

The Peace of God

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." I find these words so beautiful, so comforting. Jesus is at the Last Supper. He has just given His disciples His New Commandment, "Love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another." (John 13:34) Then He tells them that He is leaving. However He lets them know that He is not going to leave them alone. He will leave the Holy Spirit. "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you." Comfortable words. Comforting words in this or any time of distress. It is like looking out at a beautiful mountain top view. But, as one looks out, it is easy to forget that there was a long hard, climb to get to the top of that mountain. Likewise, it is easy to miss that Jesus tells us that the peace that He promises comes only after a lot of hard work. "If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him" (John 14:23) "My Word" - My COMMANDMENT - "Love One Another" This is the eleventh commandment.

In this hectic world, most of us want the peace, but we don't want the hard work. And the love that Jesus is commanding us to do is VERY hard work. I'm not talking about loving our little children or our family or friends. I'm not even talking about a nice warm feeling. THAT'S EASY! What Jesus is telling us is that we are to love those that we don't even want to be around. Perhaps it is the poor or the hungry or those in prison or oppressed. Perhaps you may be saying that you don't know any. That is exactly my point! Too many of our busy world's include only those that we are most comfortable with, that we like to love. But there are so many others that our Lord has commanded us to love. Perhaps there are family members with whom we are angry or from whom we have become separated for some other reason. And it is hard work to reach out to others we don't like!

But what does all this have to do with the peace of God? We are not comfortable reaching out to precisely those people to whom our Lord is commanding us to love. All our logic tells us that the way to peace is to avoid hard times. Avoid people that we don't like. Avoid confrontation. Avoid those that make demands we are not comfortable with. Avoid ... (You fill the blank). But the irony of the Gospel is Peace of Christ comes with doing what makes us UNcomfortable. Peace of Christ comes with taking on the burdens of others. If

we want to follow Christ, if we want the peace that passes all understanding, then we must keep His Commandment. We must love ALL our Brothers and Sisters. Only then will the peace of God fill our hearts and minds.

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