

Jesus, The Sinner's Peace

By Dr. Jerry Bilkes

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Providence Reformed Church

1700 Coit Avenue NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49505

Website: providencereformed.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/prcgr

Dear congregation, who here needs and longs for peace? Our world is filled with so much unrest, war, rumors of war, and churches too can experience much division, especially in times like we have recently had where because of legislation and many things that divide our country and also churches, there can be all sorts of rivalries, competitions, different viewpoints and also divisions in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Families can experience a lot of division and disharmony, a lot of strife from day to day. The supper table which is to be a time of harmony and breaking bread together and enjoying meals which symbolize peace and tranquility and life, they often can be turned into shouting matches or places of stern looks and quiet faces where brother does not love brother, where the generations are at odds with each other, and to top it all off, congregation, within the hearts of countless millions and billions of people there is such lack of peace and calm and tranquility, at least true peace, for sure, peace that passes understanding, as the scriptures say. "From whence cometh wars and fighting," James asks, "among you?" They come from our heart, don't they?

The division, the disharmony that we find in churches and in our world and in families as well, is all really an expression of the lack of peace that there is in our hearts, and it is to this that the gospel gives such a glorious and wonderful and real answer as the Apostle Paul speaking to real people, with real problems, and a real situation, speaks to them with the authority of God about a real peace that can be found in one place only as we hope to hear in the words of our text which you can find in Ephesians 2:14, especially the first part of that verse but I'll read at this time verses 14 through 17.

14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

Thus far the words of our text.

The theme looking to the Lord is, "Jesus, The Sinner's Peace." Jesus, the sinner's peace. We'll see him, first of all, as the foundation of peace. We read in the words of verse 15, "for to make in himself of twain one new, so making peace." He is the foundation of peace, the Lord Jesus himself. Secondly, we see the Lord Jesus as the preacher of peace. You see that especially in verse 17, "And came and preached peace to you with were afar off, and to them that were nigh." Thirdly and lastly, we'll see Jesus, the sinner's peace, namely the content of peace, and this lies especially in the words of our text, the opening words of verse 14, "For he is our peace." Jesus, the sinner's peace: the foundation of peace, the preacher of peace, and the content of peace.

Congregation, the Apostle Paul is writing as an apostle to the Gentiles. He himself was a Jew and he knew from his own experience that between Jews on the one hand and Gentiles on the other there was a rivalry, a deep-seated enmity whereby in most cases Jews could not stand Gentiles and Gentiles could not stand Jews, and a lot of it had to do with the fact that Jewish people during this time, they thought of themselves as God's peculiar people which indeed at some level was true but that did not give them a higher standing in the sight of heaven at all. They were called to be a blessing to the world and a witness to the world, not to look down upon the world. However, before we accuse the Jews of Jesus' and Paul's time, let us point the finger at ourselves because we have been entrusted with a glorious heritage and it is not uncommon in the Reformed community for people who have been raised in the church to look at people around them, growing up around them, and to look down our noses at them, as thinking of ourselves as being something superior, something more than the people all around us.

"To whom much is given, much shall be required." Whatever the Lord has entrusted to you the Lord will one day ask you to give account of it, what have you done with it. All these privileges and all these benefits, what have you done with it? Paul writes in Romans 11 to the Jews around him, he says, "Be not high-minded but fear." Be not high-minded but fear. Be afraid. Much has been given to you. You must give account.

But in the context of these Jews and Gentiles that were at odds so often with each other, something of this also took shape in the various congregations to which Paul ministered. There would often be a Jewish section and then a Gentile section, and there would often be strife between these two, even to the point where many Jewish believers, even true believers, they couldn't understand how Gentiles could be saved without first becoming Jews, without first going through all the rituals and the ceremonies that they, themselves, had gone through, circumcision and all the dietary laws and all the keeping of the feasts. So there was this superiority complex on the part of many Jews and Paul labored to make clear to both Jew and Gentile that this is an enmity that has no place in the church of Jesus Christ. There should be no looking down our noses at each other. There should be humility.

"Be ye kindly affectioned one toward another in lowliness of mind, esteeming others better than self." There ought to be that servant-mindedness in which we seek to wash one another's feet, taking the lower place in truth, knowing that apart from grace and apart from God we are all in the same lot, we are all condemnable. And to that end Paul

in the letter to the Ephesians spends a lot of time showing the mystery of salvation as something that is in Christ for Jew and for Gentile equally and comprehensively, and there is no difference for Christ is Lord over all and Savior of both the circumcised and the uncircumcised. He has broken down the middle wall of partition, as we will see later.

But congregation, all of this brings before us this need for peace, not just with one another, as important as that is, and not just within ourselves, as important as that is, peace within our restless souls and hearts and minds, but ultimately we can have neither of those two things unless we have first and preeminently this peace with God which you and I had once in paradise long ago when we walked with the Lord in the cool of the day, when he was everything to us, when there was amity between us and him, a friendship when we could see eye-to-eye, reverently speaking, with the Lord, where there was all beauty, all glory, all wonder in God. That was peace. That was true peace.

When did the quarrel start, children? When in the world's history did the fighting start? Cain and Abel. They were brothers and shared the same parents but they fought, didn't they, even to the point where the one killed the other. Oh, what enmity. Oh, what hostility. What a terrible quarrel but it didn't start with Cain and Abel, it started in the garden of Eden where we listened to the whispers of Satan who started this quarrel. But we by the instigation of the devil, we followed him and we entered into a quarrel with the Most High, all of us, you and me and every living man and woman. A quarrel with God, a terrible quarrel. In life there can be quarrels between friends, between family members, where something that was harmonious breaks down and instead of love there comes hatred, instead of acceptance there comes hostility, instead of that mutual companionship and love one towards another there comes brokenness. Broken glass all around. It's like wherever you step, you step on broken glass. Quarrels, and it's because we've left God, the fountain of living waters.

And it's a quarrel, congregation, from both sides. God has a quarrel with us and rightfully so because we have turned into enemies of God. We are rebels against God. We have our fists raised, spiritually speaking, against God and we have our swords drawn against the Most High. But don't think that from the Lord's side there is no quarrel. No, there is a righteous and there is a deadly quarrel because there cannot, apart from the Lord Jesus Christ and we'll come to that, but apart from him there cannot be any peace from God toward the sinner. God is angry with the wicked every day. He has whetted his sword, the Bible says, and he will execute vengeance upon all those who are at war with him.

Has this become a reality for you in your life too, that you realize that by nature this is your life, you quarrel with God? Maybe you know it at this level, that God in his providence brings this into your life. Very difficult, you don't see most people around you suffering exactly like that and here's this providence that God puts into your life and inside of you and inside your heart there comes up all this bitterness and strife and envy and murmuring and complaining against the Lord. We all have it, all of us by nature. We're like the children of Israel in the wilderness murmuring, complaining, even over good things like manna, good things from the Lord, but after awhile our quarrelsome spirits find even reason for quarrel in that, and that quarrel grows, congregation, in our

hearts unless the Lord stops it. Unless the Lord stops us it grows and that's why you see so many people as they get older and older, they have a growing quarrel against God, a growing tightening in their heart in which they're angry with God and, believers, if we're honest, we have to confess that often we too, we go a long ways down that path of quarreling with the Lord. Jonah had a quarrel with God, "Doest thou well to be angry," the Lord said to Jonah and Jonah had the audacity to say, "Yes, I do well to be angry." It's a wonder that the Lord didn't wipe Jonah off the face of the earth in that moment.

But congregation, do those quarrels give you peace? Do they give you rest? Do they give you calm in your soul? Face it now this evening. Or must you agree with Isaiah 48:22, "There is no peace, saith my God, for the wicked"? The wicked is compared there to a sea that's tossing up all kinds of filth and dirt and garbage and trash, and so often that's our hearts, isn't it, or don't you find that so? There's no rest within. There's no peace within. It's a quarrel and sometimes we go so far as to take that out on others around us. No peace. No peace.

But congregation, wonder of all wonders, you don't need to go past Genesis 3:15 until you hear the God of the universe speaking remarkable words. Do you hear them? "I will put enmity." Oh, it sounds like more enmity. This is the right enmity because when God puts enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, then that is ultimately a covenant of friendship in which the Lord undertakes to make a breach in that relationship of friendship that there is between Adam and Eve and Satan, and the Lord puts enmity where there was at one time peace, and that means that God has gracious designs of peace with his fallen image-bearer. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed. He shall bruise thy head, Satan, though thou shalt bruise his heel."

Already in paradise, already when that first quarrel was just bubbling up, heinous though it was, awful though it was, the Lord from heaven came with designs of peace towards his fallen image-bearer. And much of the Old Testament is prophecy and type and foreshadowing of the peace that the Lord would procure in the fullness of time. Job even saw it at the dawn of history. Job, that patriarch who was in that terrible providence in which indeed he too had many things out of which he made a quarrel against God, believer though he was. But within the pages of that there comes this point at which he cries for a daysman who would put his hand upon the Lord and upon himself, someone to mediate on his behalf, someone to give him a peace that he lacked and so desperately needed. Oh, for that daysman. Oh, for that mediator. Oh, for that one to stand in between in the gap, someone to lay his hand on us both.

Dear believer, that's your desire when you're in a right place, that you would have such a one, someone who would intervene and interpose himself between you and the Almighty. And so the whole Old Testament goes on with the offerings and the sacrifices, including the peace offering, children, which symbolized the peace that would come in the way of the ultimate sacrifice, the Lord Jesus Christ. And in all these offerings and in all the prophecies of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Old Testament it became clear that in order for there to be peace in this world, there needed to be an offering, a sacrifice, there needed to

be the shedding of blood. And not just any offering, not just a series of offerings of bullocks and goats and all the rest, but there needed to come one whom Isaiah in particular together with Micah, announces as the Prince of Peace. The Prince of Peace, someone who would mediate peace, someone who would bring about peace in our peaceless world. Micah 5:5 says, "And this man shall be the peace," that is the Lord Jesus Christ. And when you come to the pages of the New Testament in words that the children here know as well, you know what happened on that day when the heavenly host came down and they filled the whole sky around Bethlehem, what did they say? "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." What were they saying? They were saying in that manger lies peace in human nature. Son of God, in the nature of humans, having taken that nature to himself in one person, God blessed forever. There is peace.

In the whole of his life, he lived and, oh, peace dropped from his lips. "My peace," he said to his disciples, "I give unto thee, not as the world gives give I unto thee. Don't look for peace from me like the world gives it." And the best that the world gives in terms of peace is these truces that nations have once in a while with each other. A human made peace, and we can be thankful for when wars are ended but when Christ says, "My peace I give unto you," he is speaking there about something that lies deep in his heart, something that he is going to procure and hand out based on his finished work. Peace with God through his own death.

So congregation, he went that whole way of suffering until in his body on the tree he paid the penalty for sin, and he himself was made a curse, and in that moment, congregation, and we cannot fathom this, but heaven saw and accounted Christ to be the greatest quarreler with God there ever was. Oh, he was not but it was accounted to him, it was imputed to him all your quarrels, people of God, that you've ever had with each other and with the Lord himself. They were laid upon him just like the high priest would lay the sins of the people upon the scapegoat and he'd be sent out into the wilderness and he would roam there in the land of forgetfulness. So the Lord Jesus Christ was seen, was accounted as the greatest quarreler there ever was with God and he did it all out of love. The Lord laid upon him the iniquity of all his people in every age. He was made to be a curse.

In the words of our text in verse 15 it says it this way, "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." Congregation, just to say it in a compact and a brief way: when the Lord Jesus Christ came to Calvary and he was nailed to that cross, something else was nailed with him to that cross and that is the enmity, the quarrel that you, people of God, have had against God. It was nailed to the cross in him. It was put away in him.

Notice how it's said here, "having abolished in his flesh the enmity." You can't get grander than that. Abolished means it's not there anymore. It's gone. It's abolished. Children, you've heard of the abolition movement, when those who were slaves President

Lincoln declared abolition. They were freed. They were set free. They couldn't be enslaved anymore. That was abolition. Slavery was abolished formally in our nation at that time. It was no more. And how much more in the Lord Jesus Christ was enmity, that means this quarrel with each other but against God, it was abolished, or in verse 16 it says, "having slain the enmity thereby." What does this mean? Well, you remember that other promise in Genesis 3:15 where the Lord says to Satan, "Satan, the day is coming when someone of the seed of the woman is going to crush your skull. He's going to bruise your head and that means he's going to crush into a million pieces your head whereby you have sought to rule over the nations," as we heard this morning. "You're going to be finished, Satan, once and forever, and he's going to do that by being made a sacrifice and the enmity of every Christian, true Christian, in every time and place, it will be nailed to the cross, it will be abolished, it will be slain." That's my Jesus. That's my Lord. He does it all. He did what no one could ever do. He did what no principality or power or all rulers in every age together could not do. He did it all in one moment.

We are thankful for what Lincoln did but what he did was contested and even for many decades, there was still remnants of slavery and there is still slavery in our world, horrible slavery in our world. No man can abolish that save the Lord Jesus Christ and he did it on the cross and he's now handing it out, and by faith the people of God know it and they experience it and they taste it. Oh, the death of the Son of God, so much was done there and that means too that my enmity, the enmity, the hostility in my heart of which the Lord gives you a taste, dear believer, something of it, that you see this by the light of God's grace and you say, "How could that be in my heart, that enmity, that hostility against God who has never done anything wrong? And against a brother, even against a fellow creature, how that can foment within my heart? How is possible?"

Then you struggle against it and you want to be rid of it and you can't. You can't slay it yourself. You can't abolish it yourself. Your hands are tied. You only make it worse. Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, having slain the enmity. Well, congregation, do you see how the Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation of peace? It is him we need. Paul says it in 2 Corinthians 5:18 and 19, all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by the death of his Son. God took the initiative. God is the author and the finisher of the faith but also of peace. It lies all in him.

He's the peace-giver and Christ is the peace-establisher and he does it in a way of righteousness. He does it in a way of righteousness. Isaiah 32:17, "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." What does that mean? That means that the Lord Jesus Christ in his death when transgression and enmity and sin was imputed to him, he wrought righteousness. He bore the burden of sin. It was all imputed to him in order that he might be and accomplish a full righteousness to each and every one who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace. You see, congregation, that peace with God comes in the way of losing everything from our side and going lost at the feet of this Prince of Peace, submitting to his righteousness in the gospel, accounting him by faith as the righteous one, and submitting ourselves soul and body for time and for eternity unto

him. That's what faith is. Paul says about Israel, what's Israel's problem? Israel has not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God through Jesus Christ. If you're an unbeliever here today, the Bible says about you, you have not submitted yourself. You still stand tall. You hear about this Prince of Peace, about his death on the cross, but you have your own righteousness and you don't want to give it up. Or maybe you don't have righteousness but you think you'll come up with some righteousness. "Just give me some time. Just give a stay of execution," you say, "I'll pay it to the uttermost farthing," someone said in the scriptures. And you can have that attitude as well, "I'll start a new life. I'll do things better. I'll kill sin. I won't give into temptation. I won't be angry with my neighbor anymore. Lord, just give me more time and I'll accomplish it."

Well, my friend, that is a heinous offense before Almighty God who says, "My Son has paid it all. Go lost at his feet. Find all in him. Submit to the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ and you too will find the foundation of peace, that immovable, strong, solid, secure foundation of peace and happiness and tranquility all in Christ." The work of righteousness shall be peace and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever. Do you lack that? Do you need that? Do you need that quietness in your soul, that tranquility? When peace like a river is in your soul, when amidst all the tempests that roars in the billows, and all the accusations, there's that peace that passes understanding. "I know whom I have believed," I know whom, not in whom but I know whom I have believed, "that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

Congregation, Christ is the foundation of peace but, secondly, congregation, the Bible tells us that Christ has come preaching peace. This is especially in verse 17, "who came and preached peace to you which were afar off and to them that were nigh." Now this is a remarkable thing that Paul is saying because the Lord Jesus Christ never went to Ephesus, not literally, not physically. During his lifetime he stayed pretty much within the borders of Israel. He never went to Asia Minor. He never stood on the pulpit in Ephesus and preached. But how can Paul then say that, "and came and preached peace"? And he's speaking about the Lord Jesus Christ, that's clear from 15 and 16. It's the same person there, "and came and preached peace to you which were afar off and to them that were nigh."

There's a doctrine here and I wish for you to know it, and that is every time the gospel of free and sovereign grace is preached, do you know who's preaching it? It's not a man, whatever his name is. It's not, it's the Lord Jesus Christ who's here. Oh, he might use the mouth of this one and that one, but it is he who preaches peace. Do you come to church like that, "What will my Lord speak to me tonight? Speak peace unto my soul, O Lord." So often we terminate in the man. We talk to each other during the week and we say, "You know, we had So-and-so or this was our minister for that day." Oh, that we would see and know that Christ preached. What will you do with Christ? He comes. He commissions his messengers and they go and he preaches and he calls. "My sheep hear my voice," my voice, "and they follow me."

So the Lord Jesus Christ comes into any assembly where the truth is opened up and, oh yes, ministers must be faithful because they must give account in the great day of what

have they done with God's truth, what have they done with the gospel, what have they done with the souls entrusted to them. Oh, dear ones, I fear greatly so often, I see your souls and I know that the great day is coming and all your souls will pass by in that great day before the Great White Throne and God will ask me, "What did you say? Did you warn them to flee from the wrath to come? Were you more narrow with the gospel than I was in the scriptures?" It's a great responsibility and we all fail, all preachers fail. Samuel Davies said this, "There is scarcely a sermon that does not leave me with great trepidation in the review. Have I pictured the gospel differently than God would have me to do it?"

O God, have mercy on us preachers but God have mercy on you hearers because Christ is preaching to you from his word and in the gospel, and what that means, congregation, is that these overtures of peace, this peace that he's speaking about even in these very moments, it's Christ speaking to you enemies. He's speaking to you about all that lies in himself. How does the Lord do this? Well, first of all, he opens up the quarrel that lies in our heart against God. He makes room for this peace by showing us that we lack peace, that we need peace, that we don't have peace, that we can't accomplish our own peace. He makes that very clear as we heard this morning, we heard it again tonight, our own corrupt nature which is at enmity and at war with God and with each other. The Lord puts his finger on that. I pray he does that even tonight, that he from heaven puts his finger on your sin and says, "You quarreler with God. Why? What have I done to my vineyard? What more could I have done to you, my vineyard? Why are there only rotten fruit in your life? Fightings. Ragings. Bitterness. Envy."

He uncovers the quarrel but, secondly, congregation, the Holy Spirit comes and Christ in the gospel comes to you and to me and he comes with the rich notes of reconciliation that he is a God to be entreated, a God who will abundantly pardon all and everyone who comes unto him. There is a remarkable verse that you can read and study, I pray you do, Isaiah 27:4 and 5 where the Lord says this to a wicked and rebellious house. This is what he says, "Fury is not in me: who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together. Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me." In other words, the Lord is calling enemies here and he's saying, "Enemy, you have two things here before you. You can either continue in your battle schemes against me, you can lay briers and thorns between you and me," because this is what they would do in ancient times when they had two warring armies, they still do it today, they'd put maybe minefields in between both armies so that this army when it tries to cross this minefield, they'd be blown up, and in ancient times they'd put thorns and briers so that the other side wouldn't be able to come as quickly. They'd do everything they can to keep the enemy at bay and he says, "Sinner, you could do that. You could keep on doing that. But I'll burn those up in a moment. I would go through them, I would burn them together."

Oh, my friend, aren't you scared, aren't you scared? God is coming. He'll burn up every device, every design that you put between you and God. God is not a man that he's bound like we are. What will it take? When will you appear before him? Is he already on his way to you, an enemy of sovereign grace? He can burn up those briers in a second and be right there and say, "Judgment time has come." Or he may make peace with me and he

shall make peace with me. O dear ones, do you see how the Lord comes so close and he says, "I am so easily entreated by sinners. Come, lay hold of my strength." What does that mean? Who is the strength of the Lord? Well, that's the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the strength of Jehovah. Come so near, come so close, so approachable. "Come unto me," he says, "touch the hem of my garment. Come, pour out your heart before me. Come, lay hold on my strength with all your sin, with all your weakness, with all your enmity, with all your backbiting, with all your fighting against the Most High. Come, come, come and lay hold of my strength." And he will make peace with God.

Congregation, so many in the New Testament did exactly that. The woman with the issue of blood, there she came, no strength in herself, life was ebbing away, she had nothing, nothing left. She'd tried everything and she came and she came and she came. She was done with the briars and the thorns. To Christ, to Christ, to Christ she would come. She came in through the crowd until she had the hem of his garment and virtue went out from him, strength went out from him and, oh, what perfect peace this woman had. And so many did exactly that.

Saul on the way to Damascus, light from heaven, the curtain of heaven torn back and there is Jesus Christ with the crown of heaven on his head and he says, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? Why is your heart so at enmity with me? What have I done? What have I done? Why such a quarrel? It's hard for you to kick against the pricks. Why are you casting up all these briars, all these thorns? Why are you fighting and raging against Christ the King?" And Saul was brought down and in those next days he made peace with God. "Let them make peace with me and he shall make peace with me."

Do you see, congregation, what a wonder-working God the Lord is? How easily he is entreated? How merciful? We have such hard thoughts of the Lord. We think that we have to eek out some peace from him and so we come and we bargain with the Lord and we're like the prodigal son and we say, "Lord, make me a hired servant. I'll do this and I'll do that and maybe just a sliver of peace can be granted unto me." And the Lord says, "Take hold of my strength. Take hold of my Son. In him is all strength. He is the rock that none might move. In his death he's come so low that sinners can fall on him and have peace, yea, perfect peace with God, reconciled by the death of the Son with God."

Congregation, he comes preaching peace even this evening. He's after your heart, my unconverted friend. How much longer will you resist? Know this, "Why do the heathen rage and the kingdoms imagine a vain thing? He has set his king upon his holy hill of Zion. Kiss the Son." Kiss the Son, come under him, hear his voice today. It's all in Christ. And know this, congregation, he preaches peace. That means that if you refuse it, if you refuse this peace, you refuse the Son of God in our nature who comes with peace.

Earlier in my ministry, I wondered why it seemed at least so few heard and heeded the gospel and you can become so self-focused as a preacher until it became clear to me that why so few hearing God's voice and refusing God's voice, the Son of God. The Bible says this, "Refuse not him that speaketh." For if they in the old dispensation, the Old Testament refused him that spoke on earth, then they were cast out forevermore. How

much worse will it be for those who refuse the voice that speaks from heaven through the preaching of the word of God and says, "You can't win from me. None can win from me. You can only lose to me and it's best to lose to me in the day of grace." That's a blessed loss.

That's really victory, congregation. That's triumph. That's glorious peace in your soul as we hope to see in our third and final point, but let us first sing 230, 4, 5 and 6. "To us thy mercy now afford and show us thy salvation, Lord. Yea, thou would answer us in peace if from our folly we will cease." 230, 4, 5 and 6.

"To us Thy mercy now afford
And show us Thy salvation, Lord;
Yea, Thou wilt answer us in peace,
If from our folly we will cease.

The Lord's salvation will appear
To men of faith and godly fear,
And glory in our land shall dwell
When we shall heed God's precepts well.

Now truth agrees with mercy mild,
Now law and peace are reconciled;
Behold the truth from earth arise,
With justice shining from the skies."

Jesus, the sinner's peace: the foundation of peace, the preaching of peace, and lastly and briefly, the content of peace.

Congregation, in the words of our text there at the very beginning, this is actually what Paul starts with and we've saved it for last because this is the fullness. We read there, "For he is our peace," and literally it says there in the original, "For himself is our peace." That means it's all in him. He is the sum and substance of it. It all centers in him. It all sums up in him. He is our peace. That's more than that he makes peace or preaches peace, though that's true obviously because our text says that as well, but he is peace. That means all peace is in him. His name really is peace with God, and you can find peace in nothing else save in him and you need him.

O dear ones, are you looking for peace with God? It's not in works. It's not in man. It's in God, in Christ and in Christ alone. Everything is in him. If you need peace, you need him. You must have him. You must hold him. You must clutch him. You must embrace him. You see, congregation, what it comes down to is as simple as this: the quarrel, that's us, the peace, that's him. He is the peace. He's the very content of peace.

You see, the Bible calls him a covenant for the people, and covenant is ultimately that promise of peace that lies in God and that he distributes, and when he distributes it, he makes Christ to be all. "Thou shalt make him a covenant to the people." His person is

peace, that wonderful person of the Son of God. He is peace. He is my peace. He is your peace, dear believer. He it is. His offices are peace. He's a prophet of peace, a priest of peace, a king of peace. He's the true Melchizedek, king of righteousness and king of peace. His states are peace. His humiliation secures peace. His exaltation hands out peace. His benefits, all his benefits, can you list all his benefits? Forgiveness of sins. Peace that endures. Reconciliation with God. Adoption into the family of God. An inheritance incorruptible and undefiled. A family on earth. An intercessor in heaven. A peace in my soul that when everything around me is in commotion and seems to be topsy-turvy, my peace isn't in a feeling, my peace isn't in a mindset, my peace is more than a doctrine, my peace is Jesus. The sinner's peace. He it is. If he's not there, I have no peace. When he's there, I have peace, I have true peace, I have real peace within. He's my peace.

Oh congregation, are you in that "our" for he is our peace? Why not? Why not? Do you think these people are better than you? Do you think that these people for whom he is peace are such holy people? Such great people? Such exercised people? Such wonderful people? No. They're all sinners. They're all terrible sinners but Christ is their Christ and Christ is their peace and that's how we go on. In the midst of a war, in the midst of a world at war, in the midst of conflicts, strife, "My Jesus, I need thee. I need thee to be my peace."

Well, my friend, don't refuse his peace today. He is everything. You need him. We all need him. That's our greatest need is to be reconciled unto God through this Prince of Peace, Immanuel. When the Lord himself stands in your midst and says to you, whoever you are, "I am peace for sinners," while he proffers peace, hear his voice today and you'll say like a poet once said,

"Coming to Jesus, my Savior, I found
Wonderful peace, wonderful peace;
Storms in their fury may rage all around,
I have peace, sweet peace.

Peace like a river, so deep and so broad,
Wonderful peace, wonderful peace;
Resting my soul on the bosom of God,
I have peace, sweet peace.

Gone is the battle that once raged within,
Wonderful peace, wonderful peace;
Jesus has saved me and cleansed me from sin,
I have peace, sweet peace."

Amen.

Great peace-securer, peace-proclaimer and peace himself, the Lord Jesus Christ, come, we pray and overcome all resistance in sinners' hearts. Win the battle in grace before it's

too late and show thyself to peaceless souls, to restless souls tonight, that in Jesus the sinner can find peace all for the cross's sake where the enmity was slain and the enmity was abolished. O Lord, help thy people as we continue to struggle along life's way. From our side there's so much that goes against this peace, we confess it, Lord. Our hearts are so bent and addicted to quarrels but when once thou dost give this peace which passes all understanding and Satan may rage and our lusts may tempt, but thy peace is never far. Help us to submit to thy perfect peace and we ask this in Jesus' name alone. Amen.

Shall we sing in conclusion #280, 3 and 4. "Yea, the Lord is full of mercy and compassion for distress, slow to anger and abundant in his grace and tenderness." 3 and 4 of 280 in our doxology.

"Yea, the Lord is full of mercy
And compassion for distress,
Slow to anger and abundant
In his grace and tenderness.

He will not be angry always,
Nor will he forever chide;
Though we oft have sinned against him,
Still his love and grace abide."

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be and abide with you forever. Amen.