

WEEK 2 HE IS PEACE

HE IS

SCRIPTURE

Open your Bible and read today's verses with your family.

- Colossians 1:18-20

"And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross."

- Philippians 4:6-7

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

CONTENT

Read today's devotion aloud with your family, small group, or simply during your personal time with the Lord.

The older we get, the more likely our Christmas lists will start holding needs over wants. New shoes to replace the ones that have been leaving our feet achy. New cooking utensils so we can fix meals to feed our families well. New winter coats to replace worn ones so we can keep our bodies warm. But what if someone gifted us all those things, yet we failed to use them? What if we unwrapped our gifts, even thanked the giver, but then tucked those things right up on a shelf, soon to be forgotten?

To even consider such things sounds silly and wasteful. Yet this is what we do when we do not receive and walk in the peace Christ has provided for us. When we fail to let His peace reign in our lives, we can find ourselves wrestling with aching souls, hearts hungry for whatever might numb our fears and anxiety, and the suspicious feeling God must be giving us the cold shoulder when life does not go our way.

The truth is that God has gifted us with peace that makes a powerful difference in our lives through His Son, Jesus. God proclaimed peace would come through the Messiah throughout the Old Testament. The prophecies we know point to Jesus foretold not only of the peace He would bring, but many of those proclamations also pointed to His righteousness. The prophet Isaiah declared that righteousness would be the belt of His waist (Isaiah 5:2), Jeremiah referred to Him as a righteous Branch springing up from David, and in Psalm 72:1, the psalmist spoke of the righteousness endowed to the royal son.

Why do we need to see a connection between His righteousness and His promised peace?

Our unrighteousness, the sinful nature inherited by all of mankind, separates every one of us from God. Apart from Christ, we are enemies of God. But when we place our faith in Jesus and His finished work on the cross, we are reconciled to God and find peace with Him, just as Colossians 1:20 states. This is because we have been justified, meaning that the blood of Jesus has made us righteous in the sight of God. Second Corinthians 5:21 reads, "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." His righteousness has made our peace possible! We can be settled on the inside because Jesus settled everything on the cross. We should stand in condemnation, but we stand in grace. No striving. No performing. No earning the love of God. We are at peace with Him because of Jesus.

We also get to know and abide in the peace of Christ daily, letting our walk with Him bring an ever-deepening quietness of soul. We can be content with what we have because we have all that we need in Him. We can trust Him with a future He already sees and knows how to provide for. We can lift every concern to Him in prayer with thanksgiving, allowing His peace to guard our hearts and minds. With His help, we can reject the invitation to panic and choose to let His peace call the shots in our hearts and minds instead. And we can pray that the peace He is growing and deepening within us will help us live at peace with those around us.

Peace is possible. God did His part in sending His perfect Son. Christ did His part in paying the penalty for our sins. Now, we do our part. First, by receiving the peace that only comes from knowing and surrendering to the Lordship of Christ, and then, by letting the peace of Christ rule in our everyday lives as we place our trust in Him.

He is our peace, and His peace is ours. Will we receive it and walk in it?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Use these questions to start conversation with your family, small group, or simply to further your own understanding and application of today's scripture and devotion

1. What do you think peace looks like in life? How is the peace of God better than the world's definition of peace?
2. In what ways have you left the fullness of the gift of Jesus unused on the shelf of your life? What choices can you make to take hold of the gift of grace in your life moving forward?
3. What do you think it means to know and abide in the peace of Christ daily? How do you think making the choice to do that would change your life?
4. What are some things in life this Christmas season that bring up anxious thoughts and feelings? How can the peace that Jesus gives help you with those thoughts and feelings?

CONNECTIONS

Use the following activities and ideas throughout the coming week to further connect the lessons from today's scripture and devotion as well as deepen connections with family, friends, and community.

1. Create homemade presents that give peace! This year, create a picture, note card, drawing, etc. that has truth from God's Word that will remind family and friends of the peace that God alone can give.
2. When anxious thoughts hit, focusing on loving others in small and meaningful ways can bring peace and joy. Choose a little gift (candy bar, toy, hair accessory, chapstick, etc.) to surprise a friend or family member. Attach a scripture verse that is special to you and reminds you of the peace of Jesus.

MEMORY VERSE

Use the memory verse to lock in the Biblical truth of today's lesson throughout the week.

Philippians 4:6-7

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

*Do not be afraid, Mary,
for you have found
favor with God.*

LUKE 1:30

