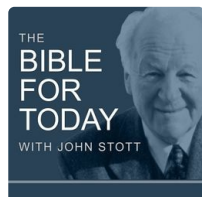


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Peace With God - Part 2

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The Bible for Today with John Stott - Premier

We can long for peace between nations, in our jobs, in our homes and in our relationships. But John Stott shows us that we will never be at peace with one another until we are at peace with God through Jesus Christ.

Transcript

The ordinary people like us who were made by God, like God, for God, are now trying to live without God. There is the fundamental human tragedy, and it's not only the human tragedy, it's also the human trauma. It explains our anguish, our meaninglessness, our lostness.

Listen, if we don't know God, our Creator who made us in his own image, to know him and love him and serve him if we don't know God, we're lost. Welcome to the Bible for today with John Stott. As the most respected clergyman in the world, according to Billy Graham, and one of the 100 most influential people in the world, according to Time magazine, there's perhaps been no one who has raised the standard of biblical teaching in the 20th century as John Stott.

An extremely humble man, known affectionately to many as Uncle John, he was a pastor to pastors and a servant of the Global Church. From his home church of all souls, Langen Place in central London, he preached over 600 sermons. And during this his centenary, we're bringing you some of his very best teaching from nearly 60 years of ministry.

This week we looked at the subject of peace and saw how we long for peace from external conflict and discord. We saw that it's impossible to find peace if we're looking for it in the wrong place, and how it's possible to feel a peace with ourselves but not be at peace with God. This week John Stott concludes his message by reminding us why we are unable to find true peace on our own.

You'll find it helpful to have your Bible open to Roman Romans chapter 5. The root cause of human restlessness is neither physical, nor mental, nor emotional, nor is it situational,

the job, the marriage, the neighbor next door, etc. No, the root cause of human restlessness is moral and spiritual. It's conflict with God.

There are people in church this morning who have no peace because they are at conflict with God. While you are in that state, you will never find peace or the peace you find will be very superficial indeed. For if God exists, and we who are Christians, of course, are convinced that He does, if the hind and beyond everything that we can see and hear and touch, there is an ultimate personal loving reality we call God.

If this God made us in His own image and likeness in order that we should know Him and love Him and serve Him, then of course we shall never find ourselves until we find Him. Of course, we shall never experience peace or integration as human beings while we are alienated from our Creator. Of course not.

It's ludicrous to suppose that we could. If those things are true, the fundamental human tragedy can be very simply stated. It is an ordinary people like us who were made by God, like God, for God, and are trying to live without God.

There is the fundamental human tragedy. Then it's not only the human tragedy, it's also the human trauma. It explains our anguish, our meaninglessness, our lostness.

Listen, if we don't know God, our Creator who made us in His own image to know Him and love Him and serve Him if we don't know God, we're lost. We're aliens in His world. We're like vagrants with no fixed abode.

We're displaced persons, stateless. Well, I'd bet some plankton, floating, drifting, purposely on the ocean of time. Or in the plain language of the Bible, the wicked, that means us, who's rebelled against God, the wicked, are like the tossing sea that cannot rest, whose waves cast up, mire, and mud.

There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked. There is for those who are in conflict with God. You see, on the one hand, there is our rebellion against God.

Sin isn't just breaking isolated commandments. I hope there isn't anybody here who imagines that sin is just breaking isolated commandments. Sin is a proud refusal to acknowledge our dependence upon our Creator.

Sin is a self-centered assertion against God. Sin is making a bid for my own autonomy. It's rebellion against God.

And then on the other hand, there is God's judgment upon us. What the Bible uninhibitedly calls his wrath, his anger. But God's anger is not like our anger.

Our anger is full of hurt, pride, full of malice and venom. There's nothing like that in the anger of God. God's anger is holy, anger.

It is implacable, settled, antagonism to evil. The wrath of God is his unwillingness to compromise with evil or to condone it. So you see, our rebellion against God on the one hand and God's judgment upon us on the other are the causes of our alienation and of our loss of peace.

Now, it's only when you begin to see this that stares us in the face this reality. It's only then that we are ready to appreciate the simply marvelous possibility of peace with God. Do you know it? Peace with God.

Peace with God is not just laying down the arms of our rebellion. That includes that. It's more than that.

Peace with God is God turning away from his own wrath and receiving us and adopting us into his family as his beloved children. I tell you my friends, there is no peace like peace with God. It's peace with God that leads to the peace of God that passes all understanding.

When our judge becomes our father, when our creator becomes our friend and we lift our eyes to him and seek his face and we see upon his face not the old frown of displeasure. How about the new smile of forgiveness? And he lifts the light of his continent upon us and he gives us peace. True peace is peace with God.

It leads to peace with others across the barriers of race and rank and color and culture and class, or that it begins as peace with God. It leads to an inner tranquility, even in the midst of calamities and in the midst of all the anguish of the world. There is an inner serenity through peace with God.

It tells us that we are no longer aliens in a far country. At last we have come home. It is a very foundation of our humanness.

You cannot be a human being if you don't have peace with God, your creator. That's the first thing I spent long on it, but it's so important. True peace is peace with God.

That's where it begins. Secondly, true peace is peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Did you know that Jesus is portrayed in the New Testament as history's greatest peacemaker? He is called the Prince of Peace, one of his great names. At his birth the good news was proclaimed. And peace on earth as a result of the goodwill of God towards men as that familiar Christmas message rarely means.

That is death we were told in the scripture that Tom read earlier. He made peace through the blood of his cross. That is the great purpose of his death was to make peace between God and man and between human beings and one another.

Because on the cross in that awful God forsaken darkness Jesus Christ made himself one with us in our sinful humanity. He accepted responsibility for our guilt. He stepped into our shoes.

He bore in his own innocent person the condemnation that we deserved and only he could do it because he was a unique person. Only he is God the eternal son who became a human being and it is as God and man that he bore our sin, guilt and judgment in his own body. Because he was condemned we may be justified.

Justification as we saw two weeks ago is our acceptance as righteous sin God's sight. That is possible only because of what Christ did when he bore our sin and guilt on the cross. As was predicted of him in Isaiah 53 he was wounded for our transgressions.

He was crushed by our iniquities. The punishment which brought us peace was upon him and with his stripes or wounds we have been healed. The Christian who has been to the cross and in great humility at the foot of the cross has received a full and a free forgiveness.

Not because of anything we have done but because of the sheer mercy of God in Jesus Christ. The Christian will never stray far from the cross. True the remistory is in the cross that our minds cannot fully fathom how it was possible for the one person Jesus to be both God and man simultaneously or how God can have been in Christ when he made Christ sin for us simultaneously.

There are mysteries the human mind cannot fully fathom but the historical evidence is there in the words and deeds of Jesus and it is this mystery that the church has always believed. Peace with God is through our Lord Jesus Christ. That's why friend if you want peace with God it's the Jesus Christ you must come.

Snow God just coming to the church the church can't give you peace. Snow God coming to clergy we can't give you peace. You've got to come to Jesus Christ.

He made peace by the blood of his cross and it's only there at the cross that you can find peace with God. Hence our responsibility to to make Christ known to proclaim the good news of peace. The Christian soldiers feet wear shoes that are called a readiness to preach the good news of peace because our beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who publishes peace.

But as we do so we're not like the false prophets in our testament days who said peace peace when there was no peace and who didn't take the rebellion of Israel or the judgment of God with deus seriousness. Now we proclaim peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We proclaim Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man.

We proclaim the cross is the only righteous foundation upon which a righteous God can accept the unrighteous without either compromising his righteousness or condoning our

unrighteousness. That's what we proclaim Christ and him crucified. So first true peace is peace with God.

Second it's peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ who died as a peacemaker. And thirdly it's peace with God through Christ which we have now having been justified by faith we have peace with God. What a tremendous statement that is.

Would that every one of the thousand or say in church this morning could say it from the depths of their heart conviction. Now I think we need to break this down a little bit. Consider first that this is not an invitation it is an affirmation.

Now I know and some of you may have different English Bibles that there are actually two readings in the Greek text. There is only one letter between the two. One makes the verb a subjunctive and would be translated notice as peace with God.

The other would make the verb an indicative and would therefore be translated. We have peace with God. There is only one letter's distinction between the two readings and they are fairly evenly attested.

Nevertheless I venture to say that the context demands an affirmation because what Paul is doing at the beginning of the Romans 5 is describing the consequences of justification. He says having been justified by faith, having been declared righteous in God's sight through Jesus Christ we have peace with God. It's the consequence of our justification.

In theological language if you relish that kind of thing then we may say that justification includes reconciliation but if you prefer basic English then we say it is because God has accepted us that we are now his friends. It's not an invitation it's an affirmation. B it's not a feeling it's a fact.

My text doesn't say being justified by faith. We feel we are at peace with God. It doesn't say that.

It says we have peace with God. It's not a feeling it's a fact. Peace with God is not an emotional state of religious euphoria.

If it were we would be in a very precarious position since our emotions have been flow like the tides of the sea. But it isn't a feeling it is a relationship which is a stable relationship because God is established through Jesus Christ and our fluctuating feelings cannot alter it. Peace with God is an objective fact based upon an objective event the death of Jesus Christ and it's these objectivities, these rocks.

If our feet stand firmly upon them which will rescue us from the shifting sands of subjectivity and baptism as we witnessed it just now there's witness to the objective fact. It says God loves you. Christ died for you once you were rebels under the judgment of

God.

But you have been washed. You have been sanctified. You have been justified in the name of our Lord Jesus and by the spirit of our God.

It's not a feeling it's a fact. See it's not a promise. It's a possession.

In other words it's not something future you're going to get one day. It's a present privileged possession. When you talk about peace lots of people think about heaven.

And when somebody's died in Jesus Christ we say to one another he or she is at peace. And for the Christian that's true. You can read it in the Apocrypha as well as in the Bible.

If you've ever read the wisdom of Solomon you know the word sometimes read at funerals the souls of the righteous and in the hand of God no torment shall touch them in the eyes of the foolish they seem to have died but they are at peace. Heaven is the perfection of peace. Peace with God peace with one another peace with ourselves as we sing in the hymn it is enough earth struggles soon shall cease and Jesus call us to heaven's perfect peace.

But that's not what Paul is talking about in this text. Paul says being justified by saying we have peace with God not we're going to get it when we get to heaven. We have it already now.

Friend have you grasped this that the Christian life the life in Christ on earth is an anticipation of the life of heaven. Have you grasped that when we come to Jesus Christ heaven's joys become ours already at least in embryo. The allegiance like to say peace is an eschatological blessing.

That means it's a blessing of the eschaton of the end time a blessing of heaven that is already ours if we are in Christ. So we have no fear of death we have no fear of judgment we have only a confident expectation of the perfection of peace that we already enjoy now. So it's time just to recapitulate and then stop.

True peace is peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ the peace maker and we have it now if we're in Christ if we've come to Christ. So here is a great Christian affirmation. Friend if you have no peace with God you need to come to Christ and you need to come to the cross of Christ it's the only place where you can find peace.

True peace is peace with God through Jesus Christ and you can have it now. And if we are Christians then here is a Christian affirmation to ponder, to learn by heart and to believe. Maybe you'd like to say it as I hope to during these coming days often to myself.

We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Whenever our memory awakens and awakens our conscience and we recall some horrible thing we did or said or thought

years ago before our conversion we need to say about having been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. But again when our conscience stabs us about something we've done even since we became Christians we say I know I know I know but we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Again when we're feeling lonely when we're misunderstood when human beings misrepresent and misjudge us and misunderstand us and we lose our peace with them we say yes but we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ and when we lose our peaceful feelings some calamity some tragedy some anxiety fighting without fears within us poor self we say I know I know I know but we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Dear brother or sister in Christ let's rejoice in this peace with God together let's make it known to others let's praise God for it we're going to praise him for our salvation all through eternity so let's get acclimated to the life of heaven and let's live a life of praise and worship and joy eschatologically in anticipation let's come to Christ to receive peace with God or if we have received it let's thank him for it we really want to thank you Lord Jesus for this peace with God that you have made by your sin bearing death on the cross grant that we may rejoice in it this coming week peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ we ask it for your name's sake you've been listening to the conclusion of a message by John Stott on what it means to have peace with God and what we must do to obtain it this message is just part of a series of sermons John preached on foundational texts at All Saints Church in London and you can hear the rest of the series along with hundreds more sermons by visiting their website John's book *Basic Christianity* has sold millions of copies and has been translated into more than 60 languages it gives one of the clearest explanations of Christianity and how you can find peace with God only through Christ details of how to obtain a copy can also be found on our website premiere.christenradio dot com/forward slash/johns-stop-the-legacy-of-john-stott-lives-on-and-is-growing-touching-every-level-of-society-across-the-world-today-Christian-leaders-throughout-the-majority-world-are-being-equipped-to-provide-pastor-training-and-resources-in-their-own-countries-thanks-to-the-vision-of-john-stott-who-donated-all-his-book-royalties-to-support-this-ministry-through-Langham-partnership-to-find-out-about-this-another-ministry-is-john-stott-founded-go-to-premiere dot org dot uk/forward slash/john-stott-join-us-at-the-same-time-next-week-for-more-from-the-bible-for-today-with-john-stott

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