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Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace! But, there is also a thief of peace. Who is this thief and what signposts are within the Word of God to help us avoid his peace-thwarting efforts? Knowing these things will allow us to enjoy the peace of Christ to a far greater degree than most people experience. How about it? Do we want to find peace?

If we were to define an opposite of peace, perhaps this does the job:

(1 Sam 20:7) If he say thus, It is well; thy servant shall have peace: but if he be very wroth, then be sure that evil is determined by him.

Verse 7 parallels peace with wroth. *Wrath is at the opposite end of the peace spectrum.* Wrath is anger. If this is true, when and where peace isn't present, anger is. Positively speaking, when peace is present, anger isn't. Which would you rather have?

How many of you would say that peace is illusive? I would think most. Where do you look for peace? In your surroundings or within you? I suppose that your worldly distractions would determine the

answer. For instance, if you are really into the world, you are more distracted from God's Word than someone who isn't so attached to the world. In this case, you probably look for peace in your surroundings, in your environment, but mostly in the things outside of you. On the other hand, if you are NOT really into the world, you are a lot less distracted from God's Word. In this case, you might look for peace within. You could more easily recognize that peace is truly something internally received, not externally important at all. In which camp are you? Externally founded or internally founded? *I'm internally founded in that I know peace won't come from my surroundings.* I know

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that it comes only from Christ in me, the Prince of Peace. I'm not discounting the importance of a peaceful environment; I'm stressing the genesis of our peace!

(Isa 9:6) For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called … The Prince of Peace.

Jesus Christ, the child referred to, IS the Prince of Peace. He's the one who brought peace into the world. Isn't that something? If he brought it into the world, then the world didn't have it before Christ. From this, we can understand that this peace has nothing to do with your surroundings. It has all to do with what Christ made available through his birth, life, death, and resurrection. Certainly you realize that the world, before Christ, had moments of peaceful times? But peaceful times and Christ's internal peace are two different movements. Which one do you think is the most important? Externally-based peace or one that is internal?

God sent His son Jesus Christ so that we could have peace. God is the true author of peace.

(1 Cor 14:33) For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

And, God's peace exists in the "churches of the saints." What is this telling us? That God's peace-distribution channels are through Christians. *So, if you are worldly, and or attached to the things of the world, the chances of you enjoying God's Christian peace is fairly limited.* I'll go the way of the Word of God and do my best to forsake worldly encumbrances for good reason: that I may enjoy God's peace within! How about you?

Jesus told us:

(John 14:27) Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

And …

(John 16:33) These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Therefore, peace IS internal; not external. Peace is available only to Christians: not to the whole world. Jesus Christ made peace available, and God is its author. You must understand: peace and anger are at loggerheads. They are in a fierce battle, not only for survival, but also supremacy. This epitomizes

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an even greater battle taking place at this very moment, that of satan against God. Understand that the devil can never win when fighting against God. He just thinks he can. Because this battle is so great, peace in your surroundings is, at best, temporary. God knew what He was doing when He established peace via Christ in you. Peace is internal.

(1 Tim 2:2) For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

As Christians, we are instructed to pray for a "peaceable" life. "Peaceable" means, "quiet" or "undisturbed." Therefore, it is possible to have a quiet, undisturbed life on the exterior, and to have a very peaceful life on the inside.

What happens when peace is not present? What is life like then?

(Psa 35:20) For they speak not peace: but they devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the land.

When and where peace is not present, deceitful things are afoot. Peace carries with it no deceit. Watch out for this in your surroundings. For example, you walk into a place expecting to have a reasonably good time and notice that things aren't peaceful. Pay attention: potentially harmful deceit is probably lurking close by. Don't allow you to be its next target.

(Psa 120:7) I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war.

The potential for war always exists when peace isn't present. Watch out for this if you walk within these worldly circles. Peace and war cannot co-exist.

(Jer 8:15) We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble!

Trouble is an enemy of peace and exposes itself when peace is absent. Using the same example as above; you walk into a place expecting to have a reasonably good time and notice that things aren't very peaceful. What might you expect? Trouble! Ah, I think you are getting the hang of this. *Trouble exists in angry, non-peaceful situations.*

The Bible is full of examples like these. If you are going to find peace, there are certain aspects of life that you must become involved with.

The first is, you must be a Christian. The second is you must develop and maintain a Christian mindset. The third is you must live like a

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true Christian.

How to become a Christian:

(Rom 10:9-10) That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. {10} For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

To become a Christian, you must 1. confess Jesus as your Lord, and 2., believe that God raised Jesus from the dead. Have you done this? If you have, you are born again. You are one of God's kids. You have been given a wonderful gift of holy spirit. You have eternal life, and you have peace with God.

How to develop and maintain a Christian mindset:

(Rom 12:2) And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

To develop and maintain a Christian mindset, you must 1., learn God's Word, and 2., renew your mind to the Word of God. You do this every day with worldly knowledge by reading, absorbing, memorizing and retaining knowledge. You can do the same with God's Word. *The "renewed mind" experience is really a "transformation" experience.* This word relates to metamorphism – like a caterpillar turning into a beautiful butterfly. This transformation, more or less, takes place automatically as you put God's Word into your mind AND practice it.

How to live like a true Christian:

(Rom 8:8) So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

The Christian's walk in life has nothing to do with the flesh; it has all to do with the spirit.

(Rom 8:9) But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

As you become transformed by the renewing of your mind, you become more and more attached to the spiritual things of this life. God's spirit dwells in you; now you must dwell in Him. You learn of this lifestyle by fellowshipping with other true Christians and by learning God's Word together.

Step one above happened instantly. When you confessed and believed, you immediately become born again. Step two and three both

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take time. If you are ever going to "find" peace, you must start with these three simple steps in life. God's Word guarantees your success, but only you can further this guarantee by living according to God's Word. You can now break away from the grasps of wrath and anger. *Thwart the thief, once and for all, and embrace what God has freely given you!* If you do your part, you will certainly find peace as a Christian.

Much love in Christ!

Jerry D. Brown