

# Advent 2019: Peace - John 14:25-31

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[ 0 : 00 ] If you would turn in your Bibles to the book of John, John chapter number 14. Today as we celebrate this season of Advent, we've already looked at the hope that we have in Christ.

And we have looked at the joy that we have in Christ. And today we are going to look at the peace that we have in Christ. And it is amazing as we celebrate this time of Advent, we can look back to the fact that Jesus came to earth already.

And we celebrate these things of Advent. But even more so, we have the future to look forward to of the kingdom of God that is coming. And the full ramification, the full sense in which we can experience these things will be realized in that time.

And as I was preparing to speak on peace today, when Nathan came to me and asked me to speak on this, at first I was a little intimidated because really when you think about it, there's not a lot of sermons that we hear on peace.

We hear a lot about hope. We hear a lot about love and joy. But peace is one of those areas that we don't really hear a lot about. And really the first thing that came into my mind when I thought about this topic of peace was that peace is almost elusive.

[ 1 : 27 ] You know, it's something that we all desire, that we all want to experience in our lives. And we all know that it should be a reality in our lives. But many times it's not.

Many times it's something that we don't think that we can fully have right now. You know, when we look out in the world today and see everything that is going on, peace is probably one of the last words that I would describe what we see.

You know, we have wars going on. We have the 2020 election coming up. We have everything in the world that is showing us that peace is not a reality.

Yet when we look at scripture, we see that peace is mentioned all over the Bible. You know, we've already listened to Reese this morning and Nathan when he read the passage today talking about peace.

And it's amazing that peace is mentioned in the Bible over 400 times. So this is something that is really talked about. But at the same time, it's something that we don't really grasp.

[ 2 : 27 ] And as I was thinking about this and as I was looking through, I ran across a survey of the American population. And in this dealing with how do we have peace in our lives?

Do we have peace or do we have anxiety, fear, and worry? And I was reading and I found that about one in six Americans, according to a 2016 survey, one in six Americans take some sort of drugs that deal with anxiety or fear or antidepressants or stuff like that.

One in six Americans. One in six Americans. I also saw a number that shocked me as well that suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in America.

And the crazy thing about it is that it's the 10th leading cause, but with people who attempt suicide, there's 25 attempts for every one successful suicide.

And so people commit or try to commit suicide, but they most of the time do not succeed. One in every 25 succeeds.

[ 3 : 36 ] And so this is definitely a rampant problem. And it's not just something of, you know, like older into adulthood, you know, kind of this hopeless sense. It's the second leading cause of death for those aged 15 to 24.

So this idea of anxiety and fear and anger and just whatever else you have going on is something that affects every single one of us.

And we see here that it's not just in the U.S., but really worldwide as well. So in a world where we see anything but peace, how do we as Christians experience peace in our lives?

And is it something that we can experience or is it just something that we look forward to in the future? When we look at peace in the Bible, as I said, it's mentioned just about 400 times in Scripture.

And it goes all the way back to the very beginning. In Numbers chapter 6, you might have heard this passage before. It's kind of a popular verse that Moses or God commands Moses to give this blessing to Aaron and to his sons.

[ 4 : 48 ] And he says, The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the Lord of Israel. You shall say to them, The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. So we see that this idea of peace is something that should be in our lives, that it's commanded, that God encourages us to experience peace.

And even it's rooted so much in the Jewish culture as well. You know, when they greet one another, even to this day, they say shalom, which is the one Hebrew word I know.

So that just goes to show you how prominent it is, which means peace. And so even in their greetings, the desire for peace, we all desire peace in our lives.

And Jesus spoke about peace a lot. And in fact, he made it a priority because in this text that we are going to read today at the end of John chapter number 14, it is some of Jesus's last sayings to his disciples.

[ 6 : 01 ] This is the last night that he is going to be spending with his disciples. And he takes this time to comfort them and to give them peace. So we're going to start reading in John 14, starting in verse 25.

Jesus says, These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you, but the helper, 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 am going away and I will come to you. If you loved me, you would have rejoiced because I am going 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.

[ 7 : 07 ] He has no claim on 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 from here. So there's a lot of things going on in this text, and we won't necessarily touch on everything.

I want to really focus in on what Jesus says in verse number 27, where he says, 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. And so Jesus draws this distinction of two places.

He shows how the world has its offering of peace. And he shows how his offering of peace is completely different than what the world gives. And so I want to focus at the beginning on what kind of peace does the world try to offer us.

We already see that the world that we have around us is anything but peaceful. And yet so often we try to go in the route that it tells us to on how to find peace.

[ 8 : 17 ] You know, if I were to take a survey here and ask everybody in this room, you know, if you suffer at any time in your life from anxiety or fear or maybe depression, I would imagine that almost everybody would raise their hand.

You know, whether you are suffering from that right now or have in the past or most likely will in the future, it's very much a reality, you know, that we will suffer troubles in this world.

And when we do, what do we go to in order to try to help us in that time? The world, of course, does not have a picture of the gospel.

The world doesn't have a picture of who God is. And so then the natural result, the natural place to look is either in your surroundings or most of the time in yourself.

And how many times do we read and even see in the bookstores of these tons of books that show how to help yourself, you know, like these self-help books? You know, some of them have great things to offer.

[ 9 : 20 ] Some of them have ways in which that we can improve, you know, our surroundings around us. But all of them fall short in this way and the fact that they ultimately look to yourself in order to fix your own problems.

And it's amazing how even we as Christians fall in that trap as well. You know, I look back in my life and I see difficulties and see problems that I have in my life.

And for the most part, the beginning reaction, the first thing that I go to is not really to the Bible or to prayer, but it's thinking to myself, how do I fix this problem?

Right? Like I have this problem in my life. I am suffering fear from it, insecurity, anxiety. And how do I solve this in order to get away from this feeling?

Like nobody enjoys suffering anxiety. Nobody enjoys suffering fear. And so our natural reaction is to quickly see how can we solve this problem?

[ 10 : 16 ] How can we run away from this problem in order to come to a more peaceful state of mind? And that's exactly what the world teaches us to do. The world teaches us that, you know, our problems are something that we should try to run away from or either figure out in ourselves of how we can fix our own problems, of looking to us and looking to us as the solution to what we have going on in our life.

And so often we fall into this trap and we begin to look to ourselves and try to figure it out. And what does that usually cause?

I don't know about for you, but for me, that just causes more fear, more worry, and more anxiety because I begin to realize how inept I am to figure out the problems that I have going on in life.

You know, and it really affects all stages of life. You know, it was kind of funny. I don't know if you guys have watched Frozen 2, but you know, the scene with Olaf where he is in the woods.

Hopefully there's no spoilers. I'm sorry. And so he's singing this song and there's all sorts of things going wrong all around him. And he's singing this song saying, you know what?

[ 11 : 32 ] This doesn't make sense right now that I'm young, but when I'm old, I will understand all things and everything will be just fine with life. And the funny part about that song is because all of us in the audience realize how far away from truth that is.

You know, we have this hope as children that, you know, one day everything in life will make sense. Everything will run perfectly smooth exactly how I want it to. And then we find a horrible reality, you know, in our minds that when we grow up, that's not exactly what it is.

In fact, there are more problems that arise. You know, when you were from 10 years old to 20 years old to 30 years old to 40 years old. There are constantly things coming up in our life that cause anxiety and worry and fear.

And because of that, it really begins to dampen our walk with Christ. You know, we begin to focus a lot on what the problems are in life rather than focusing on Christ himself.

And so the world tries to offer, you know, the solutions to this problem of peace, of saying that you must look to yourself, you must look to other people in order to solve that.

[ 12 : 45 ] But Jesus, here in this text, draws us to a completely different focus. Instead, he realizes the fact that these disciples are about to go through something that they cannot possibly imagine right now what they're about to go through.

You know, in the back of their minds, they are thinking that Jesus is the Messiah. And their picture of the Messiah is, hey, he is going to come and going to get rid of this Roman Empire that we have suppressing us.

And we are going to be rulers and we're finally going to be free. And what Jesus has come to do has not set us free from the problems that we have in this world, but rather has come to set us free with a relationship with God and having peace with God.

And so he is speaking to his disciples in this way of saying, hey, you know what? I am about to leave you, you know, which, of course, comes as a shock to disciples. If you read up earlier in John chapter 14, Jesus is saying how he is going to go away to the Father.

And Philip says, hey, like, where are you going? We're going to follow after you. And Jesus tells him that he is going to the Father and that he will one day, you know, come to the Father as well, but that Jesus is leaving.

[ 14 : 00 ] And this thought process is something that's totally foreign to the disciples that they don't understand. And so Jesus is preparing them for this time that he is going to be crucified, that he is going to leave them, but he's not going to leave them hopeless.

He's not going to leave them alone. He gives them the comfort that he is going to give them the Holy Spirit. And as we look to this comfort, I want us to turn in our Bibles to Romans chapter 8. And as we see here in Romans chapter 8, we're going to be looking at verse number 5. And as I was thinking about this, of trying to accomplish this work in our own life, of working it out in the flesh, my brain, I thought back to in school I heard this story analogy from Benjamin Franklin. So Benjamin Franklin was a guy who really tried to pursue after good morals, of living a good life, of knowing that if you live the way that you should, you know, in essence, you should have peace in life.

And so Benjamin Franklin pursued after that. And so he wrote a list of 13 morals, 13 attitudes that he wanted to try to keep, and to achieve almost this moral perfection.

[15:24] And so what he did was he wrote out these 13 principles, and each week he would focus on one principle that he would try to live out, you know, in order to be able to live a better life, and the ultimate end of finding peace in life.

And so what he found was that the week that he would focus on the one moral, he would usually do pretty well in that, right? Like if your brain is focused on something, you know, you tend to succeed in that.

But the other 12 would kind of be lacking. And so he's like, okay, no worries. This first week, you know, we've got this one down. We'll move on to the second. So the second week comes, he focuses in on the second moral, does pretty well, but then finds that he starts to lack in the first one again.

And this is just a constant rotation and problem that, you know, he would do well on one, but then the others would suffer because he wasn't really putting a lot of attention and focus in that.

And isn't that true in our lives as well, where, you know, when we see problems in our lives, a lot of times, you know, we can kind of face those head on and tackle one at a time.

[16:28] But you notice that the other problems that you had in life tend to rise up a little bit more during that time to where it's like, man, I cannot focus my attention on everything that I have going on.

I can maybe conquer this one area for a little while in my own natural self, you know, we think. But these other areas become problems again and just leads to more anxiety and more fear.

And Paul talks about this in Romans chapter number eight. And he says, starting in verse number five, he says, For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh.

But those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law. Indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. And we see the most important thing here, the fact that if we begin to trust and depend on our flesh in order to get us out of this problem, it will only lead to more problems.

[17:42] Paul here shows that this is just a completely different mindset. That we must take our mind off of the flesh, off of what we can do to solve our problems, and to put our mind on Christ.

And so the first thing that we need to do and we need to make sure of is the fact that we do indeed have a relationship with God.

You know, we see here in later on or earlier on in Romans chapter number five and in Colossians as well that Jesus Christ has come to the earth in order that we might have peace with God.

His death on the cross and his resurrection provided us an opportunity to have a relationship with God. That we were enemies of God because of our sin, but because Christ came and died on the cross to pay for our sins, if we trust and depend on him and his sacrifice, we have peace with God.

And so our standing with God is not one where God is looking to destroy us, but rather God loves us and cares for us and has a relationship with us.

[18:55] But just because we have peace with God doesn't always mean that we experience peace. You know, just because we have the status of peace with God doesn't mean that in our hearts, we all the time, 24-7, experience the peace that we so greatly desire.

In fact, I would say a lot of times the opposite is true, where even though we know that we have peace with God, getting from the knowing to feeling sometimes takes a really long time.

And it's something that we continue to struggle with and continue to try to endure. And so as we look at the passage in Romans of what Paul is saying here, that our minds so often go to the flesh,

which only leads to destruction, that we must set our minds on Christ in order to really experience this victory.

A lot of times what I notice in the more conservative movement that we find ourselves in, that there's a lot of emphasis placed on our condition before Christ, right?

That we are sinners, depraved, and worthy of God's judgment, which is totally true. And it's really good that we focus in on that, because when we see how bad we are and see how great Christ is, it gives us a lot of hope to realize that, hey, I'm not the solver of my problems, but rather Christ is.

[ 20 : 25 ] But I think one area where we find a little bit of weakness is, when we now have a relationship with God, we are not the same person as what we once were.

We are not depraved sinners. Rather, we have Christ's righteousness in us. And a lot of times I know in my life, my brain has just been fixed on the fact that, oh, I am a sinner.

You know, I almost expect to do wrong rather than do right. I expect, you know, to fail rather than succeed. And a lot of times I have an incorrect mindset in that.

And we see that Paul corrects this in verse number nine of this text, where he says, you, however, are not in the flesh, but in the spirit. If in fact the spirit of God dwells in you, anyone who does not have the spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness. If the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his spirit who dwells in you.

[ 21 : 35 ] And so Paul mentions this problem that we have in our lives, right? Where we still have this sinful flesh in us that constantly fails, that is constantly inclined to do wrong, to do incorrect, to have a wrong thought process.

But at the same time, it's not that that is the only thing that we have in us. We have the spirit of Christ in us. We have Christ's righteousness in us. And the fact that, you know, we should not necessarily anticipate, oh, you know what, I am going to sin and almost have this mindset of failure. But rather, we need to rest and trust in the fact that we have Christ's righteousness in us. That there is nothing that the enemy can throw at us, or nothing that we can experience in which we do not have hope in.

That we do not have the power of Christ in us. And that's what Jesus is drawing the disciples back to, back in our text of John 14, where he says that, you know what, the peace that the world offers is not something that's complete.

It is something that is always going to fail you. The peace that I offer you is something that is complete, because the peace that I offer you indwells you. And that is the Holy Spirit.

[ 22 : 50 ] And so we see here that Jesus is comforting his disciples during this time. And now what I really want to focus in on is, how do we experience this peace from God?

And like I said earlier, there are so many times in our lives where we know the truth. I would venture to say that in this congregation, we know more truth than probably a lot of Christians throughout church history.

I don't think knowledge is something that we are lacking in, or what is the real problem. The real problem, I believe, is getting the knowledge down to how we feel, and down to the emotional level. You know, I can know a lot of things about God, but still not experience the peace that God has for us to offer. So how do we go about doing that?

You know, Jesus here encourages his disciples to let not your hearts be troubled, and don't let them be afraid, and to go back to his commands, and go back to what he has said, and to live and to rest in that.

[ 23 : 59 ] And a lot of times, you know, we don't do that. We allow our hearts, and we allow our thoughts to drift away from Christ, and then focus in on the problems of life.

And here's the great thing about finding peace with God, is the fact that when we were enemies of God, when we tried to find peace, we had to try to fix our problems, or run away from our problems. But instead, now that we have a relationship with God, Christ does not encourage us to just run away from our problems. You know, he tells us all throughout the New Testament, all throughout his word, that you will experience trials.

You will experience things that come into your life. But instead of trying to run away from it, instead of trying to figure it out, the greatest thing in the world, the most comforting thing in the world, is he

says, come to me with it.

We are to come to Christ. Peace is not found in trying to run away from something, or trying to escape, but rather peace is found in a person. And that person is Christ.

[ 25 : 02 ] And we are to run to Christ, and to depend on him, and to not try to run away from our troubles, but rather to take what is going on in our lives, to take our fears, to take our anxieties, to take the struggles that we have, and bring them to Christ, and ask him to work in our hearts through this time.

And you know what? As we do this, it's not something that is necessarily a quick fix. You know, I think in our culture today, we want something that solves the problem immediately, right?

And I think, you know, to some of the things that I do, so I like to invest in the stock market. I enjoy investing in businesses and companies. And here's the thing.

A lot of people lose money when they invest. I think almost 90% of people who invest in the stock market lose money. And why is that? You know, when we look at it, you know, it's constantly rising over time.

Like, why would you lose money? And the thing is that most people who do it are desiring to get rich really quickly, right? Like, that's what we want. We want to be a millionaire, like, in a day. And so we figure out, okay, how can I do this?

[ 26 : 11 ] And we try to do all these things really fast. You know, whereas if we were more slow at it, you know, the people who really make money in the stock market don't make money in the stock market in two days.

They make money in the stock market over three, four, five decades of just letting the money sit in there and letting the market do its work rather than them getting too involved with it.

And a lot of times, our spiritual life is the same way too, where we see problems and we want them fixed immediately. You know, I am experiencing anxiety. I don't want to feel anxiety anymore and I want to be solved in a day with this.

And in reality, life doesn't work that way. It takes time and it takes patience and it takes a building of a relationship. You know, if you think about it, you know, the person, if you are married, most likely you didn't meet that person and get married to them in a week.

You know, it took time to develop that relationship. It took time to develop that trust, to develop that love for the other person. And the same way goes with our relationship with Christ.

[ 27 : 16 ] You know, we may be struggling with fear. We may be struggling with anxiety. But the more and more that we get to know Christ and the more and more that we learn to take our troubles to Him rather than trying to fix it on our own, the more we will experience the peace that He has to offer.

And this is something that we grow in in our Christian life. And like I said, maybe you are sitting here today and you are struggling with this idea of peace or this idea of having anxiety and fear and depression.

Like, I don't know your heart, but I would venture to say that the statistics that I read at the beginning are probably pretty true with what we experience here in this room. And I want to let you know that my heart goes out for you.

And we see here in the Bible that God cares so much about you. You know, He mentions over 400 times of how we can have peace with God. This is something that is so important to grasp and to understand in our lives.

And it's something that is a lot of times so hard to feel because, like I said, we almost get into a rush with it and we think that our problems can be solved in a day rather than realizing that it is a lifetime of a relationship with Christ.

[ 28 : 30 ] And so I want to offer you hope today. The hope that Christ offers us. Which is found in this last verse that I love that just really stuck out to me.

And Jesus says, in verse number 30, He says, I will no longer talk much with you for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, but I do as the Father has commanded me.

And so often in our lives, we see how the enemy attacks us and we see how the enemy attacks the people that we love. And we begin to think that He is the one who has the power and the control in those areas of life.

And Jesus here is saying that, you know what? Everything in this life that's coming up for these disciples is going to look like the enemy is the one who's in control. You know, in just a few short

hours, Jesus is going to be betrayed by one of His own.

He is going to be taken before Pilate. He's going to be taken before the people. And they are going to completely betray Him and have Him crucified. And the disciples are going to have the world turned upside down in about 24 hours.

[ 29 : 43 ] And He's saying, listen, it's going to look like the enemy is in complete control of this. It's going to look like the enemy has won this battle. But I want you to know that the enemy has no power.

The ruler of the world is coming, but He has no claim on me. But I do as the Father has commanded me. And I want to offer you that same hope that we have that in your life you may feel that the enemy has power over you.

You may feel completely hopeless. You may feel like there's nothing that can get you out of the place that you are in life right now. That there's just too many things that have gone on. Maybe it's stuff that you have done that you're just saying, man, I cannot be forgiven of this.

Or maybe it's anxiety or fear or just even looking to the future and saying, hey, I can't handle this. I can't do this. The enemy is winning right now in my life. And I want to encourage you that that is not the truth.

That is the lie that the enemy is trying to bring into your heart. But the reality is that Jesus Christ has overcome. Jesus did not stay dead but he rose again conquering the death and the ultimate death and now allowing us to have peace with God through his resurrection through his payment.

[ 31 : 05 ] And how we can experience that in our lives today by taking our fears and anxieties and instead of trying to solve the problem ourselves rather taking them to Christ and being open and honest with him.

You know, I find it interesting in my life a lot of times when I pray it's almost like I try to cover and make my prayer sound a lot better than what I feel. You know? I begin to think, man, I can't really say this to God because, man, what would he think if I thought this?

And then realizing, wait, he already sees what I'm thinking. He already sees the fear that I have. He already sees the insecurity and the lack of trust that I have in him. And I know that I should trust him.

I know that he's powerful enough to do this but I don't feel this way. And the key to that is not letting that soak in and sit right there but rather just taking it to Christ in that moment of saying, God, I know I should trust you.

I know you are powerful. I know you're sovereign. You created this whole world and this little problem that I have is really big in my life right now but I know that you can work in it. I know that you can solve it.

[ 32 : 11 ] And realizing that it might not be something that he just takes away right now. You know, we look at Paul and we see how Paul was struggling with this issue and he says, you know what?

I've prayed to God that he would take it away three times and he hasn't. But I know that he's working it for his will and for his purpose. There's a lot of times in our life that that's the same way where we have things in our life that are really dominating our thoughts and we just wish that God would just take it away.

We wish that God would just remove it so I could have peace. But the thing is that a lot of times in those areas it causes our hearts to turn to Christ where we wouldn't normally do that.

And sometimes God allows those things to stay in our life longer than what we would like for them to stay in order that we might have a closer relationship with him through that and by taking it to him and by depending on him for his strength through that.

And so I want to encourage you today that Jesus Christ is the victor. That we have peace with God which is the most important thing in the world but that we can also not only just have this status of peace with God but we can experience the peace of God today by resting and depending on him.

[ 33 : 29 ] And as the season of Advent as we talked about at the beginning we see that Jesus Christ has come we see that the peace is here but that the peace that we experience now is even just a small portion of what we will experience when his kingdom finally arrives here on earth.

And I want to close with this amazing prophecy that Isaiah says in Isaiah 9 and he says and he will be called speaking of Jesus wonderful counselor mighty God everlasting father the prince of peace of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end.

So in our lives today we can experience peace but we ultimately look forward to the future of Christ's kingdom and knowing that Christ will win that this verse at the end of John 14 is true that the enemy will ultimately be defeated and that Christ will rule and reign on earth and we will be with him for all eternity.

May we rest in that truth today. Let's pray. Let's pray.