

Peace With God

'You're all I want.'
(Psalm 73:25)

Peter Walker
www.1peter1three.weebly.com

To Jesus

Introduction

The purpose of life, for every man, woman and child, is to reach out and find God. To know him – now and forevermore.

‘God created all people, so that they would search for him, reach out for him and find him.’ (Acts 17:25-27)

And this last verse ends by saying: ***‘And he is not far from each one of us.’***

Is it time in your life to seek God, and find him? Is it time in your life to make peace with God, now and forevermore?

Jesus said, ***‘I am the door...’*** (John 10:9)

1. Peace on Earth

Peace with God starts here on earth. I forget this sometimes.

Do you know the story of God and Jesus?
Let me share it with you now:

God created the world. All the beauty and order that we see in creation comes from a Designer God. Life is stunning, beyond comprehension and understanding, and this because it has been breathed forth by God himself.

And people – you and me – are God’s deepest and most precious creation. In fact, God made people – you – in his own image. This is why you have ***‘eternity in your heart’***, and why you have a spirit and a soul that are completely unique from all other people.¹

So having made this beautiful life, God gave people ‘choice’ – choice to come to God, or choice to walk away from God. This is the essence of any true and loving relationship. It is chosen, not forced.

¹ Genesis 1:27, Ecclesiastes 3:11

What humankind did was choose to walk away from God. We chose 'sin' – in other words, to live for ourselves, to do what we should not do. This sin brought death and darkness into God's creation. We see it all around us. We see it in our own hearts and actions.

Maybe you have some sin in your life – in your present or your past – that weighs you down?

God did not abandon us in our sin. He did not leave us to the fate of death and decay. God himself, holy and true, put a plan of rescue in place. Here is how it happened:

God himself came to earth in the form of man. He left heaven and came down. His name was Jesus. His very name meant: **'God with us.'**¹ The purpose of his mission was to pay for our sin and free us from the curse of death – now and forevermore.

For this reason, when Jesus was born a baby, angels appeared in the sky and sang: **'Peace on earth.'**² God had come to make peace with us, and to defeat death itself.

¹ Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23

² Luke 2:14

Our sin brought death to the world. Sin is death. Death is the very picture of sin. For this reason Jesus lived a perfect and holy life, and then did a most spiritual thing that only God could do. He took our sin on himself, on his soul, and carried it with him to the grave. He put sin to death. And with it, he put *death* to death. Jesus allowed himself to die, carrying our sin and death with him.

And then he did what every heart and soul cries out for: He rose again from death. He came alive again!

In Jesus, sin and death are defeated. In Jesus, you are forgiven of your sin, and freed from death for all eternity. He is the door to a new heart, a new spirit, a new life.

‘Jesus Christ defeated death and brought life and immortality to light.’

(2 Timothy 1:10)

So how does peace with God start here and now in your life, in my life?

Well, after Jesus had come alive again, risen from death, he told us that he would go back to heaven, but he would pour out his Holy Spirit on the world. Jesus is now available to everyone by his Holy Spirit. Jesus is everywhere – and in everything – by his Holy

Spirit. We can now, by faith, allow Jesus to come into our own hearts, our minds, our lives, and be with us. We can have his presence, his friendship and his peace in our souls even now.

Do you want this? Is it time you came to God, to Jesus, and allowed him to pour his life into your life? To save you?

Do you want peace with God, now and forevermore?

2. True Treasure

If you can lay your head down at night, knowing that you have peace with God through Jesus Christ, you can sleep well. You hold life's highest – only – true treasure.

'Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crops fail and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior.' (Habakkuk 3:17-18)

This Scripture is so challenging, and so powerful. In our modern day these words might be summed up like this:

'Though I am out of money, out of savings, no food, no job, I will be at peace in the Lord. I will have joy in him.'

Now, there have been times in my life when I was in disaster like that, but I could not say that I was at peace with God. In fact, at that time, the pressure of my situation was because of my sin. I was running from the Lord, I was hiding from him. And as my life circumstances crumbled around me, I knew it was God calling me back to him. He was calling me to make peace with him, and hold

him as my highest treasure.

I whispered this prayer, quoting Psalm 27:4:

‘One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.’

I had got to a point where I desired to be right with God even more than I desired for my circumstances to get right. I knew that if I was right with God, no matter my circumstances, I could sleep at night, because I would be safe in the arms of the Father, and forgiven of my sin.

‘God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.’
(Psalm 46:1-3)

I wanted to get right with God, and build my life on *that* Rock. I knew deep in my soul that if my sins were forgiven, and I was sinning no more, hiding no more, I could lie down and sleep in peace no matter my money situation, my health, my job, relationships,

mortgage, pension...

'I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.'

(Psalm 4:8)

Are you weary? Are you tired of running, sinning, living a double life? Do you feel it's too late to come back to God?

It's not too late!

Look at this incredible invitation of Jesus, that is true for you right now:

'Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.'

(Revelation 3:19-20)

My friend, the first call of Jesus is for us to turn our back on our sin. To walk away from it. In fact the word *'repent'* means to *'turn'*. We cannot *'turn'* to Jesus without turning away from our sin. It's the same turn. For this reason Jesus said,

'Repent and believe.' (Mark 1:15)

It's important to understand that repentance is not getting ourselves clean or perfect. We cannot do that. It is a practical step, however, with a sincere heart. It *is* action. It is taking a new road, following a new leader.

There may be something specific that comes to your mind when we talk about sin, and the need to repent. Is there?

A very common sin of man right now is pornography. It is everywhere. It offers itself on all our devices, then gets hold of our minds and thoughts and actions. Is this something you struggle with?

You can repent of this. You can whisper a prayer to Jesus right now to say you are sorry for this, and ask him to forgive you. You can then take action. It won't be easy, but Jesus will help you if you put your mind and heart to the challenge.

You can delete 'friends' and contacts on your phone and computer that should not be there. You can delete messages and block numbers. You can delete – if you need to – your social media accounts, or some of them. You can decide that you will not visit websites, or even look twice at something that crosses your screen or path. It is a battle! Look what Job said:

‘I made a covenant with my eyes to not look lustfully at a young woman.’

(Job 31:1)

This is a lifestyle, not a *1-and-done*. This is why John the Baptist told people to ***‘keep with repentance’***,¹ and why Jesus told people to take up their cross – engage the battle – every day.

‘Then Jesus said to them: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.” (Luke 9:23)

A coach in school used to tell us, *‘The best defense is offense.’* In other words, when you are actively on the ‘attack’, well, you don’t need to be defending your goal because you are not near it. The same applies to following Jesus. When we are actively, daily, following Jesus, we are in a position of ‘winning’. It is when we stop actively following Jesus, that we become vulnerable to sin, discouragement, confusion, guilt.

We will look at how to actively follow Jesus in the next section. But let’s draw this chapter

¹ Matthew 3:8

to a close by coming back to the truth that peace with God is our highest treasure. Look at what Jesus said about the 'worth' of finding peace with God:

'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.'
(Matthew 13:44)

The apostle Peter also refers to our faith as ***'more precious than gold.'*** (1 Peter 1:7)

When we have peace with God through Jesus Christ, we have and hold the highest prize!

3. Actively Following Jesus

Jesus stepped out of heaven onto the earth. Born a baby the same way all babies are born, and then growing – with growing pains – the way we all do. He truly stepped into our reality.

We meet Jesus by his Holy Spirit, the same way we meet each other. Although we cannot see the Spirit, we can speak to him.

If you have not taken that first step of meeting Jesus, if you have not spoken to him yet, you can now. If you believe in your heart that he is alive, that he is here by his Spirit, you can whisper these words to him now:

Dear Jesus, thank you for loving me. Thank you for coming to the world to save me.

Thank you for dying on the cross for my sin, and forgiving me.

I want to know you. I want you to come into my heart and my life by your Holy Spirit. Help me to turn away from my sin, and follow you each day. Amen.

Did you just say this prayer? Was this the first time you took this step of faith? Look

what Jesus promises you:

‘Anyone who hears my words and believes has eternal life and will not be condemned. They have crossed over from death to life.’ (John 5:24)

You are now safe in God’s arms. You have received Jesus into your life, and he is with you. You are saved for all eternity.

This is an incredible moment in your history! Jesus tells us that in heaven there is rejoicing when a person repents and believes in him.¹

Jesus has saved you! However, we still find ourselves here in the world, right? We are not yet in heaven, though we will cross into heaven one day. But while we are here, saved by Christ, we are walking a new path. Jesus called it the ***‘narrow path’***.² Like any narrow path it is challenging to walk. But when we know that Jesus is on this path with us, and that it leads to heaven itself, well, we *can* walk it!

So how do we now ‘actively’ follow Jesus? Let me give you here a very simple **1-2-3**,

¹ Luke 15:7

² Matthew 7:13-14

but then I would encourage you, after you finish this book, to read another short book called, '**First Steps With Jesus**'. It is free to read in PDF, and on the APP (1Peter1:3). You will find it on the BOOKS tab on this website: www.1peter1three.weebly.com

But here are 3 steps to get going right away:

1. Read the Bible every day

I personally read one chapter of the Bible each day, and I take the weekends off. I would recommend you begin with the gospel of **MARK**, and then keep reading!¹

2. Pray and Worship

I love worship music. It helps me to just sing and pray to the Lord, and to listen to him.² The book in the Bible called, 'PSALMS', is basically a book of prayers. That is very helpful, too.

We learn about Jesus by reading the Bible, but we are in a living relationship *with* Jesus. We can talk to him. Worship him. Listen to him.

¹ I recommend an easy/accurate translation of the Bible, for example the NIV (*New International Version*)

² Search for Christian Worship Music online, and make a playlist of your favorite songs!

3. Go to a good church

What I mean by a 'good' church is one that preaches the true message of the Bible – and the more you read the Bible, the more you will know if they are teaching what's in it! Also, good leaders live what they preach. Are the pastors true in their marriages? Is there joy, peace, holiness and yet freedom in Jesus?

As I note above, please do read the free book, ***'First Steps With Jesus'***. This will give you a little more support in your new walk of faith. It will give more details on staying true in your personal walk with Jesus, and yet also meeting with other Christians for support and growth.

4. Peace With God

‘Jesus said, ‘I am the door and anyone who comes through me will be saved. They will come in and go out and find pasture.’ (John 10:9)

I have been focusing in this short book on the call of Jesus to us, the weary. His tender heart toward us all. He wept when people would not listen to him. He wept when he felt our own sadness. This is the picture and the experience of Christ, *‘God with us.’*¹

However, there is another side of the creation story, the full history. God has made all of us with a purpose, and that is to seek him, to know him, to make peace with him.² And there will be a day each one of us stands before Jesus:

‘We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body...’ (2 Corinthians 5:10)

Jesus himself often referred to judgment day with strong words of warning:

¹ Matthew 11:28, Luke 19:42, John 11:35, Matthew 1:23

² Acts 17:25-27

'I tell you, whoever publicly acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God. But whoever disowns me before others will be disowned before the angels of God.' (Luke 12:8-9)

As you read the Bible, and know Jesus better, you will see a deep balance between his tenderness towards us, his grace and forgiveness, and also his call to honest, pure living. Both sides of God are true, and to be known: the grace and judgment of Jesus.

As we mature in our faith, we grow deeper in our understanding of God's grace towards us, the amazing forgiveness and freedom poured out over us daily by his Spirit. But we also grow deeper in our understanding of the importance of being true in our faith - in public as well as in private.¹ Jesus is strong and serious about being true and faithful in our walk with him.

Jesus said, ***'What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this***

¹ Matthew 6:4,6,18

adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.' (Mark 8:36-38)

What is a soul worth? What is peace with God worth? Well, Jesus considered it worth his own suffering and death. Jesus paid a high price to make peace with God available to us.

'With his blood Jesus purchased people for God.' (Revelation 5:9)

If you have stepped through the door of Jesus Christ in faith, you now have and hold the highest treasure that God offers us: peace with God. You have eternal life.

Let's grow in this! Let's walk the narrow path each day, as the Spirit leads us, as the Scriptures teach us. Let's deepen in our understanding of this treasure, until one day we cross the river and see Jesus face to face.

'I pray that you will grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and that you will know this love that surpasses knowledge...'
(Ephesians 3:14-19)

Thank you for taking time to read this book!

On the following pages there is space to journal your thoughts, write down verses you read in the Bible, etc.

For more free devotionals, videos and books, please visit:

www.1peter1three.weebly.com



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‘Jesus said, ‘The peace I give you is not the same as the peace the world gives you.’

(John 14:27)