

Fruits Of The Spirit #4

The Prescription For Powerful Peace

Galatians 5:22,23

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”

Some time back the Gallup organization polled Americans about their most important criteria for judging personal success. They gave them 30 different options and these are the results:

Good health came in 1st-58%

Second, an enjoyable job-49%

A happy family was 3rd-45%

A good education, fourth-39%

Peace of mind, 5th-34%

Good friends 6th-25%

I found it interesting that one of the top 5 qualities of a “peaceful life” was peace of mind.

Did you know that peace of mind was something that God promised us? Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you...” In fact, Isaiah prophesied that when Jesus came, He would be called “The Prince of Peace, and of the increase of his government and peace there would be no end.”

So, not only do we highly prize peace, so does God. So the question today is, if everybody wants so much peace in their lives why doesn't everyone have it?

The answer, WE WANT PEACE ON OUR TERMS!! This is why there is so much conflict in the world.

Many people believe they will experience peace of mind when they get revenge, or when their political party is in office or when things go the way they want them to. In other words: We want peace on our terms!

God's peace is different than the kind of peace the world pursues. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives." John 14:27

God wants to give us peace that we can have no matter what happens to us in our lives. That's because God's kind of peace is dependent upon His Spirit being in us and not upon the momentary difficulties that we face in this world.

The Apostle Paul said, "For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all." A man once said, "Peace is not the absence of trouble. Peace is the presence of God."

The first key to having God's peace is to include God in all that we do.

Philippians 4:5-7 "Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus."

The main reason people do not have peace in their lives is because they don't include God in solving their problems. Maybe they think God is too busy or they don't want to bother him or the one we all fall into at one time or another is, we prefer to handle it ourselves.

I say if it's big enough to worry about, it's big enough to pray about.

The kind of prayers we need to pray are prayers where we give all our problems to God. Because if I don't turn my problems over to God, if I end up being the only one struggling with my problems then I will not have peace.

Illustration: Too often we view prayer in the same way an old hillbilly did when he fell off a cliff. He fell down a deep canyon, he grabbed hold of a small tree. "Help" he shouted. "Is there anyone up there?" A deep voice from the sky echoed through the canyon. "I will help you my son. But first you must have faith and trust me." "Alright, all right, I trust you," answered the man. The voice said, "Then let go of the branch." There was a long pause and the man shouted again, "Is there anyone else up there?"

The problem with that type of prayer is, We'll have neither peace nor answered prayer. James tells us that when we pray we "must believe and not doubt,

because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double minded man, unstable in all his ways.”

I’ve seen this far too many times over the years in ministry. Someone will come and ask my advice, but no sooner do I give them biblical counseling they go and do just the opposite of the counsel that I just gave them. God basically tells us in James if that’s how we intend to approach Him in prayer, He’s not going to bother with us.

One poem puts it this way.

“As children bring their broken toys with tears for us to mend, I brought my broken dreams to God because He was my friend. But then, instead of leaving Him in peace to work alone, I hung around and tried to help with ways that were my own. At last I snatched them back and cried, “How could you be so slow?”
“My child” he said, “What could I do? You never did let go.”

The second key to having Gods peace is, remembering what God has done before.

Remember that hillbilly that wanted someone else to answer his cry? Why did he doubt? He didn’t trust the voice. The voice was asking him to do something that he wouldn’t ordinarily do. And most importantly, the voice had no track record that he could trust The voice had no credibility with him.

The reason most people don’t trust God with their lives is because they’ve never practiced trusting God.

How do we learn to trust? We must let go of the limb and trust God that he has us in his hand!

The peace that appeals to most people is that which hinges on life being kind and gentle with them. If things are good and life runs along in a gentle flow, they are comfortable and at peace. But when difficulty strikes and tragedy overwhelms them, their peace disappears.

I like that old African American spiritual song that says, “This world is not my home, I’m just passing through. My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue. The angels beckon me from heaven’s open shore. Cause I can’t feel at home in this world anymore.”

In closing we sang a song this morning called "It is well." Listen to some of the words. "When peace like a river attendeth my way. When sorrow like sea-billows roll, whatever my lot, thou has taught me to know; it is well with my soul."