

GOD’S PEACE: AN ANTIDOTE AGAINST ENMITIES

GOLDEN TEXT

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” (John 14:27).

USEFUL PRACTICE

Peace, as a fruit of the Spirit, does not cause enmities and dissensions.

SCRIPTURE READING

Ephesians 2:11-17

11 - Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)—

12 - remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.

13 - But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 - For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,

15 - by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace,

16 - and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

17 - He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To understand that true peace can only be found in Jesus.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- I. **To show** that after receiving the peace of Christ, the believer must pass it on to other people;
- II. **To explain** that there are three types of enmity and their aim is to destroy the unity of the Church of Christ;
- III. **To know** that we have the mission to proclaim the gospel and to do this we need to live in peace with everyone.

INTRODUCTION

In today's lesson, we will study peace as a fruit of the Spirit and enmity as a fruit of the flesh. Led by the old nature man cannot feel the peace that Jesus Christ offers us. This peace does not depend on situations and circumstances. Even though we live in a violent society, we can have peace, because the serenity we have in our hearts is a fruit of the Spirit and does not depend on circumstances or financial resources (Gal. 5:22).

I – THE PEACE THAT EXCEEDS ALL UNDERSTANDING

1. Peace. We can define peace as a state of tranquility and inner stillness that does not depend on external circumstances. In Greek, the term peace is *eirene* and refers to *unity and harmony*. We live in a society where violence has made many victims and taken away the tranquility of the people, making people sick. Lately, we have witnessed an increase in the so-called panic disorder, that is, an anxiety disorder that leads to an uncontrollable fear, although there is no imminent danger. The person affected by this illness loses quietude. Whoever is being impacted by this ailment needs treatment by a psychiatrist, therapy, and the affection and understanding of the family and the church.

2. Peace with God. How can we be in peace with God? There is only one way to be in peace with our Creator: through our justification. Justification occurs when we, by faith, receive Jesus as our only and sufficient Savior. Then we are declared righteous before God (Rom. 5: 1). When we receive Jesus, the enmity existing between us and God is broken; we are reconciled to the Father and begin to enjoy full peace and fellowship with Him (2 Cor. 5:18-20). Our justification, reconciliation and peace with God are only possible through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ

(Isaiah 53: 5; Eph. 2: 13-17).

3. Peace promoter. The believer who has already received the peace of God in his heart must share this peace with all those who are afflicted, becoming an ambassador of peace (2 Cor. 5:20). The peace granted by the Spirit is not only for our well-being, but also for the good of our neighbor. We cannot forget that loving our neighbor is a commandment of the Father (Mt 22:39). Anyone who has experienced justification and reconciliation with God becomes a peacemaker (Mt 5:9). He does not live in strife and quarrels, does not divide churches, and does not mistreat people. Isaac was a true peacemaker, a man of peace. Even though he was harmed by his neighbors who stopped his wells, he did not quarrel, but sought reconciliation (Gen. 26:19-25). Conflicts, whether in or outside the Church, are the result of the Adamic nature, but those who live according to the Spirit have already crucified their flesh and now seek to live peacefully with all (Rom. 12:18).

II - ENMITIES AND STRIFE, ABSENCE OF PEACE

1. Three types of enmity. In Greek, the term *enmity* is *echthra*. This word serves to identify three types of enmity. Let's see: enmity toward God (Rom. 8:7), enmity among people (Luke 23:12) and hostility between groups and people (Ephesians 2:14-16). In Galatians Paul presents enmity, strife, and disputes as works of the flesh (Gal. 5:20).

2. Enmity and pride. Enmity, as a whole, is the result of pride. Therefore the Lord hates a proud heart (Proverbs 6:16, 17). When the Christian begins to believe that he is superior to others, he becomes a "sower" of enmities and strife. In the Church of Christ, all are servants, regardless of their gifts and talents. Paul shows that in Jesus Christ all are equal: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:28). Enmities and divisions are a "product" of the flesh, of a sinful nature. God forbids partiality and all sorts of enmities. Therefore, those who practice such actions cannot please God (Acts 10:34; James 2:8, 9). A believer who acts like this is unspiritual and must repent of his sins (1 Corinthians 3:3).

3. Enmity and faction. Enmities often end up generating factions and divisions in the church. Many are not content with not getting along well with people and end up causing others to not have fellowship with one another either. In the Corinthian church, the sisters and brothers began to get divided and rally around Paul, Apollos, and Cephas. Some said that they were of Paul, while others, of Apollos (1 Cor. 1:12). Paul ends the argument and enmities by asking his brothers, "Is Christ divided? Was

Paul crucified for you?" (1 Cor. 1:13). The apostle exhorts them to the fact that we belong to Christ alone. And if we belong to Him we cannot agree with enmities and factions. Enmity is the work of the flesh and its aim is to destroy unity in the Lord's Church, but a believer who has the fruit of the Spirit seeks the good of all, trying to maintain the bond of perfection, reaching out to help and treating all with Love and respect (Col. 3:13, 14). May you, as a son of God, put on tender mercies and kindness as recommended in the Scriptures (Col. 3:12).

III – LET US LIVE IN PEACE

1. God's favor. Paul exhorts the Gentiles to always be grateful to God, for they were wild olive trees and were grafted into the olive tree (Rom 11:17). He urges the Jews not to forget that they were placed by God in the world in order to bless other nations (Gen. 12:3). The apostle was showing that, in Christ, Gentiles and Jews are equal. Therefore, they must live in peace and unity. Let us live in peace with all and let us never forget that we have been reached by God's grace, because it is this divine favor that leads us to love our neighbor and live in peace and unity (Psalm 133:1).

2. The cross of Christ. The cross is one of the best-known symbols of Christianity, because, through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus, we have been reconciled to God. If Christ had not died on the cross for our sins, we would be separated from the presence of God forever; we would not cease to be his enemies. Jesus died on the cross for our sake, and even in the face of such a cruel death, He did not open His mouth to complain or utter offensive words against His executioners (Is 53: 7, John 3:16). Jesus stood still during his judgment and punishment. He proved to have peace and emotional balance even experiencing such a terrible situation. He knew the reason for his mission and that his sacrifice was necessary for us to be able to get reconciled to God.

3. Our mission. Jesus came into the world on a mission: to die on the cross for our sins. By ascending to heaven, He also gave us a mission (Mt 28.19, 20). To fulfill this mission, we must live in peace with all. Let us announce to the world that only Jesus can give us true peace, because He is the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6).

CONCLUSION

The peace we deal with in this lesson is a fruit of the Spirit. Even in the midst of adversity, we can have peace, for it is an inner quietude that comes from God. May you be a herald of the peace of Christ, whether in the Church or outside of it.