

Sermon: Step Into Peace

Text: John 14:25-27

Introduction:

Peace is something we talk a lot about. I grew up back in the 70's, and I remember hearing a lot about peace. People would hold up two fingers, and say "Peace!". There was the ever-present peace sign...that I actually remember doodling on my notebooks a lot back then. We would say "peace" as often as we would say "cool" or "right on!". Many of these things have carried over into our culture today.

But have you ever stopped to think about what these things really mean? What are we actually saying when we wish "peace" on someone else? I think that in a very general sense—we are simply hoping that they will feel well, or not be burdened down by a lot of emotional conflict. It's just a nice way of hoping that someone will have an over-all sense of happiness.

And what about hoping or praying for "Peace on earth"? This phrase actually comes out of the greeting that the angels gave the shepherds on that very first Christmas—*"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."* (Luke 2:14) I remember a very popular song from years ago by Amy Grant, entitled "My Grown-Up Christmas List." The lyrics included these words:

*No more lives torn apart,
Then wars would never start,
And time would heal all hearts.
And every one would have a friend,
And right would always win,
And love would never end
This is my grown-up Christmas list.*

I love the thoughts that this song expresses. These lyrics seem to capture the traditional notion of "peace on earth"—that there would be no more wars, and that right will always win. I'm not going to tell you that we should stop hoping and praying for these things. But I will say that this isn't exactly what the Bible says will happen as we press on toward the return of Christ. Jesus is clear in Matthew 24 that as we approach the end times, there will be wars and rumors of wars—that followers of His will be persecuted and handed over to death—that wickedness will increase—and false prophets will appear and deceive many.

It should cause us all to wonder if a world without war and conflict is what Jesus meant when He spoke about peace on earth. Perhaps it means something completely different—which I believe that it does. Perhaps the peace that has come to this earth—is Jesus Himself. Perhaps peace isn't "an achievable end" in terms of something that happens on this earth; rather, peace is a person and a relationship and something that happens between us and God. In that regard, peace has truly already come—and is something that is very much possible!

Examination:

Look up these verses, and discuss what God is saying to us about peace:

- **John 16:33**
- **Psalm 4:8**
- **Psalm 72:7**
- **Daniel 10:19**
- **Isaiah 32:17**
- **Isaiah 53:5**
- **Proverbs 3:16-18**
- **Proverbs 12:20**
- **Romans 5:1**
- **Romans 15:13**
- **Romans 14:17**
- **2 Corinthians 13:11**
- **Ephesians 2:14**
- **Philippians 4:7**
- **Colossians 3:15**
- **2 Thessalonians 3:16**
- **2 John 1:3**
- **Jude 1:2**

Application:

Read John 14:25-27. Understand that Jesus is describing the fact that He will soon be returning to heaven, and is assuring the disciples (and us!) that this is a good thing. The reason for this is that God the Father will send the Holy Spirit to actually live within us. It is in this context that Jesus then tells us that we will have peace. Not necessarily peace in the world—but peace in our hearts! And this peace comes from the very presence of God within us. Allow peace to fill your heart this week as you celebrate God's Spirit within you!