



Sermon Growth Guide

November 26, 2023

InstaPeace



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Insta - InstaPeace

John 14:23-27

Key Verse: John 14:27

“Peace I leave with you’ my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do no let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

Big Idea: God’s peace is the best peace – and it’s worth talking about.

Foundations

This week we explore the word “peace.” Jesus promises us, “my peace I leave with you, my peace I give you.” Michael breaks our time down by exploring these three core questions around peace:

What is peace? Peace means different things to different people. When we talk about Christian peace, we’re talking about a special gift God blesses his people with, a gift that comes immediately from God himself. Jesus is “The Prince of Peace.” We feel God’s peace in our lives and it changes the way we live. As we transform more and more in alignment with the fruit of the Spirit, we become more and more marked by God’s peace.

How do I get God’s peace? Peace is a gift from God for God’s people, but how do we steward peace? Can we lose peace? Our sermon series, *Insta*, has focused on the call to abide in Christ. As we abide in Christ, as we love in the way Jesus loves, we find we are unwrapping God’s gift of peace more and more.

What do I do with the peace of God? The Mission of God is carried out by the Peace of God given. God’s peace being given to God’s people is beautiful, but it is also purpose-packed. As we receive God’s peace we extend God’s peace, mission through word and deed.

Understanding God’s Word

Together, read John 14:23-27.

According to verse 23, what do people who love Jesus do? Discuss this.

According to verse 26, what activity does the Holy Spirit accomplish?

Jesus gives His disciples His peace in verse 27. What imperative is issued to the disciples in response to this tremendous promise?

Applying God’s Word

God’s peace is the best peace. God’s peace is a gift. The gift of peace is best applied through the discipline of abiding in Jesus. No one is a “perfect abider,” but we can all take our next step in “abiding better.” Discuss where you are on this journey and how you would like to begin to abide in Christ even more actively.

Witnessing God’s Word

God’s peace is the best peace – and it’s worth talking about.

As you have received God’s peace, how can you take one more intentional step toward extending God’s peace to those around you?

I want to talk to you about peace this morning. I want us to walk away from this time together and be able to define it, pursue it, and apply it. peace. What is it, how do I get it, what do I do with it?

If peace is anchored in circumstance, I should have gotten out of having to preach this morning. I'm in some deep, not fun circumstantial waters right now. However, if peace, real peace, Christian peace, is something anchored not in circumstance, but something or Someone stronger—well, if there really is a peace “that surpasses all understanding,” then maybe I really can stand here now and preach this precious text wherein Christ Himself, the cosmic and eternal Prince of peace, promises some of the best news possible to all who hear his voice and follow His steps.

peace. Three angles: What is it, how do I get it, what do I do with it. 1, 2, 3.

First, what is it? What is peace? Some say peace is circumstantial and you can have it quick. Instapeace. Boy, if it was that easy! Did anyone grab the Black Friday special, best one on Amazon, “eternal, perfect peace—75% off!” Today we conclude our *Insta* series. We've been jesting that the world may promise good things fast, but God-gifts like joy, love, and peace take time to mature in our hearts. Abiding time. Spending time with Jesus. Today we're focusing on the gift of peace, a gift that is not anchored to circumstance.

I wrote this sermon sitting in my daughter's hospital room up in Denver. At that time, Eden was 40 days old and for 40 days her whole world had revolved around hundreds of medical team members coming in and out of her room, tubes coming in and out of her body, bright florescent lights turning on and off, and of course the unholy choir of modern medicine monitoring alarms going on and off around the clock. Eden has a serious heart condition that has no cure and she needs at least two more heart surgeries beyond the one she had last month to give her a shot at living.

I keep splashing cold water in my face. Is this really happening? Surely she's not this

fragile. She's beautiful and looks amazing! Seriously, super beautiful!

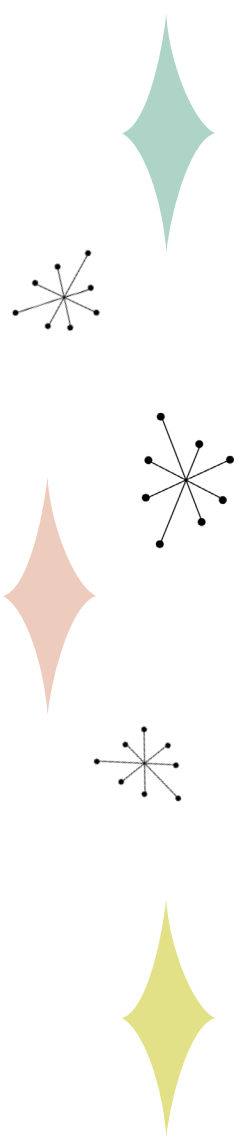
I also need to say thank you. Cassie and I have been absolutely blown away by how many of you are on this journey with us: praying for Eden, reading the blog, emailing us, supporting us. We are moved to tears often. It's just amazing. A part of our call to one another as the church is to bear one another's burdens and I've never been on the receiving end like this. It's just incredible.

So I'm personally in a hard life circumstance season, but I can confidently stand here and preach peace to you in Jesus' name. Why? Because Christian peace is beyond circumstance.

What circumstances are you facing this season? Where does peace feel threatened in your own life? Is there a circumstance in your life that you wish you could hit a skip button on?

We're all in circumstances. Life circumstances are the real contexts in which we live. Jesus gives us His promise of peace right in the middle of His own hard circumstance. Jesus is sharing His final moments with His disciples, His closest friends, and He knows that He is about to be arrested and endure intense torture. Right in this space Jesus says, “peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” Here in the dawning light of the Jesus' Passion He says, “my peace I give to you.”

Do you know why Jesus was able to experience peace on the night of His arrest? Because peace, real peace, God's peace, has nothing at all to do with life's circumstances and everything to do with God bringing you—Himself—God comes to you in whatever circumstance you're in and gives you Himself—that's the promise for every believer. Ephesians 2:14a, “For Jesus is himself our peace.” And so we pause and we say “God, thank You that You, YOU, are our peace. You bring us Yourself. You give us You. We belong to You and You are our inheritance. You are peace and You have come and now we can endure.”



God's peace in both experiential and relational. God comes in His presence to us, to be with us and to walk with us and to laugh with us and to weep with us. John 14 peace is primarily talking about peace in terms of experience, relationship, promise, and moral transformation. Verse 23, "My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them." Experience. John 14 promises that anyone who obeys the teachings of Jesus will become immediate neighbors with the Father and Son. Experiential and promised peace.

Verse 26, "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." For the child of God who is intentionally wanting to love the Lord, internalize this incredible promise that you will have the experiential peace of the Holy Spirit encouraging you toward Christ, reminding you of the teachings of Christ.

So what is Christian peace? It's relationship with God. It's God giving you Himself, a presence so powerful and personal and peaceful that you can weather every circumstance that comes your way.

Three angles: What is it, how do I get it, what do I do with it. 1, 2, 3. Number 2. How do I get it. There's a stickiness here, do you feel it? On one hand, peace with God is a free gift in Jesus Christ. In this sense, you don't need to do anything! What I can't do here is preach a works-based righteousness. What I can do is preach the words of Christ who says in verse 23b, "Obey my teaching." And Jesus says, "obey" right before He says, "My peace I give to you." peace with God is both a free gift to you and me, bought by Christ through His substitutionary sacrifice on the cross. But there's another layer of peace that seems to be tied into Jesus' command to obey His teaching. What is Jesus' teaching? Jesus sums up the entire moral code this way, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than

these." (Mark 12:30-31). In other words, affectionately trust Jesus and have a heart for the Church and the world. Love God and love others. That is to say, if you want to experience even more of God's peace, be a real Christian! Love Jesus. Trust Jesus. Turn to Jesus in your joys and turn to Jesus in your pain. Love people because God loves people. All to say, abide in the vine.

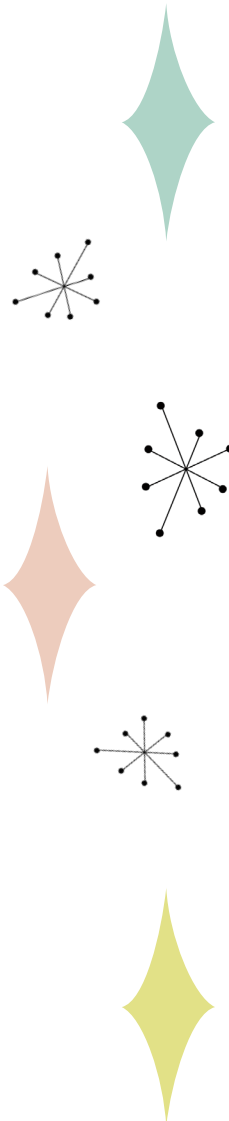
Three personal applications: cultivate your affections for Christ, devote yourself to looking to Christ, and form rhythms to focus on Christ. Three ways to abide in the vine and therein begin to experience the peace God in your life even more.

First, cultivate your affections for Christ. Again, the words of Jesus, "The one who loves me will be loved by my father." (John 14:21b) As you love Jesus, the Father turns His affection upon you. God's love is being poured into your heart. Relationship.

Second, devote yourself to looking to Christ. Having a great day? Look to Christ. Financial or relational crisis? Look to Christ. Make time to study the Person of Christ. Time in the Word. Make time to worship the Person of Christ. Time in church with the Church in the ancient discipline of true Christian worship. Make time to talk about the Person of Christ. If you can remember one idea today remember this, God's peace means everything and it's worth talking about. Affection begets affection. Love God. "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matthew 6:33)

Third, form rhythms to focus on Christ. Stay tethered. Abide in the vine means... abide in the vine! What daily rhythm can you implement now that will help you be a more faithful disciple this Advent? Prayer, reading of Scripture, fasting, Sabbath-keeping, Bible study.

Three personal applications to better abide: cultivate your affections for Christ, devote yourself to looking to Christ, and form rhythms to focus on Christ. Three ways to step into the river of God's experiential and relational peace.



Three angles: What is it, how do I get it, what do I do with it. 1, 2, 3. Number 3. What do we do with God's peace? God's peace is missional.

What ought I do with the peace of God? Did you notice our passage opens with "Jesus replied"? What was Jesus replying to? The two preceding verses read, "Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them." Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, 'But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?' (John 14:21-22) What a great question. Have you ever wondered why God chose you but not the person beside you in your office or three houses down from you? I believe hidden in plain sight in Judas-not-Iscariot's question is God's heart and plan for global mission. The Mission of God is carried out by the peace of God given. Judas asks, "Why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?" Jesus responds, "You are the light of the world. You are the salt of the earth. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." (Matthew 5) And "I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. (John 10:16)" The Mission of God is carried out by the peace of God given.

Everyday you and I have a chance to shine the light of Jesus right where we are, in whatever circumstance we're facing. Thursdays at 10 a.m., up on the 9th floor of Children's Anschutz, there is a meet-and-greet time for parents who have a child with heart conditions. "Meet-and-greet" is code for free therapy session for people walking through similar shades of trauma. I'll never forget one mother who is going through such an awful storm, yet she is so full of peace. This mother welcomed the other parents. At first I thought she was on staff. Then, at some point, she shared some of her story. Her three-year-old son has been a patient for over six months waiting for a heart transplant. She lives out of her RV parked in the hospital parking lot waiting everyday for news of a good match.

Every day without this news is one day closer to her son's passing. Eden's four neighbors are all still waiting for new hearts. While sharing, this mother grasped a cross necklace she was wearing and told everyone of the gift of peace she has in Christ. She offered to pray with anyone at anytime. Friends, the days are dark. I'm sorry, but it's true. Life can be really, really hard. We are the people who have the peace of God. We are invited to ride the wave of God's peace into God's mission in the world to seek and save the lost. God's peace means everything and it's worth talking about. The Mission of God is carried out by the peace of God given.

These hospital days Cassie and I have endured have been mostly very unpleasant, yet at a core level exceedingly peace-filled. Eden's physical heart is fragile, but she is a child of the Covenant, born into the family of God with every promise of God available to her through the blessing of belonging and the grace of faith. Through it all, God has been so kind in His nearness, so kind in bringing His experiential peace to bear upon our hearts and minds.

When you receive and feel the peace of God, what can you do except share it? Like the mother waiting for her son to receive a new heart, even in her darkest hour, she cannot help but sing of the peace of God, sing of the gospel of peace. In just a moment we are going to stand together and sing a hymn that concludes this way: "The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart / A fountain ever springing / For all things are mine since I am his / How can I keep from singing? / No storm can shake my inmost calm / While to that refuge clinging / Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth / How can I keep from singing?"

The peace that Jesus is talking about here in John 14 on the night of His arrest all turns on relationship with God. It's God giving you Himself, it's you receiving such an amazing gift. It's you abiding in the vine. It's the Spirit of God transforming your life, giving you His peace, to live on mission for Him. God's peace means everything and it's worth talking about.

