



WHERE'S THE PEACE?  
THE SUNDAY OF ST. LUKE, EVANGELIST (10-17-10)  
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*Grace, peace and mercy from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen!*

Our sermon today is: “Where’s the Peace?” This last week in Salem 2 women, a mother and daughter were stabbed by the daughter’s husband, such violence. Where’s the Peace? A convenience store clerk on Center Street, just around the corner, had a man come into the store and open fire upon him. Fortunately he wasn’t hit. But Where’s the Peace? Warfare continues in Iraq and Afghanistan not to mention Pakistan and India they really don’t want us there. Where’s the Peace? Drug cartels are pouring into the U.S. from South America creating armies of profiteers and thugs to push their product. Gang violence is up. Where’s the Peace? In our own homes children have strife with parents and parents with children. Husband and wives live in discord and discontentment. Where’s the Peace?

The Word of the Lord for today is from Luke 10:9: ***“Heal the sick...and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’”***

## I. THE EVANGELIST AND THE 72

***“Heal the sick and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’”*** St. Luke must have been filled with delight when guided by the Holy Spirit to place these words in his Gospel. St. Luke is known in the Church as “the Evangelist” because he is one of the human authors of the Gospels. He was also, by training, a doctor; and without the knowledge and medicine treatment of our day, one can only imagine how many times he sat helplessly watching a patient die. In our epistle lesson, St. Paul mentions Luke as the only one who is with him as he waits his execution in Rome.

In other words, Luke has witnessed a lot of “the wages of sin”. The one who desired to heal others saw an awful lot of death. But he also was given to record the Gospel, including this text where Jesus sent out the 72 to prepare the way for Jesus where He was about to go. Along with various instructions of what not to pack and how to behave, Jesus gave them two blessings to speak. When they entered a house, they were to say, ***“Peace be to this house!”*** This was much more than a hello. As these disciples went out, they went out as the Lord’s spokesmen—His ambassadors. When they spoke His Word, it was He who was speaking to those who heard. It was Jesus speaking peace to them. It was Jesus giving the peace to them.

What was the big deal about this peace? Follow what “peace” means in Luke’s Gospel. When John the Baptist was born, his father Zechariah declared that John would prepare the way for the Lord, who would ***“give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace”*** (Luke 1:79). The Lord who spoke peace came to rescue people from spiritual darkness and the shadow of impending death. In fact, the night that He was born, angels appeared to shepherds near Bethlehem to proclaim, ***“Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His people on earth.”*** The Baby in the manger was born to bring peace: death-defeating peace. So when Simeon held the baby Jesus at the temple, he prayed, ***“Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.”*** Simeon could die without fear of condemnation for his sin, because the Son of God had become flesh to save.

And the Son of God did become flesh to save. He became man to take man’s place on the cross, to be crucified for the sins of the world. He suffered God’s entire judgment for the sins of mankind, for

man's strife and enmity against God. With the judgment carried out and God's wrath satisfied, all that was left was...peace. So when the risen Lord first appeared to the disciples on the evening of that first Easter, His first words were: "**Peace to you**" (Luke 24:36). He was saying, "I have died for your sins; risen again, I'm back not for vengeance. I'm back to give you peace with Me. Peace with God. I forgive your sins, I rescue you from death, I give you eternal life, I give you peace!"

When the 72 in our Gospel lesson entered a house and said, "**Peace be to this house!**" this is what they were talking about. By the Word they were sent to speak, they came to deliver the hearers from the darkness of sin and death and the devil.

As the 72 proclaimed God's Word, their preaching was to be accompanied by miracles. Jesus sent them to heal the sick by His Word; and when people were healed, the disciples were to say to them, "**The kingdom of God has come near to you.**" That news was as important as it was good. Those healed wouldn't be misled to believe that one of the 72 had done this healing; the message made it clear that the disciple was only a messenger of the King and His power. But the kingdom of heaven had come near because the King was near: as near as His saving Word. When the disciples spoke the King's Word, the King accomplished what He willed His Word to accomplish. By His Word, He healed the sick and made them well again; and by those miracles, He demonstrated His power over sin, death and disease.

So put yourself in the shoes of St. Luke this 1st century physician. Mortality rates are high and medical treatments were crude. Doctors watched a lot of people die, and a godly doctor knows that death is in the world because of sin—and there's no medical treatment or cure for that. But here is the Good News for doctors and patients both: One has come to bring peace. Because of His Sacrifice for sin, He brings forgiveness, healing and deliverance from death forever. He comes: the kingdom of heaven draws near because the King draws near with life and salvation; and He is as near as His Word.

That's the message of St. Luke, the 72 and all who are called to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

## II. (†) HE'S STILL NEAR TODAY

So I proclaim to you, here and now: "**Peace be to this house!**" God sends His peace to you. You are at peace with God. God is at peace with you. Jesus the Christ, the Prince of Peace, was born of Mary to end the strife between you and God. He went to the cross and suffered the strife and judgment, so that God might declare to you, "You are no longer My enemy, whom I must destroy; for Jesus' sake, you are My beloved child and the kingdom of heaven is yours. With you I have peace!"

God delivers His peace to you. This is vital, this comforting news because you also sat in darkness and the shadow of death. And you live in this darkening world where sickness and affliction are all too common, and where death appears to have the final word. ***The wages of sin is death*** (Rom 6:23a): that is part of God's righteous judgment on mankind for sin. But that's no longer God's final word for you. Jesus Christ does not say, "Fear and dread to this house, for judgment will come upon you." No He said to His disciples after His Resurrection, while in their presence, "**Peace to you.**" Have you ever noticed in our Liturgy right after the consecration of the Lord's Supper I say, "*Pax Domini, The peace of the Lord be with you always.*" Why is that said? Because the Lord is present, and where He (†) is present there is peace. And so I proclaim to you once again, "**Peace be to this house!**"

But is this true? After all, you may still experience all manners of afflictions and suffering in your lives. Do these words really deliver peace, or are they just a nice sentiment, and nothing more? In other words, how can you be certain that God truly is at peace with you? The answer is the cross (†), the death of Jesus Christ your Savior. His death was the Sacrifice for all sin—not just some sin. Therefore, because you are the Lord’s penitent, forgiven child, the Lord has no wrath left for you. Romans 8:32 says If He **“did not spare his own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?”** Were God to consider you an enemy now, He would have to deny His Son’s sacrifice to take away your sin. He will not do that. You are His child.

But what, then, of the sufferings that trouble you? What do these things tell you about God’s love and kindness toward you? Afflictions won’t tell you about God’s love: Jesus’ death on the cross tells you how much God loves you. But when you are allowed to suffer, here is something to keep in mind.

Hebrews 12:6-11 says this, please listen: ***For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.***

As long as we are in this sinful world, there’s need for the Lord to discipline us—not to punish us out of wrath, but to train us out of love. We too easily fall prey to all sorts of temptations; and if we didn’t face adversity or hardship, we would easily think that we weren’t sinful and really didn’t need God’s grace or mercy. Therefore, the Lord permits hardship. As a loving parent disciplines a child and even allows a child to fail so that he can learn, so the Lord will permit trouble into our lives in order to remind us of our sin, our weaknesses, and most importantly our need for His grace and mercy. But all of this is done under the watchful eye of a loving Father. You might be tempted to believe that He’s angry with you (much like a teenager shouts out “I know you hate me” at the parent who disciplines out of love); but you know that He cannot be angry with you. Christ has taken away your sin: there’s nothing left in you for God to be angry with.

Furthermore, God doesn’t just discipline. Psalm 103:13 reminds you, ***“As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him.”*** He’s at peace with you, and you are at peace with Him.

It’s also good to hang on to these astonishing words from St. Paul in Romans 8:18: ***“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”*** This is the same St. Paul as the one in our epistle (2 Timothy 4:5-18), imprisoned for preaching the Gospel who is about to be executed. ***“The sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed in us,”*** he says this not to demean your sufferings. Paul’s point is not to say, “Shape up, soldier, because things could be a worse.” Where you are troubled, he’s not accusing you of being soft. Instead, he’s saying: no matter how difficult the suffering here, the sufferings of the present time are nothing compared to the joy that awaits you in heaven. This is cause for hope and further evidence that God is not angry with you: heavenly joys await you

because God has given His only Son up to the cross to make it so. God is not angry with you. He is at peace with you, and you are at peace with Him. So I say again, ***“Peace be to this house.”***

Furthermore, I proclaim this Word of the Lord to you: ***“The kingdom of God has come near to you.”*** That’s what the 72 announced to those whom they healed by the power of Jesus, and I announce to you the same: for while you may not be healed of injury or sickness until the Day of Resurrection, Jesus has already raised you from death to life by the forgiveness of your sins. Therefore, you can be sure that He will heal you of every bodily affliction on the Last Day, if not before. This is true for you because the kingdom of God has come near you; and this is true because the King has come near to you. In this Gospel we proclaim, your King is present to forgive your sins, to renew the grace that He first gave when you were baptized. In His Holy Supper, He draws near with His body and blood for the forgiveness of sins—the same body and blood He had when He went to those villages first visited by the 72. Your King comes near to you here and now - again and again, so that you might always be with Him.

That was the hope of St. Luke the Evangelist—physician, sinner, friend of St. Paul and follower of Jesus. That is your hope, too. The Lord is not angry with you, because Jesus has suffered God’s wrath and died for you already. Instead, He has only grace and favor, healing and life—all according to His will, His wisdom and His timing. In this in-between period, by faith keep your eyes fixed firmly on the cross (†)—because it is for Jesus’ sake that you know all this to be true:

Peace be to this house, for the kingdom of God has come near to you. And because the King has come near with peace, you can know beyond any doubt that all your sins are forgiven for Jesus Christ sake, for in Jesus you have true peace. In Jesus name, Amen and Amen!

*The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and mind in Christ Jesus, AMEN.*