

January 14th, 2018  
PEACE BE WITH YOU  
John 20:19-20

I just wanted to say thank you, for your care for my family and me over our vacation. Monica and I feel so incredibly loved by you our church family that you give us time off to allow us to refresh for 2018. Thank you.

While on our vacation, I read quite a bit of a biography on Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones. Born in Wales in 1899, Lloyd-Jones served at Westminster Chapel in London for thirty years when he retired in 1968. I believe that Lloyd-Jones will go down in history as perhaps the most prolific preacher of the 20th century. It is not contemporary popularity that makes a preacher's message great, it's the overwhelming sense of the greatness and majesty of God that makes preaching great. "When J.I. Packer was a twenty-two-year-old student, he heard Lloyd-Jones preach every Sunday evening in London during the school year of 1948-1949. Packer said it came to him 'with the force of electric shock, bringing...more of a sense of God than any other man' he had known."<sup>1</sup> Even now in our generation, Lloyd Jones' books are being published and are empowering God-willing the next generation of great reformed preachers.

Dr. Jones' was to be inducted as co-pastor at Westminster Chapel on Sunday September 4, 1939. However this did not happen since WWII began the day before. On that Sunday morning, Lloyd-Jones and his co-pastor Dr. Campbell Morgan "had been in the pulpit only some thirty minutes when an air-raid warning had halted the service."<sup>2</sup> Lloyd-Jones spent the first six years of his ministry in London under the threat of constant death. And I believe this gave him a prophetic message that awoke a whole generation.

Dear congregation, there is a danger of growing up in the West. Our prosperous and decadent culture tells society that everything is "peace, peace."

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<sup>1</sup> Source: <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/why-expositional-preaching-is-particularly-glorifying-to-god> accessed January 13, 2018

<sup>2</sup> Iain Murray, *D.M. Lloyd-Jones: The Fight of Faith*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprinted 2009), pg. 3

Just as in Jeremiah the prophet's day, the Lord says of the false prophets: "They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace" (**Jeremiah 6:14**) You were born into the most violent and deadly war that can be conceived. This war spans all ages, all nations, and encapsulates every single individual soul. This war makes the Nazis that Lloyd-Jones faced look like children's play things.

Consider our passage. Jesus triumphantly appears to His disciples on the day of His resurrection, and He says four words "Peace be with you." What do those four words imply? War. You don't need peace, if you aren't at war. "Christianity is not a solution," Lloyd-Jones said, "for the problems of man's bodily and temporal needs...<sup>3</sup> the gospel is the message of God coming into world when nothing else can change man's condition."<sup>4</sup> Jesus didn't come into the world primarily as miracle worker, or moral teacher, nor did He come primarily come to give us an example of how we ought to live. Jesus Christ came into the world because man's condition is absolutely hopeless.

Monica sent me an article by the Wall Street Journal Friday with the headline: "The Worst Job in Technology: Staring At Human Depravity To Keep It Off Facebook"<sup>5</sup> Content moderators review some 8,000 posts a day for FB and they are haunted by what they encounter. From anti-Semitism, to bestiality and pedophilia and everything else in between. Regardless of the high pay of \$24 an hour, the "turnover is high, with most content moderators working [only] a few months."<sup>6</sup> Face to face with that level depravity proves harmful to their souls.

And Lloyd-Jones pointed to depravity in his own day and said "The present war has revealed the utter failure of all human systems to deal with the problem of mankind...never again can it be said, or should it be said that man

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<sup>3</sup> *ibid*, pg. 27

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*, pg. 29

<sup>5</sup> Source: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-worst-job-in-technology-staring-at-human-depravity-to-keep-it-off-facebook-1514398398> accessed January 13, 2018

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*

inherently and naturally desires right, and the best, and is ready to accept it if it be but offered to him.”<sup>7</sup>

Why is the world that way that it is? Because all of humanity including you has sinned against a holy God. And the heart of this sin, is not that humanity does this or that thing wrong. Sin is the reality that everything about the human condition is wrong. You were born spoiled and rotten. You were born self-centered. You were born in love with your self, with your own thoughts, with your own desires. You were born in such a state that the only person you want to worship is yourself. And this self-worship either manifests itself in smug self-righteousness, closing off your heart to the God of Heaven and your neighbor; or you actively abuse and dominate all who will not bow the knee to your perverted desires. God is not chiefly angry with the world because they commit lewd and lascivious acts, or because they plunder property, or because they murder other men. No, all those acts are *judgment* of the real sin: forgetting God—not loving Him, not worshipping Him, failing to admire the Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as the supreme King of every heart, of every domain, of every soul. God created us for one main purpose: to worship Him. And sin is the refusal to do that. What is the worst thing you can do in your life? Forget God. That is the heart of all evil. And that root gives blossom to every other evil under the sun. Forgetting God is why humanity is at war.

When Jesus spoke these words “Peace be with you,” they were the most important words ever spoken since the beginning of the world until it’s end. What He meant to His disciples in that moment was: ‘No matter what happens for the rest of your lives, you never have to fear again. My work on the cross, My rising from the dead was the war to end all wars. Your sin has been put away. Now you and God are reconciled and you will never be separated again.’ That is the quintessence of peace. And beloved, if you have been born of the Spirit He says the same thing to you. Lloyd-Jones said it like this to his

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<sup>7</sup> Iain Murray, *D.M. Lloyd-Jones: The Fight of Faith*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprinted 2009), pg. 20

congregation: “Realize what man can do to you. Realize what God can do...He offers pardon and forgiveness, a new life, and a fatherly care which knows no bounds or limits...These are the things that really matter in this life, and they are the things that will alone matter in eternity. And with regard to these things we can defy any and every enemy. These are things that bombs cannot smash, that tanks cannot crush. These are things beyond the range of the most powerful gun...No man can touch your soul and no man can kill your soul...”<sup>8</sup>

God willing that is what we are going to see in our text today.

☆ The Shattered Peace of Sinful Man

☆ The All-Sufficient Peace of the Risen Christ

### *The Big Idea...*

When the risen Christ speaks peace to you, the war is over and you never need to fear anything from God ever again

## I. The Shattered Peace of Sinful Man

### **Resurrection appearances**

Let’s consider v.19 “On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them...” Now the way that I understand it, this is Jesus’ fifth resurrection appearance.<sup>9</sup> He appeared privately to Mary Magdalene (**John 20:11-18**) He appeared to the larger group of women (**Matthew 28:9-10**); He

<sup>8</sup> Iain Murray, *D.M. Lloyd-Jones: The Fight of Faith*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprinted 2009), pg. 27

<sup>9</sup> I received helpful direction from Robert Rollock. Source: [http://www.digitalpuritan.net/Digital%20Puritan%20Resources/Rollock,%20Robert/Selected%20Works%20of%20Robert%20Rollock%20\(vol.2\).pdf](http://www.digitalpuritan.net/Digital%20Puritan%20Resources/Rollock,%20Robert/Selected%20Works%20of%20Robert%20Rollock%20(vol.2).pdf) accessed January 12, 2018 (The Fortieth Lecture, pg. 483 )

appeared to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (**Luke 24:13-31**); and He appeared to Peter (**Luke 24:34**) although we don't have the narrative in the gospels. But Paul says in **1 Corinthians 15:5** "that he appeared to Cephas, then the twelve." This will become important later. The importance of these appearances cannot be minimized. Luke says in **Acts 1:3** "He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by *many proofs*, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God." Every appearance is an infallible proof that Christ rose from the dead.

### The Lord's Day

In our passage, John for the second time makes the point that this took place on "the first day of the week." v.1 is the first time John makes the point. This is why the first day of the week is the Lord's Day *especially*—because Jesus rose from the dead and thus finishing *re-creation*. God put special honor on this day, not only because it was the day that Jesus rose, but it was the day that the church received its first visit from Christ. We don't worship on the first day of the week arbitrarily or because it was *merely* the tradition of the apostles, we worship because just as God blessed the seventh day in original creation for rest and worship (**Genesis 2:3**), so He blessed the first day in re-creation for the same. Matthew Henry says here "the first day of the week is (I think) the only day of the week, or month or year, that is ever mentioned by number in all the New Testament; and this is several times spoken of as a day religiously observed."<sup>10</sup> And we have a great example from the disciples here. Even though they were full of sinful fear, they did not forsake the gathering of themselves together (**Hebrews 10:25**). The gathering of the church has always since the beginning of the world been under violent persecution.

After the first Sunday of war in WWII, Lloyd-Jones and Campbell Morgan immediately started strategizing how to hold continue to hold services the following week. They refused to give up the worship of God. However "not

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<sup>10</sup> Matthew Henry, *Unabridged Commentary on the Whole Bible*, (OSNOVA'S Kindle Edition), location 253158

all ministers of London were of the same opinion. In a phone call, [one of] ML-J's old friends...voiced his doubts whether there should be any services at all."<sup>11</sup> Dear congregation, peace does not come from avoiding bombs and bullets, it comes when the soul finds its rest and communion in the Living God. God instituted the Lord's Day for that. This is not a club, or a social gathering. The gathering of the church on the Lord's Day brings the most special presence of God to the church more than any other moment. **Psalm 87:2** "the LORD loves the gates of Zion [meaning the gathering of the saints on the Lord's Day] more than all the dwelling places of Jacob."

### The instability of the disciples

Now v.19 tells us that is the evening. Jesus had visited Mary that morning. That's where v.18 left off. Now it's evening, it's dark outside. What symbolism is occurring here! Just as on day one of original creation God said "Let there be light"<sup>12</sup> chasing away the darkness; so Jesus—the true light of the world<sup>13</sup>—on day one of *re*-creation is about to burst into the room forever removing the darkness of sin.

And there was real darkness in this room.<sup>14</sup> v.19 tells us "the doors [were] locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews." The Greek word for *fear* φόβος *phobos* is where we get the word *phobia*. The disciples were in a panic, a dread, a terror. Same word that was used of the soldiers who guarded the tomb when they saw the angel. **Matthew 28:4** says "And for fear (*phobos*) of him the guards trembled and became like dead men." The disciples were no doubt fearful of the authorities. Recall that Annas the high priest had questioned

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<sup>11</sup> Iain Murray, *D.M. Lloyd-Jones: The Fight of Faith*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprinted 2009), pg. 3-4

<sup>12</sup> Genesis 1:3

<sup>13</sup> John 1:9

<sup>14</sup> "The disciples (minus Thomas) had gathered together in an unspecified location (possibly the upper room in Jerusalem, scene of the Last Supper) and the doors were shut." John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: John 12-21*, (Chicago, IL.,: Moody Publishers, 2008), pg. 380

Jesus about His disciples during His trial (**John 18:19**). And they no doubt they thought that at any moment “the temple police would arrive to end this whole movement by arresting them.”<sup>15</sup> They crucified Christ and concluded they were next.

But I think there was more to this fear. Let’s turn over to the parallel account of this in **Luke 24**. When Jesus reveals Himself, we see in v.37 “But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. [38] And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do *doubts* arise in your hearts?” It wasn’t just that the disciples were scared of the Jews, they were doubtful as to the fact of the resurrection itself. Now this is incredible! Look at v.34, when the two disciples who encountered Christ returned to the eleven to tell them the good news, the eleven in return told them “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” Simon Peter already saw the Lord. Mary Magdalene saw the Lord. The other women had seen the Lord. The two disciples on the road to Emmaus saw the Lord. And v.34 seems to capture the mood at that moment of pure joy.

And yet their hearts were intolerably unstable. One minute joy, the next fear and doubting. Such is the heart of man. Dear congregation, do you not feel this heart in your own breast? Is not looking at the disciples like beholding yourself in the mirror? One minute your faith in Christ makes you impervious to all the attacks of the world and the devil. Like Peter you can walk on water with the Lord. But the next minute you shrink in fear at the mild waves on the horizon, you begin to sink and cry out “Lord, save me.”<sup>16</sup> You like the disciples have the most unstable of all hearts. Puritan Robert Rollock has said “The best thing in man is his reason, but she is full of vanity.”<sup>17</sup> Without the presence of Jesus Christ, you, the disciples, the whole world is in utter confusion. As

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<sup>15</sup> *ibid*

<sup>16</sup> Matthew 14:30

<sup>17</sup> Source: [http://www.digitalpuritan.net/Digital%20Puritan%20Resources/Rollock,%20Robert/Selected%20Works%20of%20Robert%20Rollock%20\(vol.2\).pdf](http://www.digitalpuritan.net/Digital%20Puritan%20Resources/Rollock,%20Robert/Selected%20Works%20of%20Robert%20Rollock%20(vol.2).pdf) accessed January 12, 2018 (The Forty-First Lecture, pg. 493 )

Augustine said “Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in Thee.”<sup>18</sup> No matter what spiritual mountain you have previously climbed in life, if you lose sight of the person and presence Jesus Christ, your mind and heart will turn dark. Christianity is not about morality or social change. It is about having your soul arrested by the majesty of Christ, and never wanting to leave His side. There is no rest or peace or stability outside of that. All else is vanity.

That’s our first point. The disciples though they had great evidences of the resurrection of Christ, **v.19** tells us they were still in a state of fear. Apart from the presence of Christ, man has a shattered peace.

## II. The All-Sufficient Peace of the Risen Christ

### The miracle of His appearing

**v.19** tells us the door is locked, yet we read halfway through the verse that “Jesus came and stood among them.” They didn’t unlock the door. They didn’t open the door. This was a miracle in order to further establish the miracle of the resurrection. Jesus “all at once stood in [their] midst.”<sup>19</sup> Now there seems to be at least four main views concerning this miracle. The **first view** has historically been Rome’s view. That Jesus while remaining fully solid walked through the door which also remained fully solid at the same time and the same relationship. This is absurd. Miracles are not contradictions. There are not such things as contradictions, because logic like holiness is a fixed and unalterable aspect of God’s nature. It is one of His attributes. But Rome held this view at least historically, to justify Mass—that the literal body of Christ could be in an infinite number of places at once. This is absurd, and erases any meaning of Jesus being actually fully human. The **second view** is that Jesus remained solid and the

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<sup>18</sup> Source: <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/42572-thou-hast-made-us-for-thyself-o-lord-and-our> accessed January 12, 2018

<sup>19</sup> Chrysostom, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol. 14: Chrysostom, Homilies on the Gospel of St. John, Hebrews*, Ed. Philip Schaff, (Peabody, MA.: Hendrickson Publishers, 5th Printing, 2012), pg. 325

door or walls became became penetrable, and after Jesus passed through them, they became solid again.<sup>20</sup> The **third view** is that the door opened to him not by the disciples but miraculously like in **Acts 12:10** when Peter was in prison and an angel of the Lord led him out and the gates open on their own accord. The **fourth view** is that Jesus simply appeared in the room. In **Luke 24:31**, Jesus vanished before the eyes of the two men, and He certainly reappeared somewhere. So here He could have simply appeared in the room.

With the exception of the first view that Rome holds, the later three will work.<sup>21</sup> But the point to capture here is that this coming was miraculous and it was sudden.<sup>22</sup> The Lord's coming is always sudden. That's how Jesus works. Whether He comes to His beloved in mercy or to the wicked in judgment, His coming is sudden. In the parable of the ten virgins—five of them being wise, and five being foolish, the Bridegroom—who is Christ—came suddenly in the night, and the wise ones entered in and the foolish ones were shut out. And He said “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour” (**Matthew 25:13**).

### **Peace be with you**

When Jesus appears, He speaks to His disciples. Imagine the gravity of the moment. The last time the disciples saw Jesus was when He was a dead corpse hanging on the cross. They had abandoned Him out of fear. Peter

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<sup>20</sup> “Even as when the Lord was walking on the sea, the sea was thickened and made hard and solid under his feet, that it might bear him above, and thereafter again incontinent it returned to its own nature.” Source: [http://www.digitalpuritan.net/Digital%20Puritan%20Resources/Rollock,%20Robert/Selected%20Works%20of%20Robert%20Rollock%20\(vol.2\).pdf](http://www.digitalpuritan.net/Digital%20Puritan%20Resources/Rollock,%20Robert/Selected%20Works%20of%20Robert%20Rollock%20(vol.2).pdf) accessed January 12, 2018 (The Fortieth Lecture, pg. 488 )

<sup>21</sup> Rollock says here “This opinion (the second view—but his comment is valid for all) is more tolerable than the former, because it stands well enough with the omnipotent power of God, whereas the former sentence of the Papists cannot stand with his omnipotency, because it includes a manifest contradiction.” *ibid*

<sup>22</sup> Matthew Henry additionally notes here “It is a comfort to Christ's disciples, when their solemn assemblies are reduced to privacy, that no doors can shut out Christ's presence from them.” Matthew Henry, *Unabridged Commentary on the Whole Bible*, (OSNOVA'S Kindle Edition), location 253178

disowned Him. They who were His closest friends wouldn't even own Him in His greatest hour of need. After all that Jesus had done for them. And now they were cowering in fear, in the dark. They deserved the sharpest rebuke. Yet Jesus says "Peace be with you."<sup>23</sup> Peace be with you. The greatest, sweetest, most significant words that were ever spoken to human souls. Peace. What did Jesus mean by peace?

This is important because Jesus spent a great deal of time actually warning the disciples—warning all Christians about the dangers of this age. Jesus told them that the world hates them—**John 15:19**; that the world would persecute them—**John 15:20**; that they would be put out of the synagogue and even killed—**John 16:2**. In fact, one of the last things that Jesus tells Peter is the horrible way that he would die in **John 21:18-19**. Lloyd-Jones got it right when he told his congregation "Our Lord never promises or prophesies easy things. He ever prepares His followers for the worst. Nothing is further removed from our Lord's method than the giving of some vague general comfort and encouragement designed merely to ease and to pacify them for the time being..."<sup>24</sup> When Jesus said "Peace be with you," He took nothing back of the hard predictions that would befall the disciples. And He takes nothing back to those who follow Him now. **Acts 14:22** "through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God." **2 Timothy 3:12** "Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,"

So how could Jesus say "Peace" while promise a life of hardship? Because the peace that Jesus speaks is infinitely deeper than temporal peace.

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<sup>23</sup> Chrysostom has some remarkable insight here: "For since they had a truceless war with the Jews, He continually repeated the, "Peace be unto you," giving them, to counterbalance the war, the consolation. And so this was the first word that He spake to them after the Resurrection (wherefore also Paul continually saith, "Grace unto you and peace,") and to the women He giveth good tidings of joy, because that sex was in sorrow, and had receive this as the first curse. Therefore He giveth good tidings suitable respectively, to men, peace, because of their war; joy to women, because of their sorrow." Chrysostom, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol. 14: Chrysostom, Homilies on the Gospel of St. John, Hebrews*, Ed. Philip Schaff, (Peabody, MA.,: Hendrickson Publishers, 5th Printing, 2012), pg. 325

<sup>24</sup> Iain Murray, *D.M. Lloyd-Jones: The Fight of Faith*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprinted 2009), pg. 27

Jesus is repeating here what He said in the upper room just hours before His crucifixion. He told His disciples in **John 14:27** “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you.” You see the contrast is between the peace of the world and the peace of Jesus. Those are two different types of peace. As different as heaven and hell. The world hears what Jesus tells His disciples, that they will be hated, persecuted, killed, subject to all manner of trial and tribulation, and they say “No way, that’s not the type of peace I’m looking for.” To that Jesus responds with stunning words like “What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?” (**Mark 8:36**) What good is 70 years of peace followed by an eternity of weeping and gnashing of the teeth. What good is a few moments of tranquility if it means that you will face the wrath of a holy God on judgment day, where you will be cast into the lake of fire? **Revelation 14:11** says “And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest [no peace] day or night.”

Now we start to understand what Jesus was saying. Jesus when He said “Peace be with you”, He wasn’t speaking about national tranquility, or freedom from war or anxiety or distress, or harmony between individuals, or financial success and security *here*. No, Jesus was saying ‘Now you have peace with God.’ **Romans 5:1** “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” That is the only peace that matters. The world cannot offer that peace. So profound is this proclamation of peace that it is included in every single greeting of Paul’s letters in the New Testament.<sup>25</sup>

### **The God who has scars<sup>26</sup>**

We know that it is peace with God that Jesus is speaking about because after He gives this proclamation of peace, He gives proof of peace. Look at **v.20** “When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side.” Jesus bore

<sup>25</sup> D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans Publishing, 1991), pg. 647; e.g. “Grace to you and *peace* from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Galatians 1:3)

<sup>26</sup> cf. the beautiful poem entitled ‘Jesus of the Scars’ by Edward Shillito, *ibid*

the scars of crucifixion on His hands, and the scar of being stabbed in the side with the spear. He was not *only* proving that He wasn't a spirit<sup>27</sup>, but that He in fact rose from the dead. Death could not hold Him. But His resurrection wasn't the *end all*. Jesus is saying 'Because I live, you also will live'<sup>28</sup>...The cross was a success! All your sins have been swallowed up in My blood. My righteousness was a success! The grave could not hold Me. And now My beloved, you finally have peace that the world cannot touch.<sup>29</sup> You have been reconciled to God. The war is over, you never have anything to fear from God again.'

And this is where I find Lloyd-Jones words to be the most inspiring. When I came across them in my book I wrote 'greatest war speech ever.' He says this "Realize what man can do to you. Realize what God can do...He offers pardon and forgiveness, a new life, and a fatherly care which knows no bounds or limits...These are the things that really matter in this life, and they are the things that will alone matter in eternity. And with regard to these things we can defy any and every enemy. These are things that bombs cannot smash, that tanks cannot crush. These are things beyond the range of the most powerful gun...No man can touch your soul and no man can kill your soul..."<sup>30</sup> Dear congregation, that is what the risen Christ secured for you. Through His death and resurrection, your soul now can never perish.

### **They disbelieved for joy**

After the disciples heard this and saw Jesus' scars, the end of v.20 says "Then the disciples were *glad* when they saw the Lord." I think the ESV under-translated this word here when they inserted *glad*. If everlasting life had just been conferred on you, and you have been reconciled to God, and you stand in

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<sup>27</sup> cf. Luke 24:37-39

<sup>28</sup> John 14:19

<sup>29</sup> As Lloyd-Jones would say "Whatever the conditions, and however trying, we should show that we have hidden resources of which the world knows nothing." Iain Murray, *D.M. Lloyd-Jones: The Fight of Faith*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprinted 2009), pg. 20

<sup>30</sup> *ibid*, pg. 27

the presence of the Living Christ would you used the word *glad*? Other versions the word “overjoyed” (NIV) or “filled with joy” (NLT) or “rejoiced” (NASB). Luke’s gospel describes the disciples’ response this way: “they...disbelieved for joy” (**Luke 24:41**) Meaning the sight of Christ, and the eternal implications of this visitation were so incredible, that they thought they were dreaming.<sup>31</sup>

Dear congregation, the gospel is so inexpressibly good that it’s easier to disbelieve it. Perhaps some of you are so discouraged by your own sin. So full of anxiety that others would find out how bad you really are. “Why do I even try any more? I’m not a good person.” No you’re not. You see, you must face the bad news first. The gospel message always begins with that truth: that you are ungodly. You are desperately sick. **Jeremiah 17:9** says that your own heart is deceitful above all things. You know what that means? That the greatest liar that you know is you. For those of you who are willing to be honest with yourselves, you know that I just described you perfectly. That’s why the gospel is hard to believe. Why would Jesus *ever* forgive someone like you? Even your best works have selfish motives attached them. You’ve never done something purely righteous for God in your whole life. **Isaiah 64:6** says that all your righteous deeds are polluted. Why would Jesus *ever* forgive someone like you? There is no earthly answer. There was no answer in the disciples for Jesus to show up in that room. And they knew it. By all rights, Jesus should have abandoned them, as they did He. The answer to the question: why would Jesus ever forgive someone like you, can only be found *in* Jesus. Because He is that good. That is why the soundtrack of heaven is “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!...To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!” (**Revelation 5:12-13**)

Thus Jesus’ promise to them came true. Before His death, He told them in **John 16:22** “So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your

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<sup>31</sup> When news came to Jacob from his son Joseph was still alive, we read that “his heart became number, for he did not believe them.” Genesis 45:26

hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.” This joy can only come from the all-sufficient peace of the risen Christ.

## Application

Our Doctrine: True peace cannot be touched by calamities or bought by prosperity

Humanly speaking, we as a church, faced some calamities this year. Early in 2017 one of our members was excommunicated for abandonment of her family. In the middle of the year, we passed through a near church split. And we lost two precious widows who went home to be with the Lord. What calamities await us this year? On the other hand, we ordained 2 elders, 5 deacons, and several families joined the church. God has been growing both the leadership and the membership of this church. We held a joint reformed conference with other churches in the valley and several hundred people showed up, to which my knowledge hasn't happened before in Boise. And every week there seems to be increasing opportunities to spread this gospel. So it looks like great spiritual prosperity awaits us in 2018.

Dear congregation, what does this year look like for you? Calamitous or prosperous. How will you find peace in calamity? For some of you the answer is the world's answer. If I just make more money, if I just get that relationship, if I just get that job(fill in the bank), if my kids just get to that age, if I just fulfill that dream. Those things will not bring you peace. Psychiatrist Paul D. Meier once wrote “I have had millionaire business come to my office and tell me they have big houses, condominiums..., nice children, a beautiful mistress, and unsuspecting wife, secure corporate positions—and suicidal tendencies. They have everything this world has to offer except one thing—inner peace and joy. They come to my office as a last resort, begging to help them conquer the urge to kill themselves.”<sup>32</sup> Prosperity will never buy you peace.

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<sup>32</sup> Randy Alcorn, *Happiness*, (Carol Stream, IL.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), pg. 14

And true peace cannot be touched by calamity. Many Christians who were in London during WWII in which Lloyd-Jones preached look back on those years as some of the most peaceful in their lives because they were awakened to the truth of Jesus Christ. They found their greatest peace during the greatest war of the century. How paradoxical.

Peace is the most basic and fundamental need of every human being.<sup>33</sup> Peace is what you strive for on a daily basis. At the bottom of every one of your actions ultimately is the motive “If I could just find peace.” I want to address unbelievers now. Dear unbeliever, you will never find peace in this world until you come into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. Peace is not some religious token you can earn through good deeds, or some societal status you can achieve through running the rat race. Peace is a person: Jesus Christ. Jesus is called the *Prince of Peace* (**Isaiah 9:6**). Jesus said to His disciples “Peace I leave with you; *my peace* I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid” (**John 14:27**). Don’t you wish Him to say those words to you? Believe the gospel. Surrender your life to Christ. You will not have peace until your sins are washed away and until He gives you new righteousness. And that does not come by your efforts. It comes by trusting Jesus. Jesus says “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (**Matthew 11:28**)

## Our Delight: True peace only comes by grace alone

Two things about the peace that Jesus offers in this passage. First this peace is effectual, second this peace is unmerited.

First the peace that Jesus gives is effectual. Effectual meaning producing the intended effect. The reason why the disciples became glad and believed in this passage is because Jesus Himself produced that effect in them. Their joy and belief did not come through their eyeballs. No amount of evidence in all the world of the truthfulness of Jesus Christ in the world can produce peace or

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<sup>33</sup> Peace is even more fundamental than happiness, because happiness requires peace. The disciples were not made glad (v.20) until Jesus pronounced and provided proof of peace (v.19).

belief. Spiritual peace can not be originated in man. And if you say “But you must believe, you must do your part and believe, and then Jesus will produce the peace in you.” I answer “Yes you must believe. But where does that belief come from?” Was that belief generated in your sinful heart? No my friend. John says “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, *not* of blood *nor of the will* of the flesh *nor of the will* of man, but of God.” (**John 1:12-13**). God is the one who must work first. Just as Jesus looked over the raging sea and said “Peace! Be Still!” (**Mark 4:39**), and the waves ceased; so He says to the waves of some hearts “Peace” and they are still.<sup>34</sup> But Jesus doesn’t still every sea, nor does He still every heart. And if your response to that is “That doesn’t seem fair,” then we come to our second thing about peace.

The peace that Jesus gives is unmerited. In order for something to be unfair, it must be unjust. That’s what unfairness is—injustice. Must Jesus still every heart? Is Jesus obligated to give peace to all? What has man done to earn such sinful peace? What right did the disciples have to this peace? What right do you have to peace? How have you ever put God in your debt? Paul says “...who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” (**Romans 11:35**). Jesus doesn’t owe peace to anybody. Therefore there is no unfairness when He gives to some and not others. But friend this is good news that Jesus would give peace at all. If Christ doesn’t give peace on the basis of your performance, that means that your sin cannot disqualify you from receiving it. And it means that ultimately your sin cannot rob you of it. The peace that Jesus gives was not purchased by you. It was purchased by His own blood and righteousness. And thank God that this peace is unmerited, because if it required us to merit it, we would never have peace.

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<sup>34</sup> “The Lord, in this wishing of peace, is not like man. The most that a man can do, is to wish peace, and to desire peace to others; no man, albeit he were never so holy, can do more; he cannot give his peace that he wishes, he cannot make his peace effectual. But Christ, when he wishes peace, he gives and communicates that same peace; he works that same peace in their hearts;” Source: [http://www.digitalpuritan.net/Digital%20Puritan%20Resources/Rollock,%20Robert/Selected%20Works%20of%20Robert%20Rollock%20\(vol.2\).pdf](http://www.digitalpuritan.net/Digital%20Puritan%20Resources/Rollock,%20Robert/Selected%20Works%20of%20Robert%20Rollock%20(vol.2).pdf) accessed January 12, 2018 (The Fortieth Lecture, pg. 490 )

## Our Duty: Seek a sight of Christ who is Your peace

Don't reason from what I've said that just because Jesus must give peace, that we have no duty to seek Him. That would be false. The promise of God is clear **James 4:8** "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you." What if you lack a spiritual peace right now because you are living a life completely forgetful of God? To paraphrase Lloyd-Jones here, he says "[Does that kind of life deserve peace?] What if war has come because we were not fit for peace, because we did not deserve peace, because we by our disobedience and godlessness and sinfulness had so utterly abused the blessings of peace? Have we a right to expect God to preserve a state of peace merely to allow men and women to continue a life that is an insult to His holy Name?"<sup>35</sup>

There is no peace when if you live a life forgetting Christ. Seek Him. Seek His lovely face. Seek the true bread from Heaven. When you see Christ in His word, when You communion with Him in secret prayer, when you get fresh glimpses of your own sin, but bigger glimpses of His forgiveness, your heart will be filled with joy just as the disciples' hearts were. In Him alone is happiness. You must have Him if ever you are to have peace.

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<sup>35</sup> Iain Murray, *D.M. Lloyd-Jones: The Fight of Faith*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprinted 2009), pg. 26