

Brian Chesemore
**SESSION 3 | Strategies for
Cultivating Peace**

I. INTRODUCTION

We dream about peace. We write songs that celebrate peace. We create political systems and religions which promise peace. But none of it delivers. It's all too fragile. Too momentary. Too elusive.

“Maybe the great futility of the human condition is that the thing that has been most sought after has been least experienced. In fact, the common denominator of all cultures throughout time is not the experience of peace but the reality of war. It would be safe to say there has never been a day in human history where world peace has truly been found. Somewhere in the world, there is conflict going on; it always been that way. It has been well observed: Peace is that brief glorious moment when everybody stands around reloading.” (Andy Farmer, *Real Peace*, 19)

II. DIMENSION #1: The Decisive Provision of Peace

The Bible presents a cohesive and majestic storyline of redemption and reconciliation.

- Creation out of Chaos
- The Chaos of Believing Lies

“When we lost our relationship with God, the whole world stopped “working right.” The world is filled with hunger, sickness, aging, and physical death. Because our relationship with God has broken down, shalom is gone—spiritually, psychologically, socially, and physically.” (Tim Keller, as quoted in Real Peace, page 37)

- Redemption Anticipated in the Messiah

But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken

as on the day of Midian. For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. **For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end,** on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. (Isaiah 9:1-7)

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. **But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.** All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned-every one-to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:4-6)

- Redemption Accomplished in Jesus

These powerful prophecies and others like them, give way to fulfillment in the NT. In the pages of the NT, the Prince of Peace arrives. The suffering Servant comes. And those two are one in the same person: Jesus. Paul calls Jesus's ministry one of reconciliation.

*"All this is from **God**, who through Christ **reconciled us to himself** and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ **God was reconciling the world to himself**, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore we are ambassadors fo Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, **be reconciled to God**. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become righteousness of God." (2 Cor. 5:18-21)*

Paul declares the glory of our reconciliation to God, through Christ's Cross, in these words:

"Remember that you were at that time **separated from Christ, alienated** from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now **in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace**, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of **hostility** (Eph. 2:12-14)

III. DIMENSION #2: The Comprehensive View of Peace

Here we learn to rest in the providential care of God.

Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. **Are you not of more value than they?** And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, **will he not much more clothe you,** O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and **your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.** But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (Matt. 6:25-34, also Ps. 23 and 139)

“And we know that for those who love God, **all things work together for good,** for those who are called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8.28)

“It is, indeed, true that if we had quiet and composed minds ready to learn, the final outcome would show that God always has the best reason for his plan...”
(Calvin's Institutes 211)

“Gratitude of mind for the favorable outcome of things, patience in adversity, and also incredible freedom from worry about the future all necessarily follow upon this knowledge.” (Calvin's Institutes 219)

IV. DIMENSION #3: The Daily Experience of Peace

Jesus's ascension to the Father's right hand, meant the long awaited time for the outpouring of the Spirit had come. Through him who indwells us, we experience the promise of Jesus: *My peace I give to you.* But how do we access the peace that the HS gives?

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; **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.** Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What

you have learned and received and heard and seen in me-practice these things, and **the God of peace will be with you.** (Phil. 4:4-9)

Here is Paul's strategy of peace:

- Recognize the nearness of the Lord
- Present your needs to God, and do so with thanksgiving
- He replaces our burden with the knowledge and experience of peace that transcends understanding
- He deepens our peace as we think and live rightly

“The apostle wants peace to flood the Philippian church. God wants this passage to stir peace in our hearts as well. We need peace because the ordinary stresses of life grind on our souls. And we need peace because we venture out into a world of stress every day. Paul's words to the Philippians address both what comes at us and how we need to prepare ourselves to do our business in a stressed-out world.” (Andy Farmer, *Real Peace*, 67)

- Incorporate additional scriptures. *They all teach us:*
 - *The Savior is at hand*
 - *The Spirit is at work*
 - *The Father is exercising his care.*
- Fight for peace within the community of peace

May Grace and peace be multiplied to you... (1 Thess. 1.2)