

# Peace by Jesus Christ

by H. A. Ironside

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"That in me ye might have peace" (John 16:33).

HOW long it takes many of us to learn that peace is found in Christ alone. We seek for it everywhere else, but seek in vain, until at last, disappointed, disheartened and distressed in soul, we come to the Lord Jesus, and lo, at His feet our quest is ended!

## **Peace Better Than Happiness**

Peace is far better than happiness. Happiness is primarily that which comes from a good "hap." "Hap" is an old English word for chance. Tennyson wrote of one "who grasps the skirts of happy chance." This expresses it exactly. If the "haps" are good, the worldling is happy; if evil "haps" befall him, he is unhappy. But peace is something deeper. It is the opposite of struggling, of warfare and of soul unrest. It is freedom from strife, or from mental agitation. It is spiritual content such as the Lord promised to the heavy laden, when He said: "Come unto me and I will give you rest."

"O God," said Augustine, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our souls will never be at rest until they rest in Thee." And yet most of us spend years in restless seeking before we learn this lesson.

## **No Peace to the Wicked**

This message is twice repeated in the book of Isaiah; "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked." In chapters forty to forty-eight of this marvelous book, we have Jehovah's controversy with idolatry. His people had sought in vain for peace, because they turned from Him, the true and living God, unto the senseless works of their own hands. Jehovah, the covenant-keeping God, stands in contrast to all the idols of the heathen. Therefore at the end of the forty-eighth chapter, there is this plain statement: "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked." Then in chapters forty-nine to fifty-seven we have the great Messianic section of Isaiah, and we see the true Servant of Jehovah, the anointed Saviour, coming in lowly grace to His own, to open prison doors, to unstop deaf ears, to impart strength to feeble knees, and to give new life to those who are dead in trespasses and sins. But, also, we see Him spurned and rejected by those whom He loved so dearly, and in chapter fifty-seven, we hear the grave pronouncement: "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

How solemn all this is! No peace for the man who puts aught else in place of the Lord Jehovah in his heart and life! No peace for the self-willed rejecter of God's blessed Son! In the New Testament, where we have the entire world brought in guilty before God, the solemn declaration concerning all who turn away from the Word of the Lord is this: "The way of peace have they not known."

### **A False Peace**

There is also a false peace by which many are deceived. They mistake their ease of mind for peace of heart. Deluded by a false peace, and daubing their consciences with the untempered mortar of their own vain imaginings, they cry: "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." These are they who drift down the river of time, unaware of the awful precipice over which it will sweep them at last into the great sea of eternity, where they will be forever without peace and without hope. Of all such it is written: "When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them...and they shall not escape" (I Thessalonians 5:3).

If you try to awaken such from their deadly sleep and their false security, they are likely to turn on you with indignation. They do not want to be disturbed. Like the slothful man in the book of Proverbs, they cry: "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep." Alas, alas! If not awakened soon they will find out too late the folly of their assumed self-confidence.

One day, when walking along Broadway in Oakland, California, I saw ahead of me a man whom I knew was blind, making his way through the crowds with remarkable dexterity. He did not even have a stick, or a dog, to guide him. He had been over the same route so often that he felt sure he needed no help. Suddenly, I saw a cellarway opened just in front of him. In another moment he would have stepped down into the yawning mouth of a store basement. I sprang forward, caught him by the shoulder, and told him of his danger. Do you think he was angry with me for disturbing his false peace? Not at all! He thanked me profusely. But how different it often is with the unsaved man and woman. They go on heedless of their danger, and often resent the warnings of God's servants, until the Spirit of God awakens them to a realization of their true condition, and leads them to accept peace through the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Two Aspects of Peace**

In the fourteenth chapter of John, we learn that our blessed Lord, before He left this earth, said to His disciples: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." Here we have two very distinct aspects of peace. One is that which He left as a settled thing when He went to the Father's right hand, and is the result of His sacrificial work upon the cross, while the other is that which He imparts from day to day to those believers who live in fellowship with Him.

Sometimes people use expressions that will not always bear the test of Scripture. Let me give an instance of this: A number of years ago an earnest young Christian and I went to a mission in San Francisco. At the close of the meeting, a kind, motherly woman came to me, and asked: "Are you a Christian, sir?"

I replied immediately, "Yes, I am."

"Thank God," she said, and then turning to my friend, she asked: "And have you made your peace with God, sir?"

Rather to my astonishment, he answered, "No, madam, I have not."

I knew he was a Christian, and I wondered at his replying in that way.

She said to him rather severely, "Well, if you don't make your peace with God, you will be lost forever."

With a bright, happy smile on his face, he replied, "Madam, I can never make my peace with God, and I never expect to try; but I am thankful that the Lord Jesus Christ has settled that for me, and through what He did for me I shall be in heaven for all eternity." He then put the question to her, "Have you never read that remarkable passage: 'Having made peace through the blood of his cross'?"

As he went on to explain it to her, the truth gripped my own soul. I saw then, and have realized it ever since, that sinners are saved through the "peace" which He made at the cross. And so we read in Romans 5:1, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." This peace is not of our making, and is not of our keeping either. We enjoy the peace He made as we accept by faith the testimony of His Word.

### **His Peace is Given**

But we also read, "My peace I give unto you." What does the Lord Jesus mean by this? It is another aspect of peace altogether. It is that quiet rest of soul which was ever His in the midst of the most trying

circumstances. He shares His peace with us. It is of this we read in Philippians 4:6, 7: "Be careful for nothing [or, In nothing be anxious, R. V.]; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." "The peace *of* God," you see, is very different from "peace *with* God." The latter has to do with the sin question, the former with the trials of the way. It is the believer's privilege to bring everything that troubles and distresses his soul to God in prayer; to lay down every burden at the feet of the blessed Lord, and to exchange them all for this wonderful "peace" which is the portion of all who live in communion with Him.

"Oh, the peace my Saviour gives,  
Peace I never knew before;  
And the way has brighter grown,  
Since I learned to trust Him more."

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