

April 9th, 2017

THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF JESUS CHRIST

John 14:25-31

When King Hezekiah was nearing the end of his reign, we read in **2 Kings 20:1** “In those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Set your house in order, for you shall die; you shall not recover.’” Hezekiah was to make final preparations for his departure. Likewise, parents today are to do the same in the form of a last will and testament. They have property and possessions to allocate and to distribute to their children. They have blessings to give.¹ Blessings that are meant to be enjoyed and to bring them support in their own lives.

Chapters 13-17 of John’s gospel may be *the* most precious chapters in his account, because it’s here that we see Jesus doing the same thing for His people. He is setting His house in order. He is literally giving us His last will and testament. He has already promised in **14:18** “I will not leave you as orphans...” ‘I will not leave you unsupported in this world. I will leave you an inheritance. And this inheritance will sustain you through every demonic attack, through every worldly persecution, through every fleshly failure. The inheritance I will leave you will provide you with everything you need whether you be crucified upside down (like Peter was), or boiled in oil (like John was), or fed to the lions (like the early Christians), or locked up in North Korean concentration camps (like today’s Christians). Everything that you need in life, I will provide in this inheritance. Nothing has been left unconsidered.’

The central verse of our passage this morning, where we see Jesus’ last will and testament is v.27 “Peace I *leave* with you; my peace I *give* to you. Not as

¹ My most treasured possession that my father has ever given me, is his Bible that he had as a younger man. The pages are worn, the ink that carries his notes are fading, and it has the smell of an ancient book and the look of hours upon hours of study. I hope to pass that on to my own children some day. No matter what else my dad leaves me, it will never surpass that gift.

the world gives do I *give* to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” Do you what Jesus is saying? ‘Yes I’m going away, but I’m not taking one ounce of peace away from you. In fact I’m securing your peace, *forever*, by going away. When I die, you gain everything.’

The Big Idea...

When Jesus died, He left us a peace surpassing all understanding that will guard us all the way to glory

What is true peace?

Jesus says in v.27 “*Peace* I leave with you;” What is peace? Because He contrasts it with the world’s peace at the end of the verse: “*Not* as the world gives do I give to you.” The world has a pretended peace, a circumstantial peace, a superficial peace, that collapses under pressure. Tim Keller reports in his book *Counterfeit Gods* that when the economic crisis of 2008 hit “the acting chief financial officer of Freddie Mac...hanged himself in his basement. [Likewise, the C.E.O. of Sheldon Good] a leading U.S. real estate auction firm, shot himself in the head behind the wheel of his red Jaguar.”² The world’s false god of money, cannot bring peace when the money is gone.³

The peace that Jesus speaks of here is εἰρήνη (*ā-rā’-nā*) in the Greek. It is that security of the soul that cannot be shaken whatever earthly circumstance you may face, because it is Christ’s *own peace*. Look at v.27 again “Peace I leave with you; *my peace* I give to you.” *My peace*, Jesus says. This means at least two things. 1) It means that the peace Jesus gives us is not something extra apart from Him. As **Ephesians 2:14** says “For *he himself* is our peace,” Jesus never

² Tim Keller, *Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power, and the Only Hope That Matters*, (New York, NY.,: Penguin Books, 2009), pg. xi

³ Psalm 96:5 “For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the Lord made the heavens.”

points to circumstances as the foundation of our peace. He offers us Himself. 2) When Jesus gives us *His peace*, He gives the very same peace which He himself enjoys.⁴ Meaning, Jesus has a perfect peace in His Sonship to the Father. His peace was infinite, and eternal and unchangeable and couldn't be touched by this world. When Jesus says "my peace I give to you" He means, 'I'm giving you a peace that the world cannot touch.' This is the peace is what we need. Because He is going to tell us some dreadful things in the next chapter. **John 15:19** "Because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." And this hatred will boil over into severe persecution. **John 16:2** "Indeed, the hours is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering a service to God."

Dear congregation, America in spite of all it's corruption is still Disneyland compared to the rest of the world. People talk about a future coming tribulation. There is tribulation now, around the rest of the world. Air strikes and chemical weapons in Syria. Islam exercising Sharia law against Christian converts in Muslim nations. The systematic closing down of churches in China. What is going to bring them peace? Twitter? Netflix? "Your Best Life Now?" Life insurance? Stock portfolios? 107" big screen t.v.s? If it won't give you peace when you are facing death in the eye, it is a pretended peace.

The pretended peace of the world

Some of you right now have a pretended peace. You're resting in your circumstances. You're resting in church attendance or a basically moral life. But you are not truly resting in Jesus Christ. Having some pleasant and polite thoughts about Jesus Christ is not enough. You must be born again. You must entrust your soul to Christ. Anything less than that, and you will face that terrible day of judgment and be forever ruined. Paul warns about the false peace that people have in this world. He says "While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor

⁴ <http://edwards.yale.edu/archive?path=aHR0cDovL2Vkd2FyZHMueWFsZS5lZHUvY2dpLWJpbi9uZXdwaGlsby9nZXRvYmpIY3QucGw/Yy4yNDoyMy53amVv>

pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape” (1 **Thess. 5:3**)

You must realize that Jesus did not come to bring everyone peace.⁵ This peace that He promises in our passage is only for His people. The prophet Isaiah says “There is no peace,” says the Lord, “for the wicked” (**Isaiah 48:22**)⁶ If you are not born again, you are among the wicked. And the fierce wrath of God abides on you, and nothing in this world can protect you from what is coming.

The promise of peace is for those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him” (**John 3:36**) If you will but believe in Christ, and entrust your soul to Him, you will inherit all the promises of the eternal covenant.

You will inherit everlasting life. **John 14:19** “Because I live, *you also will live.*”

You will inherit the kingdom. **Luke 12:32** “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to *give you the kingdom.*”

You will inherit an unfading glory. **John 17:22** The glory that you have given me *I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one,*

You will inherit all things that belong to Christ. **1 Corinthians 3:21-22** “...*all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.*”

You will never never be separated from the love of Jesus Christ. **Romans 8:38** “For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all

⁵ cf. Luke 2:14; Matthew 10:34; Luke 12:51

⁶ cf. Isaiah 57:21

creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

These things are the things that belong to true peace. If you trust Christ, all these are yours.

Is there an experiential peace?

Now is that all that Jesus is talking about in this passage? Is Jesus only referring to the final peace that believers will enjoy when we get to glory? Well it certainly includes that final peace, but that is not the main focus of this text. Look at v.27 again “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. [Clue 1: The world offers you a particular peace right now, a peace based on circumstances. But Jesus is leaving us a peace right now that is not based on circumstances] Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. [Clue 2: Jesus is desiring that our hearts would be at peace *right now*, that we would be fearless *right now*.] Therefore, there is nothing more practical than what Jesus is about to offer us. If you are facing trials, or anxieties, or depressions, or besetting sins, or fear of the future, listen to the inheritance of peace that Jesus has left you believer. I see in this passage three promises of peace that Jesus left us as an inheritance.

Promise 1: Jesus gives us peace through the trustworthy Scriptures

Look at v. 25 “These *things* I have spoken to you while I am still with you. Jesus makes references to “these things” several times throughout His farewell discourse. For instance in **John 15:11**, Jesus says “*These things* I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.” And then again in **John 16:1**, he says “I have said *these things* to you to keep you from falling away.”⁷ So the fullness of our joy and our perseverance hang on *these things*. Therefore our souls couldn’t be in more peril were we to lose these things. So what are *these things*? Put v.25 and v.26 together “These things I have

⁷ also cf. 16:4, 16:6, 16:12, 16:25, 16:33

spoken to you while I am still with you. *But* the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance *all that I have said to you.*"

Did you see it? *These things* are the New Testament Scriptures. Jesus is promising that the Apostles, through the Person of the Holy Spirit, will author the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit will breath Divine teaching into them (and others He chooses) and bring to their remembrance everything that Jesus said. This verse doesn't directly apply to all Christians. Unlike the other "whoever" verses in John, this promise is directed to them for the purpose of writing the inerrant and authoritative Word of God.⁸

Why then is this promise so important for us? The apostles didn't have smart phones or live streaming or electronic devices to capture the words of Christ. How were they to remember His words? How were they to interpret them? How were they to *record* them? And more pertinent to us, how do we know that we can trust them? Because Jesus promised that everything we need for our joy and perseverance will be perfectly preserved by the Holy Spirit inspiring them to write every word of Scripture. That's how massive v. 26 is.

The reason why we have all those precious words of the New Testament is because Jesus guaranteed it. **John 5:24**⁹ exists because of John 14:26. **Matthew 11:27-28**¹⁰ exists because of John 14:26. The N.T. exists because of John 14:26.

And *these things*, as Jesus said in **John 15:11**, are for our complete joy. and, according to **John 16:1**, to keep us from falling away. Dear congregation, you have no joy without John 14:26. And worse, you would be in grave danger. The biggest danger that we face is not cancer, or bankruptcy, or divorce, or

⁸ This is clear, because Jesus specifically says that the Holy Spirit will bring to their remembrance everything that Jesus said to *them*.

⁹ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

¹⁰ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

autism, or anything else. The biggest danger we face is *falling away* from the Living God. Jesus promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit would inspire them to write Scripture for us, in order to *prevent that*.

That is the first promise of peace that Jesus gives us as an inheritance! Is it any wonder that Christians around the world risk their lives to smuggle the Word of God to other nations? The precious word of Christ. Without it, we couldn't be saved. Without it we couldn't love Jesus. What an inheritance!

Promise 2: Jesus gives us peace through joy in Him returning to the Father

Look at v.28 "You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have *rejoiced*, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I."

First, what does Jesus mean here by the Father than I? It is so important to get this verse right, because it is a damnable heresy to get it wrong. Jesus does not mean that as the Eternal Son of God that He is in anyway less than the Father. John has already made this clear from the beginning of this book. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God.**" (**John 1:1**) Jesus Christ is full God. He's not a jr. god. He's not a created god by God the Father. He is 100% equal with the Father in His deity. And unless you believe that, you can't be saved. A Savior who is less than God cannot save anyone. What Jesus means, is that in His humiliation, as He put on flesh, on took on the form of a servant, and didn't "count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing," (**Phil. 2:6-7**), *in that role* the Father was greater than Him. So Jesus is speaking about *role* here. The Father is the sender and He is the one sent, therefore in that sense, the Father is greater.

But how does our love for Jesus *produce joy* in knowing that Jesus has returned to the Father? That's what v.28 says "If you loved me, you would have *rejoiced*, because I am going to the Father," This is what I think He means. Very soon (from the disciple's perspective) Jesus will be in the *fullness of the Father's presence* with all His glory. He says in **John 17:5** "And now, Father, *glorify me in your own presence* with the glory that I had with you before the world existed."

And if we truly love Christ—*our knowing* that He is re-united in the perfect happiness of His Father, sitting at the right hand as King over all nations—will produce in us an other worldly joy. Our joy does not come from this world. It comes from knowing that *very soon* we will be in the *full presence* of the Father and the Son because Jesus finished His work. And this is exactly what Jesus prays in **John 17:24** “Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, *to see my glory* that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.”

That is our second promise of peace that Jesus left us as an inheritance. That our joy does not come from this world, but comes from knowing that because Jesus returned to the Father in full glory, so we shall very soon be in His presence.

Promise 3: Jesus gives us peace by securing our faith

Look at v. 29 “And now I have told you before it takes place, **so that** when it does take place you may believe.” When Jesus spoke about returning to the Father, it’s clear that his return was through the cross. In a few short hours, Jesus will be suffering more than anyone ever has or ever will face in the universe. Infinite pain. And Jesus is pointing out that He is predicting this. He’s prophesying to them ahead of time that this is going to happen. Why? So that when it does, they will believe more deeply. The disciples already believed that Jesus was the Messiah (John 13:10). But they didn’t know that the Messiah had to die. And now Jesus predicts it. Why? So that they and every believer after them would know that Jesus was in charge here. Without the Scriptures telling us over and over again, that the crucifixion was the God’s plan, we would come to wrong conclusion.

So now as we look back on these events 2,000 years later we can see that the crucifixion of Jesus Christ was not a tragedy of history but the preconceived, carefully designed plan of God from all eternity. The whole Bible points to this moment. Why? So that we can believe. Jesus said “so that when it does take place you may believe.” That is what Jesus is aiming at. Our faith.

As John says later “Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who *believes* that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 **John 5:5**) Jesus predicted His death so that we would believe and overcome the world!

Summary

These three promises—the trustworthy Word of God, the joy of seeing Jesus glorified, and faith in His eternal plan is what brings peace in this world. And if you are listening to this message, and think, that is not very practical—I have *real* problems, I need *real* solutions—I would answer in two ways: (1 Do you believe Jesus? Because this is the peace He gives. He doesn’t give peace like the world gives. He himself is our peace (**Ephesians 2:14**) 2) Peace is only real if it can stand up under the worst of circumstances. Answer this in your heart I will have peace if _____. If what? If I get in better shape? If I get approval from others? If I have financial stability? If I get into the right relationship? If my health improves. Those are the world’s answers. If your answer won’t give peace to our Christian brothers and sisters in Nigeria who are being slaughtered by the Boko Haram, then it’s not real peace. If your answer won’t give peace to the Christians suffering under Kim Jung Un, then it’s not real. We need a peace that passes all understanding. All human invention, all human imagination. We need a peace like Darius offered to Daniel when he was about to be thrown in the Lion’s Den. “Your God whom you serve continually is able to deliver you.” (Daniel 6:16) That is the peace that Jesus offers us as our inheritance. “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

Application

Our Doctrine: The postponement of peace is the promise of a greater pleasure

There can be no doubt in at many points in your Christian walk, you will face a crisis in which you are pleading these promises of Christ and yet still no peace is postponed. This is the experience of all true Christians. David cried out in **Psalm 143:7** “Answer me quickly, O LORD! My spirit fails! Hide not your face from me, lest I be like those who go down to the pit.” God often postpones His promises of peace. Why?

Wilhelmus Brakel offers us 5 reasons¹¹ how the postponement of peace will ultimately work out for our highest good.

- 1) **Postponement of peace will teach you to consider the wisdom of God.**
God knows what we need at every moment better than we. Paul asks “Who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” (**Romans 11:34**) When we don’t get the promise of peace at the desired time, we must conclude that God is doing it for infinitely wise reasons for our good.
- 2) **Postponement of peace will cause your faith to grow.** The more we see that nothing in this world will bring us comfort, the more it forces us to rely on God. When Paul faced his most severe trials he said in **2 Corinthians 2:8-9** “For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself...But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.” Postponement of peace makes us rely on God all the more.
- 3) **Postponement of peace will make you reflect on the Sovereignty of God.**
When you grapple with the fact that God can do whatever He wants among

¹¹ Wilhelmus A Brakel, *The Christian’s Reasonable Service, Vol. 2: The Church and Salvation*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Reformation Heritage Books, 1993), pg. 630-631 [Note: Brakel actually provides six reasons with the last one being that postponement makes the soul more grateful]

the inhabitants of the earth, and that none can stay His Hand (**Daniel 4:35**); and that He could convert the whole world if He wanted to; then you will bow to His Sovereign rule over all things, and realize that He will make all things beautiful in His time.¹² God loves when we acknowledge His unmitigated sovereignty.

- 4) **Postponement of peace will teach you true humility.** Brakel says here that “Postponement will humble you, causing you to see your unworthiness and to understand that God will not give [you peace] for your sake [alone].”¹³ When Paul was pleading with the Lord to remove the thorn in his flesh, God finally answered him with a no and said “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” (**2 Corinthians 12:9**) And Paul celebrated this! He would rather have the power of Christ rest upon him in his weakness than to be delivered of the weakness itself. Postponement of peace is so that God’s glory will be more greatly seen.
- 5) **Postponement of peace causes you to yearn more deeply for the Lord.** Reflect for a moment on the times where you longed most deeply for the LORD. Hasn’t it most often been when you felt distant from God? And you cry out “Oh God, please come near me.” God told the Israelites “[I] let you hunger...that you might know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.” (**Deut. 8:3**) God designs spiritual hunger in our lives that we might long for Him more than anything in this world.

Therefore don’t think that because you are missing peace in your life that Jesus’ promises in this passage aren’t true. God often postpones peace so that we might grow more deeply attached to Him than anything in this world.

¹² *ibid*, pg. 630

¹³ *ibid*, pg. 630

That's our **doctrine**: The postponement of peace is the promise of a greater pleasure. Let's consider the other reason why we may have no peace in our duty.

Our Duty: Stop amusing yourself to death

The greatest enemy to your peace in Christ, is when you fill your mind with all the distractions of this world. Neil Postman wrote a seminal work in 1986 entitled *Amusing Ourselves To Death*. In which he basically wrote a commentary on our culture. In it he compared two apocalyptic visions of the future: George Orwell's 1984 and Aldous Huxley's *Brave new world*. This is what Postman said.

“What **Orwell** feared were those who would ban books. What **Huxley** feared was that there would be no reason to ban a book, for there would be no one who wanted to read one. **Orwell** feared those who would deprive us of information. **Huxley** feared those who would give us so much that we would be reduced to passivity and egoism. **Orwell** feared that the truth would be concealed from us. **Huxley** feared the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance. **Orwell** feared we would become a captive culture. **Huxley** feared we would become a trivial culture, preoccupied with some equivalent of the feelies, the orgy porgy, and the centrifugal bumblepuppy. As **Huxley** remarked in *Brave New World Revisited*, the civil libertarians and rationalists who are ever on the alert to oppose tyranny "failed to take into account man's almost infinite appetite for distractions." In 1984, **Orwell** added, people are controlled by inflicting pain. In *Brave New World*, they are controlled by inflicting pleasure. In short, **Orwell** feared that what we fear will ruin us. **Huxley** feared that what we desire will ruin us.”¹⁴

It seems that most of the circles that I run in people are more terrified of Orwell's vision of totalitarianism as opposed to Huxley's view of Hedonism.

¹⁴ <https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/2337731-amusing-ourselves-to-death-public-discourse-in-the-age-of-show-business>

Dear congregation, if Christianity is the side dish to your amusement, you will never have peace. As Neil Postman said, we live in a culture that is amusing ourselves to death. The etymology of amusement is very telling. “Muse” means to think, and the pre-fix a means “without.” Amusement is the recreation of not thinking.

Part of the reason the Christianity in America is so insipid and stagnate is because our culture hates to think. Why does it need to think, it has everything it needs on it’s smart phone, and Netflix, and instant internet access, and a billion new apps to distract you with a billion useless things.

Is it possible that your peace is paper thin because you spend more time on your smart phone than in the Scripture? Is it possible that your family’s peace is suffering because instead engaging in family worship your are worshipping Netflix? Don’t overhear me. There is nothing inherently wrong with either smart phones or Netflix. But what is the priority in your life? People who find worship of the Lord on Sundays boring do so, because they have no appetite for it. They are living lives like the rest of the world. But Jesus tells us in our passage that the world’s peace will never bring you peace. Reflect on your life. Are you pursuing the peace that Jesus offers, or the peace and distractions that this world offers? Isaiah said “You keep him in perfect peace *whose mind is stayed on you*, because he trusts in you.” (Isaiah 26:3)

That’s our **duty**: We must stop amusing ourselves to death. Therefore let’s fix our minds on what our peace cost Jesus in our delight.

Our Delight: Satan is not the reason for our inheritance, Jesus’ obedience is.

Look at v.30-31 “I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.” These are Jesus’ last words spoken in the upper room. Although His farewell discourse continues, the conversation takes place as they are walking

through Jerusalem towards Gethsemane. And how fitting to be walking the streets of Jerusalem in the darkness while speaking about the world's hatred of him. What Jesus says here *at first* is disturbing. "The ruler of this world is coming." 'Satan is on his way to fetch me. The soldiers are gathering in a demonic frenzy as we speak. The darkest hour that the world has ever known is about to take place.' This is disturbing. But Jesus immediately say, as if to correct any wrong conclusions.

"He has no claim on me." 'Satan has nothing on me.' Meaning two things. **First, Jesus is completely free from all sin.** Remember He asks rhetorically in **John 8:46** "Which one of you convicts me of sin?" Jesus has accomplished all righteousness and He has never once compromised His purity, therefore the devil had no legal claim against Christ. 'I am not under the pollution of Satan. He can't touch me.' Satan has no claim on the sinless Son of Man. He has no right over Christ.

But Jesus is saying more. **He's also asserting His absolute sovereign power.** 'Satan has no power over me. I'm not surrendering to Satan because He has more power than me.' Calvin says here "Christ was not dragged to death by the violence of Satan."¹⁵ Jesus gave him power he needed to bring me him to death. Jesus is saying "I'm choosing to be betrayed. I'm choosing to be arrested. I'm choosing the beatings and floggings before Pontius Pilate. I'm going to choose to let those Roman soldiers nail me to that cross and spit on me and mock me."

Why? Jesus if you knew when and where you were going to be betrayed and arrested, and brought to your horrifying death, why would you go? v.31 "I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father." The crucifixion was not Satan's idea, it was the Father's. And Jesus obeyed because He loved the Father. 'The cross is not my defeat, it's my victory I'm not under the power of Satanic forces, I'm under the power of Fatherly love. I love obeying Him. And when my work is finished, the world will know that I

¹⁵ John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries Vol. XVIII*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: BakerBooks, 2009), pg. 105

love the Father. And all my people who gain everlasting life.' Satan is not the reason for our inheritance, Jesus' obedience is.

Benediction: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope."