

## I. Introduction

Good morning! How is your heart this morning? Are you filled with the deep calm of a still mountain lake? Do you have peace in your heart? In **John 14:27**, Jesus told His disciples, **“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.”** This verse tells us that the peace of Christ is available to those who trust in Him. In Christ, we can have peace and the world cannot take it away from us.



The things of this world do not bring peace. Many people have hearts full of anger. Like a sleeping volcano, they may look peaceful, but deep down they are full of hot anger. You never know when they are going to erupt. Other people have fearful hearts, like a boat in a storm they are thrown about by the waves of this world and they fear every thunderclap.



But we do not have to be controlled by fear and anger. Jesus offers a better way, the way of love and peace. But even as Christians, most of us do not fully experience the peace of Christ in our daily lives. Perhaps this is because we have not yet learned to trust in Jesus fully. But as we learn to know Jesus better and walk with Him more closely, we can experience growing peace in our lives and hearts. It is my prayer that we would all draw closer to Jesus today through His Word. Let's read **Acts 10:34-43**. These verses were part of our reading last week, but this morning I want to take a closer look at one or two things.

## II. Scripture Reading Acts 10:34-43, (NIV, 1984)

34 Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism 35 but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. **36 You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.** 37 You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached-- 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

39 "We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, 40 but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. 41 He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen--by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. **42 He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.** 43 All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

## III. Teaching

Some of us are old enough to remember the Berlin Wall that the Soviet Union built to divide East and West Berlin. From 1961 to 1989, for nearly thirty years, the Berlin Wall was a dividing wall of hostility that separated East Germans from West Germans. This wall is a fitting symbol of the problem of the human heart. The human heart is also divided by many walls of hostility.



Sometimes our hostility is focused inward; we are often angry with ourselves. At other times, our hostility is focused outward. We are often angry even with our own family and friends. Walls of hostility often divide nations and peoples as well. But the most terrible wall of all is the one that separates sinful man from Holy God.

There are many dividing walls. But we give thanks to God, because Jesus tears down dividing walls and brings peace to those who trust in Him. Consider the words of **Ephesians 2:14**, “**For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.**” Notice that it says that Jesus Himself is our peace. No wise philosophy, clever teaching, ascetic practice, or energetic political movement has the power to tear down the dividing walls of hostility and bring peace. Peace is not found in those kinds of things. True peace is found in a person, the person of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Himself is our peace. In English this truth can be expressed with a word play. “*No Jesus, No Peace; Know Jesus, Know Peace.*” Apart from a relationship with Jesus Christ, there is no lasting peace. Only the peace of Christ is sufficient to bring lasting calm and joy to the human heart. This peace is made possible because of Jesus’ death on the cross. Some people ask, “*How can a violent death bring peace?*”



But as this picture shows, the cross of Jesus serves as a bridge by which we can return to God and be reconciled with Him. God almighty, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, is righteous, perfect, and holy. But we are unrighteous, imperfect, and unclean. Our sins separate us from God. In fact, we deserve to receive the death penalty for our sins. But God had mercy on us and He came in the person of Jesus Christ to bring salvation. On the cross, Jesus died for us. Jesus gave His life as a substitute sacrifice for us. On the cross, the justice of God is satisfied and the love, grace, and mercy of God are poured out. But Jesus Himself was sinless and death could not hold Him, so on the third day He rose from the grave and is alive forevermore.

This is how the violent death of Jesus brings peace. The death of Jesus paid for the sins of the world so that we can have peace with God when we believe in Jesus and place our faith in Him. **Romans 5:1** tells us, “**Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,**” This cross proclaims the peace that Jesus provided through His death. The circle connected to the cross symbolizes eternity, reminding us that the peace Jesus gives us is an eternal peace.



Let’s look at Acts 10:36 and 10:43 one more time and notice what these verses say about Jesus. **Acts 10:36**, “**You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.**” And, **Acts 10:42**, “**He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.**”

Look at what these two verses teach us about Jesus. Verse 36 said, “**the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.**” And, verse 42 said, “**testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.**” What does it say? Jesus is Lord of all and He is the One who brings peace. At the same time, Jesus is judge of all, the living and the dead.

What happens when a person dies? The Bible is very clear; after a person dies they must appear before Jesus to be judged. Regardless of whether a person is atheist, Jewish, Buddhist, Shinto, Hindu, Muslim, Christian or whatever, after death they will come before Jesus and Jesus will decide their eternal fate. **Hebrews 9:27** says, “**Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.**”



Is this unfair? No, it is not. Jesus already paid the price for the sins of the world, and Jesus freely offers forgiveness of sins and salvation to everyone who repents and calls on His Name. And, because Jesus came and lived just as we do in this fallen world, He understands all of our struggles and temptations. So it is good and right that Jesus alone should decide the eternal fate of each person. Trust in Jesus and trust Him as Lord and be saved. Reject Jesus and He will be your judge.

Those who know Jesus and walk with Him in this world will be welcomed into eternal joy when they come before Him. It will be as Jesus described in the parable of the talents. **Matthew 25:21, “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!’”** Jesus wants us to rejoice with Him when we come before Him after death. It is my prayer that all of us would be prepared to rejoice when we meet Jesus face to face.



#### IV. Conclusion

I would like to close today with a reading from Psalm 85. The last words of this reading say, “righteousness and peace kiss each other.” I think this is a beautiful expression of what Jesus accomplished at the cross. By giving His life on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, Jesus, the Prince of Peace, satisfied the righteousness of God, brought peace to us, and became the judge of the living and the dead.

**Psalm 85:7-10, “Show us your unfailing love, O LORD, and grant us your salvation. I will listen to what God the LORD will say; he promises peace to his people, his saints-- but let them not return to folly. Surely his salvation is near those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land. Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other.”**

Let’s pray.

#### V. Prayer