

***“The Prize Of Peace!”***  
***1 Thessalonians 5:12-15***

**Introduction:**

1. Just About Every Year, People Are Nominated For The Prestigious Nobel Prizes!
  - One Of The Most Coveted Prize Is The Nobel Peace Prize!
    - Year After Year, People Have Won This Prize For Promoting Peace In The World – But What Have Been The Real Results Of Their Efforts? Have They Lasted?
    - In 2007 - Former Vice President Al Gore Won The Nobel Peace Prize!
      - For His Work On Man-Made Climate Change!
      - Yet, Since That Time:
        - In August, Over 2K Killed & 2M Displaced In Monsoon Floods In South Asia!
        - In September, Over 100 Killed In A Hurricane In Nicaragua With Over 160 MPH Winds!
        - In November, Over 1K Killed In A Cyclone In Bangladesh! ([www.time.com](http://www.time.com))
    - These Disasters Will Continue!
      - Peace With The Natural World Is A Mirage!
    - In 1994, PLO Leader Yasser Arafat, And Israeli Leaders Shimon Peres & Yitzhak Rabin Shared The Nobel Peace Prize!
      - “For Their Efforts To Create Peace In The Middle East!”
        - That Sure Lasted, Didn’t It!
    - In 1944, The International Red Cross Won The Nobel Peace Prize!
      - For “Protecting The Lives And Dignity Of Victims Of War And Internal Violence And To Provide Them With Assistance!”
        - They Still Have Plenty To Do!
2. In The World, Peace Is A Long Way Off!
  - But, In & Through The Church, The Lord Jesus Christ Came To Provide Real, Lasting Peace!
    - With God! In Your Own Heart! And Within The Church!
    - But, Has He Ever Won A Peace Prize?
  - Instead Of Receiving A Prize **For** Peace – He Has Given To His Church The Prize **Of** Peace!
    - Especially In A World That Has No Real, Lasting Peace!
  - This Morning, We Will See That God Provides For Peace Within His Own Church!
    - End Of 1 Thessalonians 5:13 - “And Be At Peace Among Yourselves!”
      - This Is The Center Of Our Passage & The Central Message Of Our Passage!
      - The Thessalonian Church Was Facing Great Opposition & Even Persecution Because Of Their Faith In Jesus Christ!
        - And So The Lord Teaches That Inside The Church Itself Ought To Be The Greatest Peace – A Place Of Refuge For Christians!
      - And So, From Verses 12-15, Paul Shows Us How To Maintain / Keep The Peace In The Church!
        - Each Person Has A Responsibility!
        - This Is All Part Of The Edification – Building Process Seen In 5:11!
          - It Will Be Much Easier To Build With Both Hands, Than With One Hand On A Sword & One Hand On A Brick! Ask Nehemiah!
          - Sometimes It May Be Necessary, But It Is Not Easier!
        - Save Your Swords For The Battles Outside! Strive For Peace & Harmony On The Inside!
          - “No Church Could Grow Spiritually Without Its Members Being At Peace Among Themselves!” (G. W. Garrod)
  - 3. With All The Conflict Outside Of The Church, We Must “Endeavor To Keep The Unity Of The Spirit In The Bond Of Peace!” (Ephesians 4:3)
    - How?
      - Be At Peace With Your Shepherds!
      - Be At Peace With Your Sheep!
    - The Church Is Often Likened To A Flock Of Sheep With A Chief Shepherd & Under-Shepherds!

- When There Is Harmony & Peace, It Is A Beautiful Thing!
- But You Better Not “Worry” The Sheep!
  - If You Do – When There Is Conflict – You Can’t Get Anywhere! You Can’t Do Anything! No Productivity!
- James 3:16 - “For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work!”

**1. *Be At Peace With Your Shepherds! (5:12-13)***

- 5:12-13 - “And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; / And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake!”
- Every Useful, Productive Flock Has A Faithful Shepherd!
  - And These Verses Are Describing The Relationship Between The Sheep & The Shepherd – The Church & Her Leaders!
  - Some Scriptures Points Out Who Our Chief Shepherd Is!
  - Other Scriptures Challenge The Under-Shepherds (Pastors / Elders) How They Are To Serve!
  - This Scripture Appeals To The Church To “Encourage & Edify” Their Own Leaders!
  - Strive To Keep The Peace With Your Shepherds!
    - How?
- Recognize Your Shepherds! (5:12)
  - “To Know” - Not Just Who They Are, But What They Are Like, And What They Do – For You!
    - Look After Them & Know Them – Just As They Are Appointed To Look After You & Know You! You Are All “Brethren!” They Need You, As Much As You Need Them!
  - Recognize Their Working With You!
    - “Labor” - Pouring Their Lives & Souls Into You!
    - See 2:8-9!
    - What Is This Labor In?
      - Prayer! Colossians 4:12
      - The Word & Doctrine! 1 Timothy 5:17
    - Much Of This Labor May Be Hidden From Your Eyes – This Is Why You Must Recognize What Is Being Done For You!
  - Recognize Their Watching Over You!
    - “Over You” - To Watch & Care For!
      - Not Describing A Ruler, But A Caregiver!
      - Hebrews 13:17 - “They watch for your souls, as they that must give account!”
    - 1 Peter 5:2-3 Describes How They Do This - “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; / Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock!”
      - Through Leadership / Service / Example / Prayer / Direction
  - Recognize Their Warning For You!
    - “Admonish” - To Put In Mind / To Warn!
    - This “Warning” Is Based Upon The Word Of God, And Is Brought For The Benefit Of God’s People!
  - Know:
    - Who Your Shepherds Are!
    - What Your Shepherds Do!
    - Why Your Shepherds Do It!
    - And How Your Shepherds Do It!
    - And Then, Do Something About What You Know!
- Respect Your Shepherds! (5:13)
  - “Esteem” - What Should It Look Like?
  - It Should Be Limitless!
    - “Very Highly”
      - Translated From A Very Long & Complex Greek Word – “The Ocean Of Esteem Having Reached Its Outer Most Perimeter, Reaches Even Higher And Begins To Flow Outward, Overflowing Its Banks!” (William Hendrickson)

- Beyond Measure! Like A River Overflowing Its Banks!
- It Should Be Loving!
  - “In Love”
  - Esteem Can Come From Any Number Of Reasons!
    - Official Esteem – From The Office!
    - Personal Esteem – From The Person!
    - Popular Esteem – From Popularity!
  - This Esteem Ought To Come From & Develop In Love!
    - 1 Corinthians 13 Kind Of Love!
- This Is “The Proper Response To The Good Work They Are Doing!” (Hiebert)
- When You Strive To Keep The Peace With Your Shepherds:
  - Love Is The Oil That Maintains This Harmony!
  - Especially When Your Love Is Derived From The Love Of Your Great Shepherd, Jesus Christ!
    - He Knows What Is Best For You & For His Church – And This Is Why He Teaches This Here!
  - When You Recognize & Respect The Shepherds God Has Given You, You Become A Partner With Your Great Shepherd!
    - 1 Corinthians 3:9 - “For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building!”

**2. *Be At Peace With Your Sheep! (5:14-15)***

- 5:14-15 - “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. / See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men!”
  - These Verses Describe The Relationship Between The Sheep – Your Relationship With Everyone Else In The Church!
    - Strive To Keep The Peace With Your Sheep!
      - You Are “Brethren!” How?
  - Through Warning!
    - Those Who Have Problems Of The Spirit!
      - “Unruly” - The Disorderly - Military Term!
      - Spiritual Problems!
        - Those Who Are Out Of Step / Out Of Line / Out Of Order!
        - Those Who Have Taken Upon Themselves What God has Ordered & Placed Over Them! (Christ / Word / Ministers)
    - The Same Ministry The Leaders Had!
      - Help Get Them Back In Line!
      - Galatians 6:1 - “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted!”
    - When Order Is Restored!
      - You Can Worship & Serve In A More Effective & Impressive Way! (Like An Orderly March!)
  - Through Comforting!
    - Those Who Have Problems Of The Soul!
      - “Feebleminded” - The Timid - The Broken Hearted!
        - Describes Those Who Are In Doubt / Discouragement / Despair!
        - Because They Have Laid Down The Armor Of Faith / Love / Hope!
    - Right After An Appeal To Maintain The Purity Of The Church, Here Is An Appeal For Sympathy & Compassion Within The Church!
      - To Give & Show Love!
      - Includes The Elderly / The Grieving / The Children!
        - People Are More Important Than Projects!
    - How Do We Comfort?
      - Through Christ! All Of Chapter 5!
  - Through Supporting!

- Those Who Have Problems Of The Body!
  - “Weak” - Infirm / Sick
  - Both Spiritually & Physically!
- “Support” - To Hold Up!
  - Physical Support For Physical Needs!
    - Don’t Forget Order Of Priority!
  - Physical / Financial / Simple / Not-So-Simple!
    - Build A Ramp / Build A House!
  - There Is No Limit To Kindness Within The Body Of Christ!
- When You Strive To Keep The Peace With Your Sheep:
  - Patience Is The Oil That Maintains This Harmony!
    - “Be Patient Toward All Men!”
    - “Long-Suffering” – Bearing With Each Other!
  - Why Must We Be Patient?
    - Because Of People!
      - Make Mistakes! Say / Do Things That Hurt! 1 Peter 4:8 - “Charity shall cover the multitude of sins!”
    - Because Of Ourselves!
      - Don’t We Need Patience?
    - Because Of The Lord!
      - Exodus 34:6-7 - “And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, / Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin!”
  - How Can We Be Patient? (5:15)
    - Make Sure – “See”!
      - You Don’t Pay Back!
        - “Render Evil For Evil!”
        - Be That “Voice Of Reason” That Brings Someone From Their Anger! (Abigail & David)
      - You Do Pursue Good!
        - In Every Circumstance / At Every Turn / At All Times!
        - NIV - “Always Try To Be Kind” – Don’t “Try” – Do!
      - A Hunter / Stalker For Good!
        - Romans 12:21 - “Overcome Evil With Good!”
        - Like Christ! “Father Forgive Them!”

**Conclusion:**

1. We Have Enough Conflict On The Outside Of This Church – We Don’t Need It On The Inside Of This Church!
  - So Strive To Keep The Peace!
    - With Your Shepherds & With Your Sheep!
2. If We Were To Take Nominations For A “Grace Peace Prize” – Who Would Be On The List?
  - We Can Keep The Peace!
    - Because We Have Been Given The Prize *Of* Peace By Jesus Christ Himself!

\* Invitation:

- Do You Have Peace?
- Are You Keeping The Peace?

**Grace Baptist Church**  
**Stephen Elmer, Pastor**  
 4245 North 200 West  
 Greenfield, Indiana 46140  
 317-326-2362

*Pastor-Elmer@hotmail.com*  
*www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace*  
*www.growatgrace.com*