

The God of Peace

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Text: Hebrews 13:20-21

Hebrews 13:20–21 [20] Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, [21] equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. (ESV)

I. God is the source of all peace

“Now may the God of peace (verse 20)”

- Throughout the pages of the New Testament, God is referred to, numerous times, by that title, “The God of Peace” – (Rom. 15:33, 16:20, Phil. 4:9, I Thess. 5:23).
- This is a glorious attribute of God, and it is such good news this morning because our sin has alienated us from God.
- Our sin broke our relationship with God. Our rebellion against God means we are deserving of His righteous judgment.
- And the good news this morning, is that though, by nature, we are sinners all, deserving of that righteous judgment, God has moved toward us to provide a way for us to be completely forgiven, fully free.
- Let us not take it for granted. Apart from His merciful movement towards us in Christ Jesus, we would all be objects of God's judgement. By faith in His Son, Jesus Christ, we have peace

“For He Himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in the flesh the dividing wall of hostility.” -- Ephesians 2:14

- God is the God of peace, and what we celebrate this morning is that He has moved towards us in His Son to offer eternal peace – the permanent forgiveness of sin – so that we can have eternal joy, eternal security, eternal hope.
- This is a peace that we cannot gain on our own. We can't merit this peace by good works. The peace can only be given by God, on His terms. And the terms of His peace is provided only through the Blood of His Son

II. God, in great love, sent the Great Shepherd to gather the sheep

“Now may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep... (verse 20)”

- Though our sin and rebellion broke our relationship with God, He still greatly loves us. He loves you, He loves me.
- And the manifestation of that love is His sending His Son, Jesus Christ, “the great shepherd of the sheep” (v.20) to gather the sheep.
- And how does the Shepherd gather the sheep? By giving His own life for them.

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.” -- John 10:11

“But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned - every one - to his own way, and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” -- Isaiah 53:5-6

- Though we’re the ones in rebellion, Jesus Christ substitutes Himself in our place. We’re the ones who went astray, but Jesus, willfully, in love, takes our sin upon Himself. What a Great Shepherd He is!
- What has sin ever offered you? Sin only offers empty promises! It never delivers. Sin only steals and kills and destroys!
- God offers you peace, this morning, through the forgiveness of your sins. Peace with Him...Peace knowing that you are fully forgiven...Peace knowing that you are completely cleansed...Peace knowing that your sins are not held against you by God.
- Who can give you that kind of peace? Who but God Himself has the authority to declare forgiveness over you? No one but God Himself can forgive sin, and He offers you full and free forgiveness today.
- Do you know this peace? Do you know this hope? Do you know this joy? Come to Jesus. He will abundantly pardon. That’s why He came, to grant you forgiveness through His sacrifice. Come to Christ and enjoy the life, the peace, the pardon He intended for you, today!

III. God raised Jesus, assuring us of our peace with God

“Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep...” – v.20

- The reality of this Easter morning is that God raised Jesus from the dead! The resurrection of Jesus is the demonstration of His power over sin and death!
- Sin couldn’t keep Him in the grave! Death couldn’t hold Him any longer! And in great victory, Jesus rose again!
- As God raised Jesus from the dead, it was His the seal of His approval for Jesus sacrifice for our sins.
- His resurrection secures our resurrection! His resurrection assures us of His forgiveness. His resurrection accomplishes our redemption.
- The resurrection of Christ assures that we too will rise with Him. If by faith your sins have been forgiven, then you too will rise to eternal life! God gives life to your mortal body!

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow

Because He lives, every fear is gone -- Song, "Because He Lives"

- Because He lives, there is therefore now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.
- Because He lives, there is a day coming when there will be no more sickness or death, suffering and sorrow and strife will cease.
- Because He lives, death is swallowed up in victory.
- Because He lives, all in Christ have eternal, unshakeable hope!

Conclusion

- If you have trusted in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, then you are a child of God. You're a co-heir with Christ.
- If you've not believed in Jesus, the message of the Bible is clear -- you are still dead in your sins. You are without hope. But the great news of this Easter morning is that joy and forgiveness await you in Christ. Your sins can be forgiven if you repent and turn to Him.
- In Christ we have the ultimate victory because Christ is raised from the dead. Today you can know that your sins are forgiven. The God of all peace has sent His Son Jesus, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, to shed His blood for you -- to give you a living Hope. Will you believe in His sacrifice for you? Will you receive His mercy, poured out for you?
- Let us come now, in worship and in faith, to our God, the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant has raised Jesus from the dead, that we might now and forever, have peace!

Questions for Discussion/Application:

- Re-read the text, Hebrews 13:20-21 What initial observations and insights do you have from reading this text?
- What impact has this past weekend had on your soul as we have taken time in a focused way both on Good Friday and Easter Sunday to contemplate and meditate upon the work of Christ on our behalf?
- The author of Hebrews refers to God as "the God of peace"? This refers primarily to that fact that through Christ, we have objective peace. In other words, no matter how we may feel, through Christ's sacrifice we have peace with God. Let us just consider together for a few moments -- what happened at the Cross that secured our peace with God?
- When we consider the objective peace we have with God through Christ, what difference should that reality make in our daily lives?
- At great cost to himself, God made peace with us through the Cross. This truth has powerful implications for how believers relate to one another. What are some of those implications (see Eph.2:13-14, Eph. 4:32, Eph. 5:2)?

- Who are one or two individuals you are praying God would save and thereby know peace with God ? Consider giving "One Life" updates. Is there anyone you can think of to possibly invite to the upcoming Bridge Course?
- Consider taking time to pray and (1) Thank God for the peace we have with God through Christ and (2) Pray for the lost people we know who don't yet know this peace--that God would save them and bring them into His kingdom.