might get their attention. But what they want are some specifics, which Jesus does not give them. He doesn’t answer their question.

C. V19: **Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, “Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me?’”²⁰ Very truly (pay attention) I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices.**

1. Events that will make others happy – the world (remember, in this context, we are talking about those “alienated from God, which includes the Romans and religious leaders.

2. In this case, it sure looks like he is talking about his upcoming death.

D. **Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.**

1. Things are about to be upended. Things are going to get bad. But I will turn them back around. I am going to prevail. I am going to win. I am going to make things right. **You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.**

E. And then he uses the illustration of childbirth as an analogy – which was a common OT illustration. It points both to suffering followed by immense relief and joy; and it also pointing to the arrival of the Messiah.² **V21: A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.**

1. This passage is often misused by prosperity preachers who put the emphasis on God giving you whatever you ask for – such as a new private jet. The thrust here is not about what we ask for. It is on the fact that we are to ask “in Christ’s name.”

2. This is the first time we are told to pray in Christ’s name. This is now done all the time. We tack, “in Jesus’ name” onto our prayers.

3. This had not happened before now. We need to realize that the phrase isn’t magic. The point here is that we stand “in Christ.” He represents us. We can approach God in his name.

4. If you look at the teaching on prayer in other religions – because just about everyone prays (Jews, Hindus, Muslims even some atheists). But if you look at what is taught about prayer, what you see is the idea that our requests will be granted contingent on two things:

a) The merit of the person praying: how good he or she has been. What sacrifices they have made. What steps have they taken to win over God – to manipulate God so that God is almost obligated to say yes.

b) And the second part is disposition of God. His mood.

5. That is now how our prayers are assessed. We do not stand on our own before God, Jesus stands in for us. And God is shaped by his nature and love, not by his moods. So, when we stand in Christ and pray in his name, we are perfectly positioned.

F. **Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.**

G. **V25: “Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father.**

1. As I said, Jesus is not answering their question. He now alludes to that. He notes that he does not always speak as clearly as they might like. Instead, he makes use of a variety of metaphors and teaching methods – such as parables. He teaches in different ways at different moments.

2. So, those listening are not always certain of exactly what he is saying. But there will be a day when we are. When we will understand more.

H. **V26: In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf.**

1. I think the suggestion here is that a lot of our questions will be answered when his plan unfolds or when we see Him. We’ll have some – “Oh, now I get it” moments.

2. And also, that He doesn't need to lobby or persuade the Father, because the father is for us.

I. ²⁷No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. ²⁸I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.”

1. OK, pay attention, because verse 28 is loaded. You will never see more doctrine packed into less space than right here.³ I heard one scholar say that vs 28 not only sums up everything that Jesus has been saying in the Farewell Discourse, but that it summarizes everything in the Bible.

J. There are four discrete claims.

1. First, Jesus says: **I came from the Father** – i.e., I am not like you. My life did not begin at conception. I am God. I existed before time began. I existed in glory with the Father and the Spirit. Here we go again. Jesus the selfless one; Jesus the humble. Jesus the one who lived simply. Jesus claims to be God

a) You have to get this. If you want peace, you have to get this, because you have to trust for Him to deliver on His promises.

b) You are going to have to understand that Jesus is not just a wise teacher. He is not just a life coach. He is not just a good example. He is not just a moral reformer. He is the Son of God who comes from the Father

2. Second: **I entered the world** – he becomes one of us. He incarnates himself.

a) While remaining fully God, he becomes fully human. Again, he is not like us! But he shows up for us!

b) Dorothy Sayers was a fiction writer who wrote detective stories. She was also a friend of CS Lewis, and one of the first women to graduate from Oxford. And a famous playwright. And other things.

(1) One of her lead characters is Lloyd Peter Wimsey. Well, in her novels, Wimsey is lonely and so she creates a love interest for him - Harriet Vain, who just so happens, is one of the first women to graduate from Oxford and who writes detective novels.

(2) Sayers scholars say – Sayers created a character, saw that he was lonely, fell in love with him and so she showed up to rescue him.

(3) This is what Jesus does. He enters time and space to rescue the ones he created who are now hurting. He wrote himself into the story.

3. The third big item in verse 28 is next. Here he talks about his death. ²⁸**I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world.**

a) By “leaving the world” he means – he is going to the cross to die for us.

b) Please notice how collected he is about this. He doesn't say, “I'm about to be grabbed and arrested, beaten and locked up. I'm about to suffer and get sham trials.” No. He is very collected.

c) His anxious moments are coming. As he who knew no sin becomes sin and is estranged from God, we will get reports of anguish – sweating blood and crying out, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” But not here. At this moment he is very much in control. The non-anxious presence.

d) As he will say in John 10:18, “No one takes my life from me. I lay it down.”

4. And then, in the fourth part of this he talks about his ascension. **I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.** Forty days after his resurrection he will ascend to heaven.

a) About a month ago I did a podcast on this if that topic is of interest.

b) The point here is that Jesus is now with the Father where he serves as our high priest, interceding for us.

B. Then Jesus’ disciples said, “Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God.”

K. ³¹“**Do you now believe?**” Jesus replied. You can hear a bit of irony here. Jesus does not think that they get it – and they do not. As soon as it gets hard, they are going to scatter.

L. **V32: A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. V33: Here is the word peace I started with. I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”**

IV. So, what do we take away from here? What are we supposed to hear here?

A. Clearly, the disciples have some wrong expectations – what else is new? They are expecting easy and their timing of events appears to be off. So they are asking (if not the wrong question, not a question Jesus is going to ask directly). But he sets out to tell them what they need to hear.

B. In his last words to them, he tells them that it is going to get hard, but even in the face of hard they can relax. He has everything under control. He loves them – as does the father. And he will be back.

C. What do we take away?

V. I thought about doubling down on the idea that our hardships are real, because the Bible takes our hardships seriously. It is realistic about our suffering. Not every worldview is. Some tell us it’s an illusion or advises us to ignore it. The Bible acknowledges our pain. Read the Psalms. And while we do not get every question answered, Jesus shows up.

VI. But I want to highlight something else. I want you to realize that there is no peace without right doctrine.

A. You want inner quiet, poise, groundedness, confidence? OK, well, that comes through knowing and trusting and acting on right doctrine. It comes from knowing the truth, because the truth will set us free.

C. If you want peace, you have to understand who Jesus is – in part because, God uses hard to help us get better. Look at verse 33: **In this world you will have trouble.**

D. Why would God allow this? Well, hard to answer fully, but here is something we know: we grow more on stormy days than on sunny ones.

1. Few of us ever find out that Jesus is all they need until Jesus is all they've got.
2. God often builds us up spiritually by taking away the things we are leaning on, which forces us to lean on him, and we realize that He is better.
3. One of the ironies of life is that we often think we are getting stronger when we are resting. But if we stay there too long we get weaker.
4. Meanwhile, while we are working out and feeling more tired, we are actually getting stronger. There is a spiritual analogy to this. It is when things are hard, we have the chance to grow.
5. I heard Tim Keller comment on this recently.⁴ He has pancreatic cancer right now. He was actually commenting on this long before that. He said that as a new Christian and a college student, he read *Knowing God*, by JI Packer, and in one of the final chapters, Packer highlights a John Newton hymn that makes this point – that we grow most (or can) when things are not going as we'd hoped.
6. I went and found it. Let me read four stanzas from it
 - a) I asked the Lord that I might grow, In faith and love and ev'ry grace,
Might more of His salvation know, And seek more earnestly His face.
 - b) Instead of this, He made me feel, The hidden evils of my heart
And let the angry pow'rs of hell, Assault my soul in ev'ry part.
 - c) "Lord, why is this," I trembling cried; "Wilt Thou pursue Thy worm
to death?" "'Tis in this way," the Lord replied, "I answer prayer for grace and
faith."
 - d) "These inward trials I employ, From self and pride to set thee free
And break thy schemes of earthly joy, That thou may'st find thy all in Me."
7. We tend to grow during challenges – not always in the right direction. Some get bitter not better. But it is in the trial that we have the chance to get better.
8. This doesn't mean we go looking for trials. But it does mean that when we are walking through trials that we need to drive right doctrine into our heart.

E. How do we do this? In verse 33 we are told, "Take heart, I have overcome the world."

1. I like the translation "dare" instead. Not "take heart I have overcome the world" but "dare to believe that I have overcome the world." Step out on faith. Live as if it's true.
2. Dare to rest your identity in Christ. Dare to believe that you are loved because of Jesus and not what you've done.
3. If you get your identity in anything from the world, the world can take it away. Go to the doctrine. Think about these things. Think about who Jesus is and what he has done for us.

F. One of the classic examples of this is in 1874, Horatio Spafford and his wife lost their children in a shipwreck. He was not on the ship. She was, and was found unconscious clinging to some wood. They had to try to go on. How?

1. They drive the doctrine deep into their heart. Instead of asking, “How can God have allowed this?” They look at Jesus on the cross – taking their sins – and say, “I am loved. I am going to live loved. I am going to trust even though I do not understand.”

G. There is no peace without right doctrine. Drive it deep into your heart.

¹ Hos 1:4; Isa 10:25; and Jer. 51:33

² Isaiah 26:16-21

³ Thanks to Tim Keller for this observation. It’s in his sermon, “Overcoming the World,” which is an exposition of John 16:28-33.

⁴ Again, Tim Keller.