

Peace: Thrive not Survive

John 14:25-27

12/8/24

What are you looking for? Peace. Many are looking for peace. For Jesus peace is not simply rest, or being content, or not fighting. Peace is to thrive not survive. Peace is not surviving. Peace is thriving! Peace is knowing where we have come from and knowing where we are going. Today we are going to talk about how peace and joy are inseparable.

Someone asked me the other day why people don't believe in God. For the most part I believe the reason many don't believe in God is because God doesn't show up the way they want God to show up. For many, God doesn't speak to them in an audible voice, nor for me by the way. Folks simply don't see or feel God the way they want to see or feel God. Jesus shows the way to have God show up: it's through us.

We Christians believe that God shows up in a specific and significant way as Jesus Christ. Christmas celebrates the Creator of the Universe freely chooses not to be God to experience what it means to be human and to be with us as a human now and forevermore.

Christmas is inseparable from Easter! Jesus lives to live in us is what Jesus tells us in John 14:25-27. "Peace, I leave with you. My peace I give to you." The world teaches us that peace comes through consumption. You will be at peace if you make more money. You will be at peace if you become healthy. You will be at peace if you get that new car for Christmas.

Jesus teaches us that we will only be at peace if we follow His way of creating joy for others not simply consuming. Eating a Christmas cookie is good. Making 3 dozen cookies for our youth fundraiser creates joy. Getting the new thing for Christmas is good, generously giving to support Haiti alternative gifts creates joy. Jesus shows the way to have God show up: it's through us.

As I teach our boys, don't be zombies going from one place to another mindlessly consuming. Bring joy to where you enter. Jesus shows the way to have God show up: it's through us.

Let's see how peace and joy are inseparable in John 15:7-17.

We Christians believe Jesus lives and lives in us. How are we showing the world this reality? Back to why many don't believe in God: God is not showing up the way they want God to show up. Jesus teaches and shows the way to have God show up: it's through us.

To have God show up the first step is trust. Throughout Jesus' ministry He teaches not to start with fear but trust. I have been listening to many different podcasts. If within the first few minutes they are trying to sell me gold because the world is coming to an end, I don't listen because I know they are supporting a viewpoint that begins with fear and many times these are Christian podcasts. My recommendation for where to get source material is to ask the basic question, "Is the source starting with fear or trust?" To thrive into peace, we must trust Jesus'

goodwill for us. We must trust that our lives rest in God's good and gracious hands. Anyone can survive, few thrive into the faith of Jesus Christ. Jesus shows the way to have God show up: it's through us.

Two weeks ago, we heard the story of 10 lepers calling out to Jesus to be healed. Jesus commands them to go and worship and they will be healed. Worship is where Jesus believes we will thrive. Worship is where we learn from whence we come, and where we are going! But the story teaches more. 9 were healed but only one gave thanks! Health is not everything, but the world teaches that it is. 9 were healed, but they weren't living. 9 were healed, but they yet live lives of worship and thankfulness. An attitude of gratitude. The 9 may have been happy for the day or even a few weeks after their healing but they had yet discovered joy.

Happiness happens to us. Joy is what we bring to the world. Jesus lives so His joy will be in us and our joy will be complete. Happiness is surviving but we will not be at peace. Jesus shows the way to have God show up: it's through us.

Peace: thrive not survive. Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any wish to come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. ²⁶ For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life? – Matthew 16:24-26 Peace: thrive not survive. 9 were healed but they weren't living. Jesus shows the way to have God show up: it's through us.

The reason I can say thrive and not survive is because of what God's Word teaches about peace. We often think of peace as not fighting, but this is far from God's meaning of peace. To translate what Jesus means with peace we must use a handful of words. We translate peace from shalom: shalom is when something is whole, when something is complete, when something is perfect, when something is that which it is intended to be. So even if you are healed of your physical sickness, you will not be whole until you are living a life of gratitude.

Our souls gotta be right to be at peace. Even if you are joy filled you may not be at peace because shalom is when the individual and society are whole, complete, perfect, that which society is intended to be. For the individual to be whole our minds, bodies and souls must be healthy. Our minds and bodies will never be healthy without the soul being healthy. As God's Word teaches, "Since we are justified by trust, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. - Romans 5:1-2 Following Jesus is trusting that our lives rest in God's good and gracious hands and that when we sin, God forgives us in Jesus Christ. We do not fear death but thrive knowing that we are forgiven. When we forgive, Jesus shows the way to have God show up: it's through us.

Our bodies gotta be right to be at peace. "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? ²⁰ For you



were bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body.” – 1 Corinthians 6:19 Jesus shows the way to have God show up: it’s through us.

Our society has gotta be right to be at peace. As Christians we must support those who support individual liberty. As Christians we must support those who support education for all. As Christians we must support healthcare for all. It is tragic that healthcare is tied to employment. We will not be at peace until we get healthcare and education figured out.

Peace: thrive not survive. Jesus lives to live in us. I end at the beginning. God’s Word says, “No one has ever seen God, it is God’s only Son that has made God known.” When Jesus calls the first disciples the very first question He asks, “Is what are you looking for?” Are you looking for peace? Are you looking for joy? Where are you looking? The disciples don’t know how to respond and ask Jesus, “Where are you staying?” And we come to our passage today, “Stay with me and I will stay with you. Stay with my love and my love will be in you. Jesus lives and lives in us. Show the world Jesus lives.

Jesus shows the way to have God show up: it’s through us.

Merry Christmas,
Pastor Curtis