

## War & Peace

What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you? You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure. You adulterers! Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God. (James 4:1-4)

- I. Introduction: **In the news**, we read about wars, threats of wars, daily conflicts
  - a. **In the world**
    - i. Full blow war in Ukraine with Russia... **Is there an end in sight?**
    - ii. China & Taiwan... **Does anyone know what will come of this?**
    - iii. Intermittent North Korea missile launches... **Does this worry you?**
    - iv. **Do you think the US will be able to be a peacemaker and help resolve these world conflicts?**
  - b. **Probably not**, because our country has its own conflicts we can't resolve.
    - i. Instead of governing, Democrats and Republicans fight each other.
    - ii. Liberals and Conservatives blame each other, no one with answers.
    - iii. In the name of Tolerance there is Intolerance and cancel culture
    - iv. People are quick to judge, criticize and condemn others.
    - v. **Do all these things bother you or trouble you? Is politics the answer? Is there anyone who is able to bring peace to all this? Do you have an answer to this?**
  - c. **Probably not**, most of us will say we have our own problems.
    - i. There are conflicts between families and even church members.
    - ii. within families... Sibling conflicts; Parents and children
    - iii. Within oneself: many struggle with depression, anxiety,
    - iv. Others struggle with addictions and gender conflicts.
- II. **WHY are there all these conflicts in the world???**
  - a. Whenever we struggle with something BAD in ourselves, in others and in the world, whenever there is SUFFERING... we ask the "WHY" question.
    - i. It is the hardest question to answer. But there is always a right answer, ... though it may not comfort much to know it: ... it is **the curse of sin**.
    - ii. The wages of sin is Death and Death is "separation":
      1. **Physical death** is when our **spirit** is separated from our **body**.
      2. **Spiritual death** is when our **spirit** is separated from **God**.
      3. Death of a relationship is when the two parties are separated or divided. There is a **Broken Relationship**.
    - iii. As a result of the **curse of Sin**: the world is divided, our country is divided, families are divided, and we are broken within ourselves.

- III. In Our Scripture verse: The Bible teaches us that we are all involved in 3 wars.
  - a. With **others**: “quarrels and **fight**s among you”
  - b. With **ourselves**: “evil desires at **war** within you”
  - c. With **God**: “an **enemy of God**”
- IV. **Conflict (war) with Others**:
  - a. **Why do we have conflict with others?** (I am asking a “why” question)
    - i. **You want** what you don’t have, so you scheme and kill to get it. **You are jealous** of what others have, but you can’t get it, so you fight and **wage war** to take it away from them. Yet you don’t have what you want because you don’t ask God for it. And even when you ask, you don’t get it because **your motives are all wrong**—you want only what will give you **pleasure**.
    - ii. It is the **sinful nature** that is the result of the **curse of sin**.
      - 1. **PRIDE**: It is all about me, mine, and I
      - 2. From the Tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil
        - a. We have our own idea of what is right and wrong, and it is often different from what others think is right and wrong.
        - b. In the name of tolerance, we have become intolerant to any “intolerance”. Does that make any sense?
        - c. We are very self-focused. We can always justify what we do but not what others do. There is a double standard.
        - d. When others don’t agree with us, when they get in our way, when they criticize us... **we fight back**.
    - iii. “Those who are dominated by the **sinful nature** think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. So **letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death**. (Romans 8:5-6)
    - iv. Everyone has their own **desires** and when we want to have **things our way** and others want things their way, there’s a problem. Everyone sees things differently and when we **don’t agree** with others, **war erupts**.
  - b. **Why are we unable to make peace with others?**
    - i. Some specific examples:
      - 1. **Why can’t anyone resolve the Ukraine-Russia war?**
      - 2. **Why can’t Republicans and Democrats get along?**
      - 3. **Why don’t we get along with everyone?**
    - ii. **What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don’t they come from the evil desires at war within you?**
    - iii. The scripture passage teaches us that we are unable to make peace with others because we are **at war within ourselves**, and we are not able to find peace within ourselves.
    - iv. When you are at war with yourself, that **turmoil spills over** to those around you. Grumpy days.

- V. **Conflict (war) with Ourselves** — what are we talking about?
- a. “And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in **my sinful nature**. I want to do what is right, but I can’t. I want to do what is good, but I don’t. I don’t want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway” (Rom 7:18-19).
    - i. **Have YOU ever experienced this conflict within yourself?**
    - ii. Because of the curse of sin...
      1. Some have been abused as a child and they struggle with love and hate, anxiety, and depression. **Unresolved conflicts** within results in emotional pain & suffering and inability for a right relationship with others.
      2. Some suffer from mental illness —> depression, suicide.
      3. ALL of us have a sinful nature within us and we are self-focused. We want what we want, and we want it now! Even if we know it is not right and not good for us. We keep repeating the same mistakes over and over. We struggle with failure, regret, remorse.
  - b. **Why are we unable to find peace within ourselves?**
    - i. “For **the sinful nature is always hostile to God**. It never did obey God’s laws and it never will. That’s why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.” (Romans 8:7-8)
    - ii. Don’t you realize that friendship with the world makes you **an enemy of God**? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God.
    - iii. Because we are **at war with God** and unable to make peace with God, we are at war within ourselves and unable to find peace within ourselves, and as a result, we will never be able to make peace with others. Paul summarizes all this with this cry...
    - iv. “**Oh, what a miserable person I am. Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death?** (Romans 7:24)
- VI. **Peace with God**: After preaching the bad news, he brings the Good News...
- a. “Thank God! **The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord.**” (Romans 7:25)
    - i. “For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace**.” (Isaiah 9:6)
    - ii. “Therefore, since we have been made right in God’s sight **by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our lord has done for us.**” (Romans 5:1)
    - iii. Jesus is the mediator, the **peacemaker** between God and man.
      1. Broken relationships may need a third party to mediate.
      2. Parents are always struggling to mediate sibling rivalries.
      3. God may be calling you to be the peacemaker for others.

- b. **How?** “For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of **Christ’s blood** on the cross.” (Col 1:19-20)
  - i. **What does it mean to believe in the “blood of Christ” shed for me?**
  - ii. Faith: Believe that Jesus is the God-Man who took our curse of sin upon himself to die in our place. He paid the price, the debt for us.
  - iii. **Be reconciled to God.** (2 Corin 5:20)
  - iv. **Jesus** did all the **work** and **paid** the whole price. **For us** salvation, forgiveness, and a new life with God is a **gift** of God for us to simply ACCEPT or REJECT. To believe or not believe. To trust or not trust.

VII. **Peace with Ourselves:**

- a. When we do **accept, believe** and **trust in Jesus**, He gives us another gift.
- b. “I am leaving you with a gift- **peace of mind and heart**. And **the peace I give** is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be **troubled** or **afraid**” (John 14:27)
- c. **Are you troubled or afraid?** If so, you have not received this gift from Jesus. Go to Him in prayer and exchange your fears and anxieties for His peace.
- d. **How many of you have ever experienced this peace?**

VIII. **Peace with Others:**

- a. If you have peace with God and peace with yourself, you will be equipped to make peace with others.
- b. “When a man’s ways are pleasing to the LORD, he makes **even his enemies live at peace with him.**” (Proverbs 16:7)
- c. “Blessed are the **peacemakers**, for they will be called sons of God.” (Ma 5:9)
  - i. We may not be able to be a peacemaker between Ukraine & Russian, between Liberals & Conservatives... those are God size jobs.
  - ii. But we can make peace with those God has placed in our lives and on our hearts. It may involve some form of sacrifice, as Jesus had to for us.
- d. Therefore, as the **elect of God, holy and beloved**, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; **bearing with one another, and forgiving one another**, if anyone has a complaint against another; **even as Christ** forgave you, **so you** also must do. (Col 3:12-13)
  - i. All of God’s laws are summarized in the 10 commandments.
  - ii. Jesus summarizes the 10 commandments with:
    1. Love God and
    2. Love Others as you...
    3. Love Yourself.
- e. Let us endeavor not to consider anyone an enemy. But if we end up with enemies anyways... let us **love our enemies, bless those who curse you, do good** to those who hate you, and **pray for** those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; (Matthew 5:44-45)

## IX. Conclusion:

- a. **Meaning of Life** is found in **relationships**.
  - i. When the curse of sin brings death to the relationships in our lives, we find ourselves **alone** and struggling to find the meaning.
  - ii. The meaning of life starts with our **relationship with God** who is able to **bless** us with the **peace** with ourselves that will lead to a **meaningful** relationship with others.
  - iii. You will not find meaning in anything else or anyone else.
- b. **When you are able to love yourself because of God's love for you, you will be able to love others the same way God loves you.** But that's often a long journey to get there.
- c. **What does it mean to be "at peace" with someone?** To be "at **peace**" with God, with ourselves, and with others is to have a "**right relationship**" with God, a right relationship with ourselves, and a right relationship with others. God will let you know what that "right relationship" is.
  - i. Sometimes, it may involve not having much interaction with that person for a season.
  - ii. Sometimes, it may mean disagreeing with that person but still accepting that person and not rejecting them.
  - iii. **Do you have a right relationship with God, yourself, and others?**
  - iv. **If not, what is God calling you to do to make it right, to seek peace?**
- d. **Humanity** would define **peace** mostly in **negative terms**: to be without *trouble*; to be free from *conflict*; to have no *stress*. It would be the absence of *hostility*, the absence of *unrest*, the absence of *conflict*. Peace for the world is just the absence of what *troubles* them. It is being free from things that cause you to be *fearful*, *anxious*, depressed.
  - i. **Is this the peace you desire?**
  - ii. **How do you get it? Where do you get it?**
- e. The Hebrew word for peace is "**Shalom**". Shalom is a word that is a very large and all-encompassing word, and in essence it means this: a wish for **completeness**; or a wish for **contentment**; or a wish for **fulfillment**, or **satisfaction**, or **blessing**; or maybe **well-being**; a wish for **prosperity** on all levels. In other words, it is a desire that **all that is good** would grow into your life. The New Testament counterpart is the word *eirAnA*. It is a word that literally describes a **tranquil state of the soul**, a soul **at rest**, a **satisfied** soul. That's the biblical view of peace.
  - i. It is to take what is Broken and make it Whole again.
  - ii. **Is this the peace you desire?**
  - iii. **How do you get it? Who do you get it from?**
  - iv. Try greeting one another with "Shalom". What you are saying to that person is...

1. If there is any war or conflict between us, I wish to make peace with you with the forgiveness and peace that only comes from God.
  2. If there is no conflict with that person, you are wishing them wholeness, contentment, fulfillment, all the blessings that only comes from God.
- f. Let us pray... **“SHALOM”**