

II Thessalonians 3:16 Part 2 The Condition of Peace

We are in II Thessalonians chapter 3, verses 16 through 18 part two. II Thessalonians 3:16-18 part two. We have studied in chapter 1 about the instruction concerning afflictions. We saw in chapter 2 the instruction concerning the day of the Lord. We saw the II Thessalonians chapter 3 the instructions concerning their testimony. And we have studied those instructions all the way through verse 15 of Chapter 3.

And then last week we picked up in verse 16, the prayer of Paul concerning peace. He says in verse 16, **Now may the Lord of peace Himself give peace to you through everything in every way. The Lord is with all of you.** That is Paul's prayer for them, **that the Lord of peace Himself will give peace to you.** Last week we saw the definition of peace from the Greek word **εἰρήνη** (eirēnē), which means *to be at one with* or *unified with* someone or something. To be at one with someone.

We are taking two things concerning peace. Last week we saw the concept of peace. And today we are taking the condition of peace. Last week in the concept of peace we saw three things:

- 1) The concept of peace in the Bible is different than the concept of peace in the world. The world applies peace to circumstances and to the physical body. The Bible presents that peace is the person of Christ as we will see in a moment. In John chapter 14 verse 27 Jesus said, **Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.** Peace is different with Christ in the inner man. Spiritual peace is different than physical peace in the Bible as it teaches. So first of all, the concept of peace in the Bible is different than the concept of peace in the world.
- 2) The title of Jesus is, He is the Lord of peace. That is what he says in this verse: **May the Lord of peace Himself give to you.** So His title is He is the Lord of peace. We saw from Isaiah chapter 9 verse 6 that the Messiah, who is Jesus, is called the Prince of peace. So He is the Lord of peace and He is the Prince of peace.
- 3) We saw from Ephesians chapter 2 verse 14 where it states literally **He himself is our peace.** Not only does He give us peace, but He gives us Himself. He himself is our peace. In John chapter 16 verse 33 Jesus told His disciples, **These things I have spoken unto you that in Me you might have peace.** Christ is our peace.

We have studied the incident of Jesus in the boat with the disciples out on the sea. And a hurricane storm whipped up the waves and the sea, and a great storm came and filled the boat with water, and Jesus was asleep in the back of the boat. And the disciples were panicking, bailing water. Finally they realize they did not have a chance and they came to Jesus and woke Him up and said, "Help us! We are going to be destroyed." So Jesus gets up and He stills, calms the waves and the sea, the storm stopped instantly. And of course, the disciples said one to another, **"What manner of person is this that even the wind and the seas obey Him?"** Their

perception of Jesus was now enlarged to encompass the fact that He is in control. If He is in control to stop it, He is also in control to let it rage. He is sleeping in the back of the boat. The disciples are panicking. That is the message of Scripture. If you have received Jesus Christ, He is in the boat with you. And though the storm rages all around, He is our peace. He gives us Himself. While we look to have the storm calmed, He is directing us to Himself.

We ended off last time with Isaiah chapter 26 verse 3 where it says, **You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed (or fixed) on You because he trusts in you.** So the mind that is fixed on Christ - not psychological principles, but on Christ Himself in the boat - that person who is fixed on Christ will be at peace because they will be at one with, they will be unified with Christ in the midst of the circumstances, and that is very important.

So the concept of peace is He is called the Lord of peace. He is called the Prince of peace. And the concept of peace is that He himself is our peace. Peace is a person, the person of Jesus Christ.

Now for today - that was the concept of peace - today it is the Condition of peace. Very important. There are two kinds of conditions of peace that are talked about in our relationship with Jesus Christ. First of all, before I receive Christ the Bible says I was at enmity toward God. *Enmity* means *hostility*. So the Bible says I was hostile towards God before I received Christ. It says in Romans chapter 8 verses 7 and 8, **The mind of the flesh is hostile toward God: for it is not being subject to the law of God, for neither is it able. And the ones existing in the flesh are not able to please God.** So it says, **the mind of the flesh**, the word *mind* is *φρόνημα* (*phronēma*), which has to do with the *frame of mind*, the *attitude*, the *flow of thought of the mind*, which is very important for us for today. My natural mind, the mind of the flesh is hostile towards God. It is rebellion against God.

In James chapter 4 verse 4 he says, **Do you not know that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Hostile with God. Whoever therefore decides to be a friend of the world is being established as an enemy of God.** So the natural mind is hostile towards God. Friendship with the world is hostility towards God because the world is run by Satan himself. God is overseeing. Satan is the one who is in charge of the world. But the moment that I received Jesus Christ I became at peace with God. That is positional. That never changes, ever.

Paul said in Romans chapter 5 verse 1, **Therefore having been justified out of faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.** Having been justified by faith we have peace with God, we are no longer fighting against Him. When you receive Jesus Christ you are surrendering to Him, submitting to Him as Lord and as Savior. My position with Him is that I am no longer fighting against Him, I am now with Him and He is with me. I am no longer the enemy of God. I have peace with God. It does not say I have the peace of God, it says I have **peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.** I am no longer hostile against Him. I am no longer enemies with Him. I am no longer rebelling or resisting or fighting against Him. I have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. That is positional and that is for all of time. No matter what happens or what I do I have peace with God through Jesus Christ. Now this is important.

Secondly, there is a difference in the Bible between having the peace with God and experiencing or having the peace of God. That is conditional. Experiencing the peace of God is conditional.

If you have your Bibles, or care to, you can turn with me to Philippians chapter 4 verse 1. I am always at peace with God, but I do not always experience the peace of God. In Philippians chapter 4 beginning at verse 1, **So then, my beloved and longed for brothers, my joy and crown, so stand** - the word *so* means *this way*. **This way stand firm in the Lord, beloved.** (verse 2) **I encourage Euodias, and I encourage Syntyche, to think the same thing in the Lord.** Notice how it is literally translated: **to think the same thing in the Lord.** English translations translate it as *having the same mind in the Lord*, but it is literally **to think the same thing in the Lord.** That is that φρήν (phrēn), that φρόνημα (phronēma), that *frame of mind*. Now, he is not asking them to have the same thoughts. Basically the word *think* or the word *mind* has to do with the *frame of mind*, as I just mentioned.

Here were two women in the church in Philippi who are fighting with each other over something. There is one woman that might have wanted a green rug in the nursery and the other one in a red rug in the nursery. Well, when Paul said that they should have the same mind or literally think the same thing, it means have the same frame of mind. They are to think the same thing in the Lord. In other words, whatever your opinion is, the bottom line is functioning together in the body of Christ, you want with the Lord wants. To think the same thing in the Lord is to want what the Lord wants. Then we have unity. Then we have peace. But the Lord runs His church. Maybe the Lord does not want a rug in the nursery at all. Maybe He wants a brown rug. Who knows? It is whatever the Lord wants. It is not what we want. So when you bring two parties together, to where they say, "Here are our differences," but the question is, "Do you want what the Lord wants?" Then you solved the issue. If a person is not ready to come to that point then you know where the problem is. The problem is not whether there is a green rug or red rug, the problem is whether we want what the Lord wants or not. And then the focus goes off of the rugs and on to the self-will and what one wants.

But he says, **I encourage Euodias, and I encourage Syntyche, to think the same thing,** that is, have the same purpose and intent, have the same frame of mind that no matter what our differences are, we want what the Lord wants.

Verse 3 of Philippians chapter 4, **I ask you also, true companions, assist them who struggle together with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers whose names are in the book of life.** These women who were having this little rift with each other are really godly women. They struggle with Paul and the Gospel, and he is encouraging them, **help these women.** He says, "their names are in the book of life." It is possible for people whose names are in the book of life to not get along. Christians do not get along because we all have our wants and desires, the way we want things to be. So he is saying, "I am encouraging you, help these women. They struggle with me, their names are in the book of life, they belong to Christ, but they have this issue." The issue is, and the answer to the issue is, you have to want what the Lord wants, no matter what the differences are.

So here we go with principle number one that Paul said in Philippians chapter 4, principle number one to solve this issue and bring people to think the same thing in the Lord. First of all, Philippians chapter 4 verse 4 is the first principle. It says, **Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I will say, rejoice.** The word *rejoice* in Greek has to do with satisfaction. So he says, **Be satisfied in the Lord at all times and again I will say,** that is, I am going to keep on saying it over and over again, **be satisfied.** I will say it today, I will say it tomorrow. The key principle in the oneness and peace among believers is to be satisfied with the Lord. What if I do not get my way? What if I do not get what I want? What if the Lord is leading in a different direction? If my satisfaction is in the Lord then whatever He wants and whatever He does is satisfying to me. So he says, "If you make the Lord your satisfaction you will be able to be of the same mind and same attitude towards things in the church together." So he says, **Rejoice or be satisfied in the Lord at all times and again I will say be satisfied.**

The second principle is in Philippians chapter 4 verse 5. The second principle, **Let your moderation,** as the King James says it, the New King James says *gentleness*. **Let your moderation be known to all men. The Lord is near.** To be *moderate* or *to be gentle* is *to hold back, withdraw, yield to others*. Moderation, not indulgent. In other words, when you get too involved in the world and are so self-indulgent that is the problem. That is why you cannot be satisfied in the Lord. You are too deep. You want more of it all your way. You need to back off and let your moderation be known. Are you known for a moderate person or a self-indulgent person? Maybe Euodias and Syntyche were self-indulgent people. They are just very materialistic and very much in the world. And he says, **The Lord is near,** you should not be that involved with the world nor what you want.

The third principle is found in Philippians chapter 4 verse 6. I will give it to you literally, **Be not anxious about one thing.** The word anxious is our word **μεριμνάω** (*merimnao*) that we have studied over the years, which means literally *do not allow the attention of your mind to be occupied with one thing*. Again, **Do not let the attention of your mind be occupied with one thing; but in everything by prayer and supplication** - and the word *supplication* means *petitioning specific things*, so prayer in general and petitioning specific things - **with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.** So if you have something you are anxious about, then give it to the Lord through prayer. Euodias and Syntyche were obviously very anxious about whatever the quarrel was. Do not let it be on your mind. Give it to the Lord with thanksgiving, that is you are thanking the Lord that you can give it to Him and that He will take it off. He will take the load off. So we can let the Lord know our requests and we can do it with thankfulness that He is there to take the burden and take the situation.

So when anything comes along that grabs the attention of your mind and gets you so anxious and worried, give it to the Lord. And guess what? You will experience the peace of God. You are always at peace with God, that is positional. I am always in Christ therefore I am always at peace with God. That makes the peace of God available to me. I do not always experience the peace of God though, though I am always at peace with Him. So for me to experience the peace of God I am to be satisfied with the Lord, handle the world with moderation, and everything that comes my way that draws me into anxiety and worry, I am to give it to the Lord in prayer with thanksgiving so that I can be at peace. Not so that my flesh can be at peace. Not so that my conditions can be at peace. The situation might never go away. But

the point is we can experience the peace of God because Christ is our peace, because He is the Prince of peace and the Lord of peace.

The Lord said again in John chapter 16 verse 33, **These things I have spoken unto you in order that in Me you might have peace.** So many times we find ourselves going to the Lord in prayer asking for peace in the circumstances or in the flesh. The Lord will not answer that prayer because that is not what He does. He basically says, "I am right here, trust Me."

Then Paul goes on to say in Philippians chapter 4 verse 7 - the result of all this, these three principles, the result of all of this - **And the peace of God, the peace that is surpassing all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.** The peace of God is going to guard our hearts and thoughts. It is going to stand guard so that we will experience the Prince of peace and the Lord of peace Himself who lives inside.

We go back to our verse that we often quote in Psalm 46 verse 10 where it says, **Be still and know that I am God.** That is peace. Faith is giving up any concept or any way in which we want things to turn out, or hope that it will turn out. We only want what the Lord wats. We are at peace because we know it is going to happen. So when we are lined up with Him - not the circumstances, or my flesh, when I am lined up with Him: I have committed myself and the situation to Him for His will to be done, I will always experience the peace of God because He never changes. **He is the same yesterday, today and forever,** as the Scripture says. My flesh will change; the circumstances might not ever change; He, Christ, never changes. He is my anchor. Circumstances do not have to change with Christ. He is teaching me to look inward where Christ dwells. He is calling us to study His word, to strengthen the inner man where Christ dwells, the inner relationship, not the outer relationship: the circumstances and the flesh.

We will take next week to finish out II Thessalonians as we take the last two verses and we are going to study about prayer, let your requests be made known to God. How does that work peace out for us? We are going to study that next week.

Let's close in prayer.