



PEACE
Fruits of the Spirit
Galatians 5:22-23

This Week's Message
April 14, 2024

The Fruits of the Spirit
Peace

Peace I leave with you...

John 14:27
(New International Version)

Sunday's Scripture Reading
Galatians 5:22-23; John 14:27

²²*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*
²³*gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*

²⁷*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.*

*Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.*

Francis of Assisi

Peace demands the most heroic labor and the most difficult sacrifice. It demands greater heroism than war. It demands greater fidelity to the truth and a much more perfect purity of conscience.

Thomas Merton

On Sunday, I will continue the series of messages based on the Fruits of the Spirit, which come from Galatians 5:22-23. This week's topic is *peace*.

Peace is a very elusive commodity in our world. Perhaps it has always been so, but it seems to me that people have more anxiety and are more ill at ease than in previous generations. So many people lack peace in their lives. They are so stressed, so anxious, and so worried, that peace seems totally foreign to them.

Part of whether or not we find peace is, I think, in our perspective. Some people find bad in everything in life. No matter how good life may be, they only see the negative. Others find good, no matter how bad their circumstances. Then there are those who just keep their head down and try to get through each day with as little difficulty as possible, but never really enjoying the richness that life has to offer.

Another part of finding peace is in learning to distinguish what is important in life. There are some things that are simply not worth the time and effort of worry. There are a few foundational matters to life, and they are

Questions to Consider –

* What would you list as the biggest barriers to us finding a sense of peace in our own lives? What do you think can bring a sense of peace to our lives? Is there anything we can do to foster a sense of peace?

* There is often an absence of peace between people. There is a great deal of conflict that plagues relationships. What do you think is the primary source of conflict in interpersonal relationships, and what can be done to bring peace to those relationships?

* Peace is not just an individual pursuit, or something that is sought between individuals, but has a large-scale aspect as well. Take a look at the amount of violence and unrest in our world. Is it possible for us, as individuals, to have any impact when it comes to bringing about peace on a global scale?

* As we are so very connected to one another these days – by our phones and through our use of social media, as just two examples – is it possible to have a sense of peace in our lives? Are we too connected? Is there too much information that flows into our lives every day to allow us to feel peace?

worthy of not only our time and effort, but also the investment of our emotions. Learning to distinguish between what is worthy of the investment of our time, effort, and emotions and what is not, is one of the most important elements in whether or not we will find peace in our lives. I will confess there are matters that capture my attention and cause me to worry, even though they shouldn't, but they do. I know it is more important for me to worry about the well-being and the health of my family rather than matters of much less importance, but I'm not always successful when it comes to worrying about what is worth worrying about, and what is not.

The early church was full of conflict. In fact, it was conflict that brought much of the New Testament into being.

But it's not just *personal peace* that is elusive today; there is also a lack of peace on a larger scale. We live in a dangerous world, where violence and war dominate the news headlines. Our nation often becomes the broker for peace between other nations and various warring factions, but for all of our efforts, it seems that peace is as elusive as ever. The great passage from Isaiah 2:4, reminds us that *He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.* And yet, while mankind has dreamed of peace for millennia, it continues to remain very elusive.

Beyond the lack of peace that we feel in our own lives and the lack of peace between nations and political factions, there is also the lack of peace in interpersonal relationships. As we read through the gospels, a recurring theme is the lack of peace in human relationships. Jesus found himself in constant conflict with the religious leaders of the day. His disciples were often in conflict with one another. The early church was full of conflict. In fact, it was conflict that brought much of the New Testament into being. The letters of the New Testament were written, in large measure, as an attempt to settle the conflicts that were taking place in the churches. Without that conflict, much of the New Testament might be missing.

Well, there is a lot to talk about when we come to the topic of peace. I hope to see you Sunday, as we tackle this subject.