

Righteousness and Peace Have Kissed Each Other

Psalm 85:8-13,

Invocavit Sunday, February 22, 2015

Sermon Text: *“I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.*

Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land.

Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase.

Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of his steps.”

Psalm 85:8-13 (KJV)

Beloved of the Lord.....In the news this week just yesterday there was an article about a Christian woman who is a florist in the state of Washington. Because she refused to provide flowers for a gay abomination, the state is persecuting her. They have told her if she pays a \$2000 fine, they will drop the prosecution. This is essentially a bribe to compromise her faith. They want her to acknowledge guilt, as if she has done wrong, and the price is \$2000. Yet by the grace of God she has refused to deny Christ and go against conscience. She has refused to give her blessing to a gay wedding. She has refused to become a Judas and sell Christ for 30 pieces of silver. Do not be deceived or think this battle far away. Sooner or later we will all need to take our stand for or against Christ on this matter. Unless God spares us, the day is coming when they will demand ministers perform gay weddings, and the threat likewise will be fines or jail. Since we are now in the season of Lent, let us remember not to be a Judas and deny Christ for the pleasures of this world. Let us all remember there is a cost to discipleship, and also a great reward. “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.”

Our psalm begins today with the words, I will hear what God the LORD will speak. This means we will hear and heed, treasure and obey God’s Word, holding it far up and high, above all the words of men. When our world denies the truth of God’s Word, we must not yield to the devil’s voice, but follow the voice of our Good Shepherd, who died for all, all homosexuals, adulterers, evil kings and governors, even all the ungodly, even you and me. Even if the cost to our discipleship is bankruptcy, jail, or loss of life, Jesus is worth it. “Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.”

So He will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly. Indeed Jesus has spoken peace to us, through the cross of our salvation. When God speaks “peace unto His people”, God speaks of Christ our peace. Through His onetime sacrifice where His blood spilled to the ground, the heart of God was changed and reconciled. Being punished for our sins, Jesus removed the curse of the law from us, and since His blood now covers all our sins, God holds us in peace and favor. When we

as Christians thus fear God's wrath, as if He may turn on us any time, we are questioning the power of Jesus' blood. Thus when God says He "will speak peace unto His people", He ONLY wants us to expect PEACE from Him, not wrath. "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD."

Knowing this peace, the Lord also warns His saints, but let them not turn again to folly. This means now that you believe in Christ and are justified by faith alone, don't turn back to the foolishness of your previous life where you lived in unbelief without repentance. If then you are tempted now to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, consider is it worth it? If your sins are not so bad and evil, why did Christ suffer torment on the cross for you and all sinners? Will you be one of those who stands at the cross and spits upon Christ, or will you be at the base of the cross like Mary and John, clinging to the Lord by faith? When a Christian gives themselves over to those works of the flesh, they are crucifying Christ anew. If we become impenitent and hardened in heart, loving the sin and not forsaking it, we cease to be Mary or John and we become a Judas. Whichever sin you may choose or lust after, even if the pleasure is a few seconds or minutes, is it worth it? After it is done you only have guilt. Moreover, heaven is eternal, and even now the saints above rejoice in their deliverance for all eternity. But hell is eternal also, and even now below millions are enduring torment with the full knowledge that it is their own fault, their own unbelief. There are fallen Christians there also who once knew well the blood of Christ washed them clean, yet they traded it all away in this world only so they could gratify their flesh, their lusts, and live in sin. Was it worth it? Would you rather have forgiveness or sinful pleasure which leaves you empty and hollow inside? Yet these very sins of which you feel guilty, are THE SINS Jesus suffered upon the cross so you are even now forgiven. Accept His forgiveness, believe it for it is real, purchased by blood. Don't turn away from Him who never turned away from you, but rather He suffered, died, and was buried, but rose again in triumph on the third day. Whatever your sins may be, no matter how great their power, Christ is stronger, His forgiveness sweeter, and His Spirit will help you fight this battle in faith. So the Bible says "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

Surely His salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land. This means the helping hand of God is always close by for those believers who are in trouble. If you revere God, namely you stand in awe of His mercies upon you, rest assured He is going to help you whatever your trouble. This portion of Scripture seems tied especially to troubles in our own land, for it says "that glory may dwell in our land." Thus let us think of the abysmal and dreadful spiritual condition of our nation where those who condemn homosexuality are being persecuted, or those who believe we came from monkeys are exalted as knowledgeable scientists! We likewise have teachers teaching gender confusion in our schools, and we have Planned Parenthood planning and plotting and helping to murder babies in their abortion mills. We also have a president which supports all these evils, and yet he cannot connect the evil of ISLAM with ISLAM! Yet as bad as all this is, God's Word is true, we still have a gracious Lord above

whose helping hand is always near. Pray to Him then as the Bible says, for He has promised to help, and remember “Before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear.” Just because our nation is a spiritual shipwreck, it doesn’t mean the Lord is no longer with us. As He saved and delivered Lot from Sodom and Gomorrah, by the hands of angels, so He will take you by the hand through every crisis and lead you to safety. Christ then lives in the midst of His Church, not separate or apart, and His glory does indeed dwell in our land. “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.”

Indeed our cup runneth over because Mercy and truth are met together. The Hebrew word for mercy also means kindness, which is especially extended to the lowly. So “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” Mercy, kindness and truth are personified in Christ Jesus, the very Son of God, and the very Son of Man, two natures in one person. Through such mercy and truth, there is also pardon, forgiveness and grace to cover our sins so He remember them no more. The Gospel message of Christ is THAT TRUTH which does all this and more, for righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. No poet on earth can write such beautiful words, and God is more than a poet, for His words are alive and living. They are even breathing words, in that through them the Holy Spirit breathes spiritual life into us, namely eternal life through Christ. So Jesus said, “The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.” So also TRUTH springs out of the earth and righteousness looks down from heaven! Righteousness and peace even kiss one another when we see Jesus is the Lord Our Righteousness, through whom we have spiritual peace of heart. Indeed Christ the Righteous becomes our peace, and “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

Yea, the LORD shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase. This is a promise from God to you, for Christ’s sake. Namely all of your temporal blessings come from the spiritual blessings of Christ. Because there is grace and forgiveness for your sins, you can be assured God will bless you with temporal blessings also, namely clothing and shoes, meat and drink, house and home, wife and children, fields, cattle etc. He will give you all you need to support both body and soul, “not by any merit or worthiness in me”, for all which it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him. Even when you have little, learn by faith to see you have much, for the meek shall inherit the earth. As long as this world stands, there will be a harvest to feed God’s children.

Finally beloved, Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of his steps. While Psalm 23 tells us “surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life” namely God’s goodness and mercy follows us wherever we go, Psalm 85 teaches us His goodness and mercy also go before us, ahead of us for Christ’s sake.

Therefore as He has blessed us in the past, so He will bless us in the future. No enemy can attack us from behind or up front without first having to deal with Christ who is a Man of War in battle, our sure defense! Therefore we do not need to live in fear of anything in our future because Christ is near.....Righteousness goes before us. Picture then going through a forest or wilderness where Jesus is always ahead of you on the path, a path chosen by Him. Indeed Jesus "shall set us in the ways of His steps." All the future events in our life, both days of tears and laughter, each footstep is God-ordained, even chosen from the foundation of the world. And even when your foot strays from that step Christ would have you follow, because He is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, He will gently correct and redirect that step so you do not stumble. Your steps become His steps. His path you follow. Follow Christ then dear believer, and follow His path alone. He knows where to lead and guide you. He will take you to green pastures and still waters. Thanks be to God "He shall set us in the way of His steps".....and who would want to go anywhere else, but to Him? "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.....I and my Father are one." Amen.

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