

Sermon Notes and Discussion Questions
Sermon Title: Colossians 3:15-17 – Keep the Peace
Sunday, Dec. 30, 2018
Pastor Howard T. Washington

In 2019, our new church theme is “Maturing our Faith”. We have been focused the last few years of building our community through unity. Intentional to preach and teach the theme of unity. Now it is time to move to the new theme. This last message on the theme of “Unity in Community” is about what is required to maintain unity.

Peace is the ingredient that keeps us walking together as a community in unity. Without peace we may be uniform, but we won't have unity. What we need to sustain unity is to keep the peace. Isaiah 26:3 says, “Thou will keep in perfect peace those whose mind is stayed on thee because He trusts in you.”

- Only God can give us perfect peace. To seek peace somewhere else is not sustaining.
- Peace is an offspring of trust because we have faith or trust in God.
- Perfect peace remains in spite of what is going on around you. Perfect peace is a gift. It is not earned. We need the gift of peace from God. Is there anyone here who would like that peace? “Peace I give to you, not as the world gives...let not our hearts be troubled.” (John 14:26-27) When you pray about everything, God gives you peace. We hear these words, but struggle to live them. (Philippians 4:6-9)
- Peace is a gift from God. Learn to live with the peace that no one can take from you.
 - Someone may have taken your peace from you without your permission. Don't allow anyone to walk away with your peace. Guard your peace. God gave it to you.

Paul was writing to a church that had been deceived by false teachers. The teachers were a threat to the centrality of Jesus and the unity of the believers. Paul has to remind them of who Jesus really is. You have been called to unity. He corrected any individualism that was promoted by false teachers.

Paul said, “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.” Let peace reign, not the emotion tied to your behavior. When you think about what Jesus has done for you, then your joy, security and peace will be complete. You did not give me my peace, so no one can take it.

You were called to one body. Be thankful.

Sermon in a Sentence: The new life of a believer is maintained when the perfect peace of God prevails. Everyone that is born again has a new life and has access to that peace.

Peace is the birthright of every believer in all circumstances. Peace is only found in God and is maintained by having a close relationship with Him.

Sometimes we slip into our old nature—“before Christ” (B.C.). Paul distinguished between the characteristics of the old nature in the chapters 2 and 4. It is easy when you don't have peace to slip back. B.C., when someone said something to you they felt you before they heard you. B.C. Includes things we don't want to talk about. It is in the past.

- 1. My character imitates the compassion, kindness, patience, gentleness and forgiveness of God. (Verse 15) – Message Translation – “Let the peace of God keep you in tune with each other, in**

step with each other. None of this going off and doing your own thing—and cultivate thankfulness.”

- a. When I have the peace of God, I can be upset and not hurt people
 - b. When I am going through the dark day, I can recognize I am going through a dark day. The peace of God can reign. My character is not impacted by what is going on around me.
 - c. When we don't have the peace of God, we will *Fight, Flee* or *Freeze*
 - d. We can't bring stability to a messed up situation, if we do not have peace ourselves.
- 2. When peace prevails, my conversation is an encouraging witness. My expression is full of worship. (Verse 16). Let the Word of Christ richly dwell within you so you can bless someone else. Peace prevails when people hear me, they hear encouragement or worship.**
- a. There is something about knowing that in the midst of a circumstance, Jesus will show up.
 - b. In your conversation and character, do not let anyone take your peace. Don't make the mistake that Esau made and give your birthright away.
- 3. My conduct represents the wisdom of God and my gratitude toward God. (Verse 17)**
- a. Whatever you do in word and in deed, do in the name of Jesus. If God is not co-signing on it, why do it. Our account has Jesus' name on it. I would not write a check that he would not sign. My conduct should be of such that in word and deed, Jesus would sign.
 - b. Sometimes we are doing things and we are not comfortable because we have not asked God
 - c. If you want peace, do in words and deed what represents Him. There are some things we used to do, we used to wear, that is not for you anymore. That is the way it is with our conduct. There are things we used to do, that don't belong anymore. "Turn it in." Give God thanks.

How believers maintain peace - "What Can I Do To Maintain Peace?"

- d. **Through remaining in Christ**
John 15, "Abide in me and I in you." Connect and stay connected with God. Remain in Him. Live and stay in Christ. Obey the Word of God. Allow the Holy Spirit to remain and live in us. Jesus said, "I will leave my peace with you." John 14:26
- e. **Through living by the Holy Spirit**
The Holy Spirit helps me maintain my peace.
- f. **Through obedience to God's word**
In Joshua, the law will not depart from my heart. I maintain my peace by meditating on God's Word. God told Joshua to not be frightened because I will be with you always.
- g. **Through prayer and meditation – See Philippians 4:6-9**

Why should we be bound when God has set us free? God will wipe our tears away and make a way out of no way. He is the keeper of our soul.

KEEP THE PEACE

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is “true” unity impossible without peace?
2. According to John 14:27, where does peace come from?
3. What can we learn about how to identify false teaching/false teachers? How can you avoid being deceived by or becoming a threat to unity in the church?
4. How can you maintain or keep the peace? Explain.
5. What is your action plan for keeping the peace in your heart, your family, your church? What will you do differently? What will you continue doing that is consistent with the Word of God?