



A Peaceful Life – Message 5

Warm-up

What things do you consistently fear or worry over? These can be general or specific concerns such as finances, relationships, crime, work, health, etc.

Overview

Over the last four messages of the series, we've explored how to get through trials by living a joyful, strong, humble, and focused life. Today, we discover how to walk in the supernatural peace of God that surpasses the fears and mindsets which result from challenging circumstances.

Word & Application

Did you know that over 18% or 40 million Americans are classified as having anxiety disorders? Fear and anxiety are rampant in our society and the world we live in. The good news is, as followers of Jesus, we don't have to be a statistic. We have been given the promise of peace from God through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let's define what the peace of God looks like. The word "peace" is mentioned 350 times in the Bible. It is derived from the Hebrew word *shalom* which means "to be complete, perfect and full--nothing broken or missing." God's desire is for His children to be undivided, unshaken, and unbroken when trials befall us. Our part is to believe His promise and keep our focus on the King of Peace.

Read Isaiah 26:3, Romans 5:1, and Romans 15:13. What are some obstacles that make it difficult for you to apply these Scriptures in your life? What negative influences have you allowed to affect the peace of God over your circumstances?

Someone once said of negative people, "They didn't give me my peace, so they can't take it from me." In other words, the only way a person or circumstance can "steal" our peace is if we *give* it away. Do you agree with this statement? Explain.

Read John 14:27. What are the differences between the peace of the world and the peace Jesus leaves us? Why was it so important for Jesus to tell the disciples this principle?

John 16:33 reminds us that trials will remain but His peace is greater. Now that we understand the promise of peace, how can we keep God's peace amidst challenging situations?

Here are *Three Steps to Walking in Peace*.

1. **Praise**

Read Philippians 4:4-5 and Acts 5:40-42. Let's face it, when we are going through rough times, the last thing we think about doing is rejoicing. Yet, Scripture both encourages and commands us to do so. Why would God tell us to find joy when we experience trials? Explain how it is possible to rejoice in God during hard times?

Read Psalm 146:2 and Acts 16:23-25. *While gratitude and other forms of worship can be inward, praise is outward. Praise, by its very nature, must be vocalized.* It pleases God when we choose to praise Him in any trial. Why do you think that is? What is the relevance of declaring praise *aloud*?

2. **Prayer**

Prayer plays a vital role in the life of a believer. Devotion, supplication, and intercession are three types of prayer. In supplication prayer, we can exchange our fear, anxiety or worry for the peace of God. **Read Proverbs 3:5-6 and Philippians 4:6-7.** How will the peace of God guard your hearts and minds?

3. **Positive Thinking**

The battle to walk in peace often starts with what we feed our minds. What we think--whether it is true or not--feeds how we feel. *We experience stress when we allow our minds to think irrational or unlikely thoughts--fearful thoughts.*

Read Philippians 4:8-9, Colossians 3:1-2, and 2 Corinthians 10:4-5. According to these passages, how do we win the battle of our minds? What are some practical steps you can take to combat a negative thought life?

Life Challenge

1. Ask God if there are any areas in your life in which your peace has been shaken or is completely gone.
2. Choose a Scripture verse from this lesson or your own to declare over your "peace-stealer." This week, find a private place with God to rejoice aloud, pray, and think positively on your Scripture verse.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, I can't thank You enough for the gift of Your shalom peace! You know my most difficult challenges, and I trust You to work them out for my good. Lord, I choose to praise Your Name in every trial, and I exchange any anxiety I have for Your peace that transcends my limited understanding. I will meditate on what is good, pure, admirable, and holy. I remain in Your peace and glorify Your Name.

Pray for the specific needs of the group.