

Things Which Make For Peace

“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another,” Rom. 14:19.

There are often great struggles as faithful soldiers of Christ must wrestle against *“principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places,”* Eph. 6:12. At times the struggles are long and intense and take a heavy toll of the weak and fainthearted. Jude 3-4 is an earnest appeal to the saints of God to contend for the faith when false teaching comes into the church. When such battle must be joined, there are often rude jarrings, shattered ties, heartaches and finally open division. In the midst of such conflicts the child of God longs for peace.

The New Testament Usages of the Word Peace

The term *“peace”* has a variety of usages in the New Testament. Proper distinctions must be made in order to understand the will of the Lord and prosper thereby. Observe the following usages:

1. Harmony between individuals. We are to *“seek peace,”* I Pet. 3:10-11, *“follow peace with all men,”* Heb. 3:10-11, and as much as is in us *“live peaceably with all men,”* Rom. 12:18.

2. Peace between the sinner and God. *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,”* Rom. 5:1. Peter came to the house of Cornelius, *“preaching peace by Jesus Christ,”* Acts 10:36.

3. State of assurance of one who has obeyed the Lord’s will. *“To be spiritually minded is life and peace,”* Rom. 8:6. *“Now the God of hope fill you with joy and peace in believing,”* Rom. 15:13. *“That ye may be found in him in peace,”* 2 Pet. 3:14. Then, there is the *“peace of God, which passeth all understanding,”* Phil. 4:7.

4. Blessed state of devout men in the world to come. In Rom. 2 Paul foretold the judgment and stated the basis on *which men would be eternally saved or lost.* *“But glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentiles,”* Rom. 2:10.

5. The way of contrast to a state of discord and strife between brethren. This is the case in Romans 14, where Paul discussed the eating of meats offered to idols. Some said it was proper and some said it was not. There was the danger that the weak brother might be emboldened to act in violation of his conscience, thus the strong brother was taught not to cause him to stumble by acting contrary to his conscience. Paul wrote, *“Let us therefore follow after things that make for peace, and things wherein one may edify another,”* Rom. 14:19.

Things Which Destroy Peace.

1. Being soon angry. Some have explosive temper which can be ignited with a very little spark. Turn one of these men loose in a business meeting, and things could get bad. Paul said to put off anger, Col. 3:8. An elder is not to be soon angry, Tit. 1:7. Solomon gave us the way to respond to anger. *“A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger,”* Prov. 15:1.

2. Selfishness. There are some who are determined to have their way at all cost. In matters of judgment, all will not agree. Someone must yield. Paul said, an elder is not to be “*self-willed*,” Tit. 1:7.

3. Desire for Preeminence. John wrote, “*Diotrephes, who loved to have the preeminence among them, received us not*,” 3 John 9. Some men are natural born leaders. If you do not think so, just ask them! Some men (and women) are determined to run things, or else they will not play. They don’t want to be just a laborer in the vineyard; they must be a supervisor.

4. Self-justification. It is difficult for some to admit wrong. A position is taken, wrong words are uttered, or improper acts performed, and rather than confess the error and change the life, one begins to justify himself. When we do wrong we need to have the spirit of the prodigal son who came to himself and said, “*I have sinned*,” Luke 15:21.

5. Ignorance. Some congregational disruptions come because of ignorance of what the Bible teaches. Jesus said those baptized were to be taught “*to observe all things*” He had “*commanded*,” Matt. 28:20.

Things Which Promote Peace

1. Genuine love for the church. Jesus loved the church and “*gave himself for it*,” Eph. 5:25. The welfare of the body of Christ is much more important than any one of us. The church is “*the pillar and ground of the truth*,” I Tim. 3:15, and ought not to be hindered in its work to satisfy the whims of immature members.

2. Sincere interest in the souls of others. Not only are we hindered in reaching the souls of others when discord is present in the local church; we do not fulfill our responsibilities to each other as Christians. “*Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others*,” Phil. 2:3-4. Many weak members and babes in Christ have been destroyed because of thoughtless disturbances caused by brethren who would rather argue than work.

3. Retaliation forbidden. “*Dearly beloved, avenge not yourself, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, said the Lord*,” Rom. 12:19-20. Has someone in the congregation slighted you? Have you been mistreated? Then forget about “getting even.” Leave that up to the Lord.

4. Try to understand the other person. The prophet Ezekiel said he went to those of the captivity and “*sat where they sat*,” Ezek. 3:15. All of us are different. Our personalities, backgrounds, likes and dislikes, our daily circumstances vary. One may be in poor health at times, another distraught over family problems of which others do not know. There are babes in Christ who have not had time to grow. There are those who are weak and who need patience and understanding. Each of us should give the other person the same understanding we desire for ourselves. The “golden rule” must be applied by Christians in their treatment of others.

5. Let us speak the same thing. We cannot find any unity among the creed books of today’s religious organizations, for there is not a creed book among those written by men that is acceptable as a basis for unity. There is one book, that records God’s Word, which is recognized as rightly constituted authority. That book is the Bible. We need to follow it and teach what it

says. Please note I Cor. 1:10: “*Now I beseech you brethren, by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no division among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*” If religious people would but speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where it is silent, there would be no division among them.

While we should desire harmony between brethren, peace at any price is not peace with God. Those who will not walk in the doctrine of Christ have not God, 2 John 9-10. Peace with God is shattered when brethren cease to abide within the doctrine of Christ. Shall truth be compromised in order to have peace? “*Buy the truth and sell it not,*” Prov. 23:23. In order to have peace with God it is sometimes necessary to be divided from men,.

God grant that those who stand in the truth shall have the courage and persistence to continue in the good fight of faith. We pray as well that those who have broken the peace by inventing and then adhering to man-made dogmas and practices, will realize their error and return to the truth. It would be so pleasant if the necessity for battle were ended and we could confront an unbelieving world with our full energies trained on sin, error, and spiritual ignorance leading multitudes to everlasting ruin.

—by Everett Hardin

Sentence Sermons:

“The man who sings his own praises will invariably get the tune too high.”

“When a person robs another person of virtue he loses his own.”

“We should never forget our blessings nor remember our works of charity.”