

## II Thessalonians 03:16 Part 1 The Concept of Peace

Alright, we are in the last three verses of II Thessalonians. II Thessalonians only has three chapters and today we begin our study in verses 16 through 18. I say *begin* because it looks like we will have to finish up next week with this important subject that we have concerning peace. That all elusive peace that people are trying to obtain. It is interesting what the Bible teaches about peace.

Only three verses here at the end but it is packed full as Paul uses these three verses to sign off and to minister to those that he has been ministering to concerning the false concept about the time of tribulation, or the period of tribulation. There were those who said that Paul had said through either a letter that they saw, or that he had written to them personally, that Paul said that we were in the day of judgment because of all of the trials that they were going through. And so Paul had to correct the false teaching about the judgment in chapter 2. He did that as he set the story straight about the tribulation period, that seven-year period of judgment that is to come upon the earth.

But in chapter 3 we have been studying about the commandments concerning their testimony while waiting for the coming of the Lord.

The first command was, **Pray concerning us**, - in verse 1, meaning concerning Paul - **that the gospel might have free run, and that the Lord might be glorified in His gospel.** (verse 2) that he, Paul, **might be delivered from twisted and evil men**, that is those who oppose the free run of the word of God. Paul was not praying for himself, he was praying for the outcome and purpose of his life, which was the ministry of God's word.

The second thing he commanded, we studied in verses 6 through 15. He says, **Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, for you to withdraw from every brother walking disorderly, and not according to the tradition which he received from us.** The tradition was down in verse 10, which reads, **For even when we were with you, this we were commanding you, that if anyone does not desire to work.** It does not say, "if someone is not working," it says, **If somebody desires not to work, then neither let him eat.**

Paul used himself as an example that he worked night and day so as to not be a burden to anyone. He would not take food as a gift, which as he stated he has authority to do. The Scripture says that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel (I Corinthians 9:14). And Paul, here in chapter 3, he is saying that he worked day and night in order to be an example to them, not taking any food as a gift. Because they had a problem in that church with people not desiring to work with some kind of spiritual mystical reason. They said, "The Lord is going to come at any moment. We are in the tribulation and I just do not want to be a part of this world." And you know this whole approach, they made it be very spiritual. And Paul says, "If a person does not have a desire to work, then let them not eat." And Paul says, "I was an example amongst you. I worked night and day and paid for my own food, so that is what you are supposed to do."

But in Thessalonica people purposely did not work. They had a desire not to work so Paul could not do it too because they could say, "We are doing the same thing as Paul is doing." So Paul says, "If anybody has a right not to work, that is, *physically labor* in order to minister the gospel," Paul says it was him. So Paul was an example. He laid down his life to be an example to the ones who did not desire to work.

But then as we get into the texts today, in fact starting at verse 14 it says, **If anybody does not obey our word through the letter, mark this one, and do not associate with him,** - he says. That is, do not socially associate or mix with him - **in order that he might be ashamed.** Verse 15, **Yet do not count him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.** Do not treat him like an enemy, he is a family member. But the whole point of not associating with him is to make him feel ashamed. The worst thing that can happen is to make a disorderly person feel comfortable in their disorderliness. The whole point is to cause them to miss fellowship by disassociating with them.

And as Paul said in I Corinthians 5, that we took last week, about the man sleeping with his stepmother and they did not do anything about it. He says, (verse 5) **You know to give him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his soul can be saved in the day of the Lord.** And so, the person is not an enemy. This is discipline, not punishment. Keep that in mind.

So as we start today in verse 16, as we study the prayer of Paul concerning peace. So as we finish this letter, verse 16 of II Thessalonians chapter 3, it says, **Now may the Lord of peace Himself give to you peace.** The word *peace* literally is *the peace*. **May the Lord give to you the peace,** the specific, the particular peace that the Bible, in fact, Paul was teaching. It has the definite article *the*. **May He give to you the peace through everything in every way.** That little phrase there that says, *through everything in every way*, that is, *at all times in every situation*. At all times in every situation may He give you peace.

Then He finishes this verse by saying, **The Lord is with all of you.** If you are following along with an English translation, the word *be* is in italics, **the Lord *be* with you all**, that is because it is not in the original text. This indicates that it is not in the original language. And I am afraid when some of the translators of some of the English translations put the word *be* and it is showing that it is a wish of Paul, when in reality, it is a fact. May the Lord be with you all, He is with us all. So it is a factual statement that the Lord is with you all. That was the whole point. There is no chance that He will never be. And he is saying, **The Lord is with you all at all times in every situation.** That is the emphasis here at the end.

I want to go back to verse 16 because verse 16 involves the Lord of peace. Paul's prayer for them and it is a wish, it is in the optative mood in Greek, it says, **May the Lord of peace Himself give to you the peace.** Not *peace* in general, there is a particular peace that he is talking about.

Let us take the word *peace* itself, εἰρήνη (eirēnē) in Greek and the concept of it is *of unity and oneness with something*. To be in unity or oneness with someone or something. It other words, not fighting against them but on the same side, joining with them to become one.

That is what the word *peace* means and it has different applications both in the world and in the Scripture. That is what we are doing this morning, we are studying what peace means in Scripture, according to God not according to the world.

So he says this peace is to be through everything, that is, at all times and in every way. Now the Lord Jesus Christ is called in this text *the Lord of peace*, who He himself gives peace to His people. Not just peace as tranquility in the flesh, but the flesh is not promised to be at peace or tranquil. Please remember that. There is nowhere in God's word where it promises that the human flesh God promises to bring to be at peace. But the Lord of peace gives the particular peace to His people and that is what Paul is praying over them.

First of all, I want to take two things in verse 16 about peace. First of all, the concept of peace that is what we are studying this morning, the concept of peace. And second of all, that we will take next Sunday, the condition of peace, how to experience peace. So the first thing I want to say about the concept of peace is that the Bible is different than the concept of peace in the world. Jesus said in John chapter 14 verse 27, **Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you, not as the world gives to you I give to you.** The peace that is in the world is physical and human and fleshly, but the peace that Jesus gives is internal, it is personal in response to God's peace that He gives through Jesus Christ.

Unfortunately the world's view of peace has entered into the church and people are pursuing peaceful circumstances and peaceful flesh - peaceful in the human and God just does not promise that.

He says in verse 16, **Now may the Lord of peace.** The second thing about the concept of peace is that Jesus is the Lord of peace. That is His title. He is the Lord of peace. We read in Isaiah chapter 9 verse 6 it says, **His name** (talking about the Messiah), **His name shall be called Counselor, a Wonder, Everlasting Father, and Prince of peace.** He is the Lord of peace. He is the Prince of peace. He is our peace. So basically those who have Christ they are at peace with God, they have made their peace with God. And we will get to that when we study the conditions of peace next week and how to experience this peace that God has given to us.

Thirdly, peace is personified in Christ. Ephesians chapter 2 beginning at 13 says, **But now in Christ Jesus you who once were afar off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.** Ephesians chapter 2 verse 14, **For He himself is our peace.** That is Ephesians chapter 2 verse 14, that is how the Greek text reads. This is not peace and tranquility. He is the peace. Peace is a person, not a feeling. He himself is our peace. And again, that word has a definite article with it. He is the peace from God.

**For He himself is our peace who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,** that is, between Jew and Gentile, **to make everyone one.** Bring everybody in a unit together - all believers, everybody in Christ is one, at peace. It is peace, not peace is a feeling, but when two people are at peace it means they are not fighting. They are one. They are united now. And so the Lord is our peace. So the moment that I received Christ He gave me himself. I am now at peace with God because I have Christ. Christ is my peace, you see. When He promises to give me peace, He promises me to give Himself.

In other words everything around me might be in turbulence, even the flesh or circumstantially, and the Lord is there to say, "I am right here." Then we might say, "Yes, but my flesh and my circumstances are not at peace." There is no peace with my circumstances. There is no peace with my flesh, but that is not what God promises. The Lord says, "You have peace, I am right here." So it is becoming one with Him that is peace. It is not a feeling. It is a relationship.

But that is interesting. In John chapter 16 verse 33 Jesus told the disciples before He went to the cross to die, He says, **These things I have spoken unto you that in Me you might have peace.** He did not say, "Come to me, and I will give you peace, and you can run off and feel tranquil in your circumstances." He says, **That in me you might have peace.** My flesh might not be at peace. My circumstances might not be calm and at peace but the Lord says, **In me you might have peace. In your spirit, Jesus says, where I dwell.**

Again that picture of the concept of Jesus in the boat with the disciples. And when the hurricane force came on the Sea of Galilee and the Lord was asleep in the back of the boat, that is perfect picture of peace. In the midst of a hurricane, out in a rowboat, sleeping. Perfect peace. Where the boat was filling up with water, where the waves were splashing up against the boat, and the boat was filling up and turbulence all around to the point where the disciples cried out and said, "Help us or we are going to be destroyed." The Lord was at perfect peace because He was in control. That is why we get shaken up by our circumstances, we are not in control. The Lord is in control so He does not need to do anything except bring us to himself. Basically His message to them was, "Have courage, I am in the boat with you. There is peace here in the boat."

Again in John 16:33 it is recorded that Jesus told the disciples, **These things I have spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulations and trials,** He said, **but be of good cheer; for I have overcome the world.** So whatever the situation is, you will overcome it. Will. It is a factual statement. Not stop it so it will not happen, but you will overcome. So the concept of peace in the Bible is the person of Jesus Christ. Period. Our problem is our whole understanding of the concept of peace and what peace is.

I think about the person who went over and there is a hot water pipe in their apartment, and they grabbed hold of the hot water pipe, and it was burning their hand, and they called out for help. And when help came they said, "Why do you not let go of the pipe, it will not burn your hands?" You see, the problem is we are attached to our physical bodies. We are attached to the world and the people that are in it. We have a hold of them, a control on them, so that when things go turbulent or go astray in the situation, we cry out to the Lord to intercede to make the circumstances calm down, because that is what we have a hold of. I am asking for the Lord to help me and give me peace but that is dependent upon Him changing my circumstances. The Bible says, "Let go." Take up your cross and follow the Lord. So our position of peace is to Christ, let the situation go and our focus is one in unity with Him, then we are at peace. But it will be an inner peace where Christ dwells, not in the flesh, not in the physical worldly sense. There will not be peace ever until Christ comes, but it will be in our spirit were Christ dwells.

In Isaiah chapter 26 verse 3 it says, **You**, meaning *God*, **You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed** (or *fixed*) **on You, because he trusts in You**. See, our boat where Christ dwells we have a boat up here, this mind, this psyche, and that is what entertains all the thoughts and feelings that the flesh goes through, or what we go through personally, and Christ is in the boat with us. He is there at peace and so everything outside of us, outside of our boat, including our physical bodies; including our possessions and material things; including the people, and things, and events of the world, are all of the physical realm. And we are so associated with them and so involved with them, that if anything goes wrong we start crying for help. When the real person that needs help is me. I need to be at one with Christ. If I take my mind off of Him then that situation and that circumstance is going to drive me up a wall. So it is committing it to Him.

Next week, when we study the condition of peace we will find out that we who have received Christ, we all have peace with God, through Jesus Christ, but we all do not experience the peace of Christ. That is dependent upon our focus and our trust. See, peace is a person as we just studied, not a feeling. It is not looking for tranquility, it is looking for oneness with Christ. Some people say, "Oh, I am looking for the peace of Christ." While looking for Him to give them some shot of tranquility in the flesh or calm our circumstances because we are such a psychological and/or emotional turmoil over it all. But yet the Lord says, "I am right here. I am Your peace." Peace is a person, not a feeling. Peace is not a condition. It is Christ.

So from II Thessalonians chapter 3 verse 16 it says, **Now may the Lord of peace give to you peace**. He is called the Lord of peace. He is called the Prince of peace. And the Bible says, **He is our peace**, that in Him we might have peace. So the concept of peace in the Bible is the person of Jesus Christ. And my experience of peace is how I relate to Him in the midst of all the situations. In one sense, I always have peace with God, but in another sense I do not always experience the peace of God, and we will study this condition of peace next week.

Let's close with prayer.