

Introduction: Since the “peace of God” is the glorious theme of the angels who announce the birth of Christ, let us survey this subject with the goal that at the end of this season’s Christmas notes, we will have a stronger grip on the peace which comes to us from “The God of Peace.” Let us especially learn how God *tailors* and *applies* His peace to every possible situation in which we find ourselves. What Divine condescension! What grace! The Lord of peace is willing to *stoop* to us in every situation and *adapt* to our ever-changing needs in order to preserve our peace with Him!

Monday: read Numbers 6:22-27 and Ephesians 2:13-18. To appreciate the “peace of God,” we must begin with the comprehensive definition given to us in Numbers 6:22-27, where God “speaks peace” to His people through what is commonly called “the Aaronic blessing.”

The most fundamental fact about this priestly blessing is that the peace which it conveyed brought a sense of blessing over the *whole* of life. That *wholeness* is the foundation of our word “peace,” coming as it does from the root which means to “complete” a transaction or to “fulfill” a vow. It is used in Psalm 50:14 where the Psalmist urges Israel to “*fulfill* their vows to the Most High,” meaning that through the appointed sacrifices made in God’s name, Israel was to enjoy a restored, whole relationship based on forgiveness and God’s gracious acceptance of their sacrifices. This “peace through a completed and accepted sacrifice” was conveyed to God’s people by the priesthood after all the sacrifices were finished. God’s “last word” to His people after accepting the priestly offerings for sin was a word of “peace.”

Meditate and Pray: Thank Jesus for becoming for us “our peace” in Ephesians 2:14ff. He is God’s “last word” of forgiveness because of His completed sacrifice on the Cross. Ask Jesus to “speak this peace into your hearts” – no matter what the situation is in which you find yourself today. Ask Jesus to be your “Solomon,” whose finished work of salvation is meant to bring into your life all the “words of peace” which were originally used of Solomon as a “type” of Christ in 1 Chronicles 22:9-10: Words in which God promised David to give him a “peaceful” successor on the throne. Praise Him that this promise was fulfilled in Christ’s birth at Christmas!

But you will have a son who will be a man of peace and rest, and I will give him rest from all his enemies on every side. His name will be Solomon, and I will grant Israel peace and quiet during his reign. He is the one who will build a house for my Name. He will be my son, and I will be his father. And I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.

Tuesday: read Colossians 3:15. Let us remind ourselves of the *authority* and *power* of God’s rule of peace - as it is explained by Rev. William Still’s comments on Colossians 3:15 in a letter entitled, “Let Peace Rule,” in Banner of Truth’s volume of his pastoral letters:

Many Christians seem to think that the concept of peace is too passive and negative to bear such weight of Christian importance. But is it? It certainly does not suggest action to busy spirits who like to be in the thick of getting things done. But it depends on what we mean by getting things done. Busy people get outward things done, but are these the things that most need to be done?...

*... How deep is the lesson of peace we have to learn! Since God is willing and eager to be at peace with us (on His terms of course!) about anything in heaven and earth or hell, there is therefore nothing in the whole wide world that should disturb us. When we are there, we are founded on rock, for our peace is built upon **His sure Word**. Let us ask ourselves the question, Can we do **more** than God wills? We only need to ponder His astonishing ingenuity in queering every pitch and foiling our crafty purposes to know that man can never hope to do what God forbids. Let us also ask, Can man or demon harm the child of God whom God promises to protect? We only need to review how often in our lives all seemed lost, and God stepped in, and quietly reversed the calamity that threatened, to be assured that there is **nothing** to fear.*

Not much wonder, then, that our smiling Father God puts on a grim face and sternly commands in the imperative mood, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts!" This is the beginning and ending of everything in Christian life and service.

Meditate and Pray: How thankful we should be that God proves His power and right to rule our lives by ruling over us with His magnificent peace. He could have demonstrated His power to rule our lives via His awesome and terrible justice, burning with righteous anger towards our sin. But instead, He chooses to reveal Himself to us as the God who reconciles Himself to sinners so that He might be at peace with them. All this is possible, of course, only because His Son, our "Prince of Peace," offered up His life as the price to purchase our peace! Thank Jesus now for how important peace was to Him in that He purchased it for us with His own blood!

Weds/Thurs: read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-24. For further proof of the *adaptability* of God's peace to our every want and need, consider how God weaves His name as the "God of Peace" into 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12 and 5:12-24. Here the Thessalonians' need for a new level of holy living is addressed. Working through the Apostle's words in these two chapters, God is concerned for the Thessalonians': 1) Effective witness before men (vv. 11-12); 2) Ongoing respect for church leadership (vv. 12-13); 3) Peaceful relations among church members (vv. 13-15); 4) Loving, joyful and prayerful spirit in the church (vv. 15-18); 5) Proper respect for the prophetic, teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit (vv. 19-22).

How then will such a daunting list of so many urgent spiritual needs be addressed? The answer is in 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24:

*May God himself, **the God of peace**, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.*

How glorious! God is determined that our peaceful relationship with Him will not be damaged by our sliding into the sins Paul lists in 1 Thessalonians 4 and 5. As the "God of Peace," He will sanctify us "spirit, soul and body" in order to preserve the bonds of peace between us!

Meditate and Pray: God does not desire peace with us only at the moment of our conversion... He wants the peace which Christ purchased on the Cross to endure and to increase into every area of our lives... so that we are at peace with Him and with each other in the church no matter what situation we are currently facing. Sing about our God as the *ever adaptable* God of peace in hymn # 702 in our Trinity Hymnal:

*Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin?
The blood of Jesus whispers peace within.*

*Peace, perfect peace, by thronging duties pressed?
To do the will of Jesus, this is rest.*

*Peace, perfect peace, with sorrows surging round?
On Jesus' bosom naught but calm is found.*

*Peace, perfect peace, with loved ones far away?
In Jesus' keeping we are safe, and they.*

*Peace, perfect peace, our future all unknown?
Jesus we know, and He is on the throne.*

*Peace, perfect peace, death shadowing us and ours?
Jesus has vanquished death and all its powers.*

*It is enough: earth's struggles soon shall cease,
And Jesus call us to Heaven's perfect peace.*

Friday: read 2 Thessalonians 3:16-18. We return to the climax of Paul's second Thessalonian letter where he confirms how *adaptable* the peace of God is by blessing the Thessalonians with these words, translated in various versions to emphasize how omnipresent our peace with God is:

¹⁶ Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace **always in every way**. The Lord *be* with you all. (NKJV)

¹⁶ Now may the Lord of peace personally give you his peace **at all times and in all ways**. The Lord be with you all. (JB Phillips)

¹⁶ But the Lord of peace himself give you peace **continually in every way**. The Lord [be] with you all. (Darby)

¹⁶ Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace **at all times in every way**. The Lord be with you all. (ESV)

¹⁶ And God himself of peace give to you **everlasting peace in all places**. The Lord be with you all. (Wycliffe)

¹⁶ and may the Lord of the peace Himself give to you the **peace always in every way**; the Lord [is] with you all! (Young's Literal Translation).

Meditate: Doesn't our assurance and hope increase as we read all these translations (out loud if necessary) and hear their universal testimony to God's peace in each and every situation? Is there anyone for whom you are burdened who could possibly resist this peace when God is determined to let it flood their lives?

Pray: Ask the Lord to give seeking, anxious souls you know an 'answer of peace' through the blood of Christ shed for them! Thank Jesus that He is indeed, in this world, a "preacher of peace" as Ephesians 2:17 says, able to "preach peace to those who are far away from God, and those who are near!"