

Peace With God

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Lent / Peace; Weakness; Justification; God's Love / Genesis 17:1–7; Genesis 17:15–16; Psalm 22:23–31; Romans 5:1–11; Mark 8:27–38

- › Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, our Lenten King. Amen.

There is nothing new under the sun. What have we experienced since last Lent. We've experienced personally or someone we know has experienced: death, disease, divorce, depression. Plague, pestilence, pandemic, political turmoil. Hate and hunger. Oh the list could go on. What we have not experienced much is peace. Every one of these things listed has caused us to suffer. Each one of these things has caused millions to suffer in 2020 and 2021 and each of the thousands of years before. It is true...we don't have a pandemic every year...Thank God, but the rest of the results of living in a fallen broken world are still there and will continue to be there.

We will continue to live in a world where peace is very hard to find. We will continue to live in a land where we will suffer. We will continue to live in a world that is broken and cannot find peace between one another. We will continue to live in a world where nations will not find peace with each other, political parties will not find peace with another and even church and families will have times where peace is shattered.

So the question is can we have peace. Or a better question: can we live in peace?

In today's epistle, our text from [Romans 5](#), Paul describes how desperate we were. At one point there was no chance for peace. Paul writes, "For while we were still weak." There is never a good time to be weak. No matter what the weakness is, but especially when we are weak in sin, weak in mortal fortitude, weak in faith. That pretty much describes you and me. Yes, Paul goes on to say, "we were still sinners." We know that's true, isn't it? Still true! We still sin. Sin

plagues us. Sin is a lethal disease. Sin is a plague that is more damaging than the plague of Covid. Sin is an endemic. It will be with us till the end. We will sin from now until God calls us out of this veil of tears. Oh the list of sins is endless...we gossip about one another, we belittle others behind their backs. We trust in God's good gifts such as medicine, science, political freedom, family...and the list could go on over and above God himself. We live in fear more so than we live by faith. I could name sins that you and I commit all day long. We know we're still weak, we know we are still sinners.

Yes, we are still weak, we are still sinners....it gets worse than that....we were enemies of God. Yes, you heard me right at one point we were enemies...enemies with God.

Enemies? But isn't God the loving Big Guy Upstairs who gives you daily treats of bread and breath. It's hard to imagine being an outright, screaming-in-your-face enemy of God. But then look at the crowd in front of Pontius Pilate and screaming about the Savior of the World: "Crucify Him, Crucify Him."

We wouldn't do that - would we? Enemies of God?

And the thing is we are at war...the world has been at war with God ever since Adam and Eve. Enemies. Indeed! Not buddies who occasionally step on each other's toes. Not allies who occasionally disagree on foreign policy. Not neutral nations or independent politicians who may not totally be on board, but are generally sympathetic to the cause! No! Enemies! Every one of our sins puts us at war with God. Gossip - enemies. Having another god that we trust! Enemies! Living in fear! Enemies. Now you realize we have a big problem. We have a big problem between the holiness of God and the sinfulness of your flesh, deeds, doings, and thoughts and words. Our sins mean war! Our indifference isn't neutrality; it's opposition. Jesus clearly states "Whoever is not with me is against me." Enemies of God! No peace for us!

But...But! I only took a few words of our text. Here is the full sentence:

"While we were *still weak*, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly." Despite our weakness, Jesus became weak in death. To see in Scripture the Almighty

Lord and Savior sweat blood and stumble down the street with a cross on his torn back and then his weak hands and feet nailed to the cross—what wondrous love is that! By doing so at the exact, right time, Jesus wrested from the devil the keys of death, and now Jesus holds them in his strong, resurrected hand. You are “died for” by Jesus. Weak and ungodly, yes you are, but washed in the peace-giving blood of Jesus, yes, strongly and mightily, yes!

And as if he couldn't preach enough good news, Paul continues...

“While we were *still sinners*, Christ died for us.” For you! While you were weak, the death of Jesus became your death in Baptism. While you were still a sinner, Jesus made you, a lost and condemned person, a saved and acquitted child of God through Baptism. You did nothing, have done nothing, to be saved. That point is clear: Weak and a sinner. That isn't a great resume to get the job done yourself. But Jesus takes what is crooked and wrong and not strong and makes you justified and strong and redeemed. Is that not a peaceful message, one that can give you rest even in the worst of times?

And we weren't just weak; we weren't just sinners! We were *enemies* of God. We were at war with God! Yet, out of his great love for you and me, Jesus died for you, his enemy, and defeated your enemies—your enemies of the devil and sin and death. He has defeated all those enemies so that you can have peace...peace with God. You have peace now. Those sins of gossip and idolatry and living by fear no longer stand between you and God. You are Reconciled to God by Jesus. You now have the “peace that surpasses all your understanding, which will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Hear again the opening words of our text this morning:

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Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Being justified by Jesus means the Law has been completely fulfilled by him for you. Peace with God means the Lord Jesus Christ has taken away the discord of our sin, silencing the disruption of our disobedience. So now as you live your life today and always, you have peace...peace with God.

You can even today rest in the peace with God every day that you live. And as we are in this season of Lent, as we gaze at the cross, we also do consider our own death, you can say that dying to Jesus is “Character building.” We are being built up in the character of Jesus. In your Baptism, you have already died in Jesus. Jesus has made his death your death. Life will include suffering, but even when you suffer, dear Saints, dear forgiven sinners, that suffering produces endurance, which produces character, which produces hope—and all that we need in this dying and decaying world that is full of disease and death and divorce and depression is hope....hope in our Savior JEsus.

The season of Lent presses on toward the cross of Jesus, where we see his most unrestful, unpeaceful death take place. There is his reconciliation of the world, of you and me, between the Father and you, takes place through the SOn, with the result of justification, rejoicing, suffering, endurance, character, and hope. Through Jesus’ rest in a borrowed grave, you can find comfort knowing that Jesus knows what it is like to have “peace with God”

Today dear Saints, you have peace with God. You will have peace with God tomorrow and into the future because you have been justified by the Work of Jesus in his suffering and death and resurrection from the dead. And yes, as you live in peace with God, you may not live at peace completely with another, because we are still weak and sinners.

There is coming a day though when we will know what perfect peace as we live in body and soul...that day is coming when Christ returns and frees this world ultimately of all the death and disease, divorce and depression. Plague, pestilence, pandemic, political turmoil. Hate and hunger. He is coming to free us from all this turmoil and we thank God that he is...but for now we rest in the peace that we live now, the peace with God.

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

- › May the God of peace which passes all human understanding, guard your hearts and your minds and keep them focused in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.