

October 4, 2015  
Sunday Morning Service  
Series: John  
Community Baptist Church  
643 S. Suber Road  
Greer, SC 29650  
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**BELIEVE JESUS, HAVE PEACE**  
**John 16:25-33**

On January 1, Pope Francis opened the new year by calling on people throughout the world to pursue peace. He said, “May there never again be wars, but always the desire and commitment to peace and fraternity among peoples.” He said, “Prayer is at the root of peace.” And all the world said, “Amen.” What a wonderful man is this leader of the holy catholic church throughout the world. We know how great he is based on the fact that various groups recorded nearly every word he spoke on his recent visit to America— which by the way is no longer a Christian nation.

I cannot help but think of Jeremiah’s message to people who were entrenched in religion but not in truth. The preacher declared, *“For from the least to the greatest of them, everyone is greedy for unjust gain; and from prophet to priest, everyone deals falsely. They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed; they did not know how to blush”* (Jeremiah 6:13-15a). Jeremiah first spoke these words during the reign of King Josiah (c.a. 620 B.C.) when it seemed like talking about God and doing temple stuff was quite acceptable and popular. Jeremiah repeated the rebuke about ten years later in 609 B.C. just days before Nebuchadnezzar marched into Jerusalem and made King Jehoiakim his vassal. The peoples’ leaders talked about peace and promised peace but could not deliver because they did not know the God of peace.

Why is it that people who seem to know quite a bit about God and talk quite a bit about Bible things are at the same time incapable of offering true peace? Well, as Pope Francis said, “Prayer is at the

root of peace.” What if people are not praying, or they are not praying to the one God who is able to give peace? Or what if God isn’t listening to their prayers because their sins are blocking reception?

In the beginning, God made all things perfect, including our parent Adam whom God made in His own image. It goes without saying that in such a setting of paradise there was peace. Peace was the norm as long as the created being walked in fellowship with the Creator. But Satan changed all that when he decided that he would try to take God’s place. Satan sinned, fell from his exalted position, dragged Adam and the whole creation into sin, and has been the father of lies ever since.

Therefore, because humanity is sunk in sin, we cannot be at peace with God. Satan loves to make all kinds of offers that promise peace, but it is impossible for him to produce. Nothing and no one in all the world can give true peace, because that comes from God. Therefore, if we are going to know peace, we will have to trust all that He tells us. We will have to believe completely in the person and work of the beloved Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth. We will have to believe all that we read in the Word of God. We will have to pray to God based on that truth He has given in His Bible. The world does not know peace because the world refuses to seek for it according to God’s revealed instruction. Jesus told the disciples that He gives peace. Let’s learn how and believe Him.

**Jesus Revealed God’s Love (v.25-27).**

The Gospel accounts of Jesus’ ministry reveal that there were times when Jesus taught in ways that were difficult to understand. He acknowledged in this setting, *“I have said these things to you in figures of speech”* (v.25a). There are many examples of Jesus’ teaching in dark sayings found in the Bible. For example, He said that He taught in parables for the benefit of the followers (Matt. 13). When Jesus taught the kingdom parables, He explained why He used stories and pictures. Matthew recorded, *And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables . . . . Then the disciples came and said to him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” And he answered them, “To you it has been given*

*to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand” (Matthew 13:2-3; 10-13).*

It is obvious that Jesus intended the difficult to understand statements, the dark sayings, the deeper lessons, for His followers. In those figures of speech, they were to find truth. But often even they missed the point of truth. This same thing is experienced still by people who refuse to follow Jesus. People who are not born again, and, therefore, devoid of the Holy Spirit, read the Bible but it does not make sense to them. Even when they can explain the meaning of Hebrew and Greek words, they still miss the message God has put in the Bible for His people.

The Bible explains this principle of inability to know what it means. Regarding Christians, *Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God (1 Corinthians 2:12)*. But regarding the unsaved: *The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned (1 Corinthians 2:14)*.

Okay, we are able to see why unregenerate people do not understand Jesus’ teaching. But even the disciples found some of Jesus’ direct statements difficult to grasp. They didn’t understand that the “leaven of the Pharisees” was not about bread (Mt. 16:12). They didn’t understand that “Elijah” was fulfilled by John the Baptist (Mt. 17:10). They didn’t understand how Jonah being in the fish three days was like Jesus being in the ground three days (Mt. 12:40).

More to the point in the context of what we are studying, Jesus had just taught the disciples with figures of speech hard to understand. He did this when He washed the disciples’ feet. *When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, “Do you understand what I have done to you?” (John 13:12)*. They didn’t. He used figures of speech when He taught, *“Now is the Son of man glorified and God is glorified in Him” (John 13:31)*. The lesson, *“I am the vine you are the branches”*

*(John 15:1)* definitely was a figure of speech. Or so too, *“When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father” (John 15:26)*. And most recently Jesus taught, *“When a woman is giving birth she has sorrow” (John 16:21)*.

Part of the reason for Jesus speaking in figures of speech was the fact that the disciples had not matured enough to grasp the important teaching. He told them, *“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now” (John 16:12)*.

On one hand, Jesus taught with pictures and parables in order to help the hearers grasp the truth. Often the pictures would be like windows that enlightened the truth or put it in terms so that human wisdom could grasp it. At other times, as Jesus brought the incomprehensible lessons from God into the sphere of human experience, even the most faithful followers missed the point. No doubt that is the experience of all of us. How often does God suddenly open our understanding to a truth in the Bible that we had read and missed a dozen times before? God reveals His person and character all through the Bible. He desires for us who love Him and want to know Him to comprehend and appreciate that truth.

So when are the followers of Christ ready to hear and learn the important truths? That is Jesus’ point in this lesson. Through the Holy Spirit we understand God’s love (vv.25b-27). Jesus taught that *the hour* came when He sent the Holy Spirit. He told the disciples, *“The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech but will tell you plainly about the Father” (v.25b)*. This was not the plowing of new ground. Jesus had been teaching the disciples about the coming ministry of the Holy Spirit. He told us that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth who only the followers of Christ who have been born again can receive (John 14:16-17). He will teach the disciples all truth and bring to their remembrance the things they didn’t grasp at the time (John 14:26). He will convict of sin, righteousness and justice (John 16:8). He will guide into all truth and reveal things to come (John 16:13).

Because He is the Helper who is like Jesus (14:16) who will testify and glorify Jesus (16:14), Jesus speaks through Him. Therefore, when the disciples learned truth through the Holy Spirit, it was Jesus continuing to teach them. As the apostles received the inspired Bible through the Holy Spirit’s work, it was Jesus speaking

to them. In the same way, when we read the Bible that God has given to us and learn great truth, it is Jesus speaking to us. So, when a great truth of the Bible jumps off the page and speaks to a child of God, it is altogether fitting for him or her to say, "The Lord spoke to me." He did indeed, if it is a word from inspired and settled Scripture.

The hour for that kind of communication to begin was on Pentecost for the disciples. As they met together in prayer and fellowship, God poured out the promised Holy Spirit on them, and they were changed for the rest of their lives. Jesus spoke to them often, and they understood things that had eluded them in the past. Sometimes the speaking of Jesus was quite unusual and direct. For example, the Lord Jesus stood next to Peter when he was in prison and told him to get up and leave (Acts 12:7). In a similar way, the Lord Jesus stood beside Paul after he was arrested and told him that he would go to Rome to testify (Acts 23:6).

The hour for this special kind of speaking to us begins the moment we are born again and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. From that moment He teaches us what the words of Jesus in the Bible mean. He gives testimony with our spirit that we are indeed children of God (Rom. 8:16).

Jesus promised that *in that day* His followers would have direct access to God the Father. "*In that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf*" (v.26). In this age of Holy Spirit ministry, we pray in Jesus' name. It is our privilege to take our burdens and requests to God in prayer. We present our requests and petitions in the name of Jesus our Savior. A few minutes earlier Jesus had taught, "*Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son*" (John 14:13). Just moment before Jesus had said, "*Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you*" (John 16:23).

It is our privilege to pray in the name of Jesus, to invoke His name as we present our requests to God. And yet, at the same time, we have direct access to God because Jesus opened the way. We draw near to God's throne of grace with confidence where we find grace and help (Heb. 4:16). We have this confidence because Jesus opened the new and living way through the "curtain" that once kept common people out of the Holy of Holies (Heb. 10:19-20). While Jesus

intercedes with His blood to cover our sins, He does not have to take each of our prayers to the Father. We go directly to our Creator in the name of our Savior because the work of reconciliation is completed.

That is when we understand the Father's love. We can go directly to God the Father because, "*the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God*" (v.27). We have proven our love for Jesus by our faith in Him.

To believe that Jesus of Nazareth came from God is to believe an entire body of doctrine. We believe that He is co-equal with God the Father and God the Spirit. We believe that coming from God to us, He was born of a virgin in order not to be contaminated with the curse of natural sin. We believe that He lived in perfect accord with the stipulations of His own law. We believe He never sinned. We believe He shed His blood on the cross to provide the acceptable covering for sin. We believe He rose bodily from the grave. We believe He ascended to heaven where He intercedes for us at the right hand of God the Father.

If we really believe these truths, we will love Jesus. If we really love Jesus, we will believe these truths. Mere talk about loving Jesus is really cheap and easy. If you pay attention to the religious words that pass through the news these days, you will hear many claims about love for Jesus and the need to be like Jesus from the very people who are intent on replacing Jesus as the only mediator with God the offended Creator for sinners. Any religion or religious authority who claims the right or ability to forgive sins is a heretic who seeks to replace the work only God the Son is able to accomplish. They do not believe Jesus regardless of how sincere they sound. And, therefore, they do not love Jesus. We who truly trust in Jesus alone to save us from the penalty and power of sin cannot help but truly love Him.

When we truly love Jesus because we believe Jesus, God the Father loves us. Of course, we know that the Bible teaches that God actually initiated the love. John wrote this truth in his first letter. *We love because he first loved us (1 John 4:19). In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:10).* In both of those statements, the Greek word for *love* is *agapao*. This means that God made a

conscience decision to give us the very best even though it cost Him great sacrifice, the blood of God the Son.

But in the statement Jesus made here, we find a different Greek word for love. The word here is *phileo*, which is the deep affection between siblings or between a parent and child. While *agapao* is volitional, *phileo* is known more for emotions. How amazing that the Creator of the universe has a strong emotional attachment to us who rebelled against Him and became His enemies. He can only love us in this way because of the sacrifice His beloved Son made in our behalf. We can go directly to God and state our requests or petitions, we can ask for help, because He deeply loves us like a father loves his child.

### **Believe Jesus (vv.28-31).**

Christ's real disciples believe that He came from God into the world (vv.27b-28). Our faith rests in clearly stated facts. Jesus repeated the truth about Himself regularly. He said, "*I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father.*" (v.28). As we stated previously, the fact that Jesus came from the Father into the world embodies the whole doctrine of salvation through the sacrifice of the incarnate God. Having accomplished the work He was sent to do, God the Son returned to heaven and to God the Father. In heaven He continues to intercede, serve as our advocate, with God the Father.

The disciples confessed faith in this reality. Back in verse twenty-seven, Jesus said that God the Father loves us because we love Christ "*and have believed that I came from God*" (v.27b). Yes, if we are disciples, followers of Jesus, we truly believe this amazing fact. Because we believe it, we live it. The eleven disciples believed this fact and gave their lives because they could not stop believing it. What does it take for you to stop believing Jesus?

It seems that failure in the faith department was a bit of an issue for the disciples who were so proud to believe in Jesus. He eventually asked them, "*Do you now believe?*" Why wouldn't they? The followers were quite sure they understood. (29) *His disciples said, "Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative speech!*

(30) *Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you; this is why we believe that you came from God.*"

We are so much like the eleven. The disciples' conclusions prove that they are so human, so fickle, so responsive to circumstances. Jesus just acknowledged that the disciples loved Him because they believed Him. He assured them that because of their love and faith, God the Father loves them in return. And like us, they were nodding their heads in agreement, "Yes, yes, that is all certainly true of us." Now the words of Jesus came clearly to them. They grasped it all. Again they were convinced that Jesus was from God because He knew all the good stuff about them.

We are like that. We rejoice when we discover the good stuff in the Bible. We love to be reminded that we are faithful people. We love to dwell on the reality of God's love for us. We love to have our love for Jesus affirmed and know that God knows all about it. At times like that, we feel like we are almost at the gate of heaven and able to see the keepers of the gate welcoming us in.

At times like that, we tend to forget that the Lord knows all secrets and questions our faith. *Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe?"* (v.31). Ouch! Did that hurt? The disciples had just waxed eloquently about their certain belief that Jesus came from God. They just acknowledged that He knows everything, all the deep secrets and hidden stuff. Isn't it interesting how we are able to gloss over or ignore our weaknesses, our sins, our hidden flaws when we acknowledge that Jesus knows everything about us?

### **Have Peace (vv.32-33).**

Jesus, who knows all things about us, might wonder, "If you really believe Me, why do you respond as though you do not?" He revealed that in short order the disciples would abandon Him. "*Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone*" (v.32a). The disciples were on the precipice of running away in fear, pretending not to know Jesus at all. The temple police were probably at that moment in meetings at the temple with the scribes and Pharisees as they planned Jesus' arrest. At this point, it appears all the disciples have adopted Peter's errant confidence. Yet, they would all

deny association with the One they claimed they trusted and loved so much.

What does it take for us to pretend that we are not associated with Jesus? Fear of peers who take His name in vain and curse Him? A desire to be acceptable to His enemies? A desire for ease in life which keeps us from becoming like Him? Many professing Christians live to enjoy all the pleasures the world offers, while at the same time claiming that they are willing to sacrifice to walk in fellowship with Jesus.

That is impossible. Jesus had just taught these men, *“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours”* (John 15:18-20). To fear and respect the world is to abandon Jesus.

But even if we walk away from Jesus, God the Son is never alone. He assured the disciples that though they would abandon Him, *Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me* (v.32b). There is nothing in the universe that could cause God the Father to leave God the Son. Nothing that is except sin! That is why the Father turning away from the Son while He bore our sins is so grievous. Yet it is through that grief God the Son won our peace.

To that end Jesus taught us that if we really believe Him, we will have peace. The principle Jesus taught is simple to understand and important to apply. The truth of God’s Word offers peace. Jesus told the disciples, *“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace.”* How important is it for us to review the things Jesus said? He gave us this teaching so that we can have peace. How broad or inclusive is the term *these things*? Ultimately, all the teaching Jesus gave while He ministered brings peace. His teaching reveals that we are sinners in need of a Savior. His teaching reveals that He is the only Savior. His teaching reveals how we live in fellowship with Him. Certainly, the teaching is directed at the closest followers (chap. 13-16).

If we know these things and practice them, we find a peace that the world cannot give, nor do they understand. The truth is that the world brings trouble while Jesus brings peace. Jesus warned us, *“In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”* The fact that we find peace by knowing, believing, loving, and obeying Jesus does not preclude the fact that the world causes trouble. Can we have peace with our Lord while experiencing trouble in the world? Ask Paul and Silas who were beaten, thrown in prison, and responded by having a singspiration. Ask John who spent his last years in exile on a lonely island where he met with Jesus. Ask any number of martyrs throughout church history.

Our peace is not dependent on favorable circumstances but on the reality that Christ our Lord has ultimately overcome the world. He already won the battle; and when God brings it all to culmination, we will be glad we walk with Christ. Therefore, we have peace through Him even when life is chaotic. Picture a massive hurricane with over 100 mile per hour winds sweeping across the Atlantic Ocean toward our coast. The waves can reach breathtaking heights and whitecaps spray mist for many feet. And yet, while the winds howl across the surface of the water, merely 25 feet below the surface there is perfect calm. The fish and sea creatures continue their lives of tranquility as if nothing unusual is going on.

That is a picture of the life of the person who believes Jesus and loves Him because of what he believes. If we really believe the whole corpus of truth about Jesus, eternity is the only thing that truly matters to us. Life might be unkind, unfair, or just unfavorable, but we will still have peace in the depth of our souls that only Jesus gives.