

Through Jesus, we have peace the world cannot give!

by Pastor Gunnar Ledermann | May 26, 2019

Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

“All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

“You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe.

John 14:23-29

In his book, “Disruptive Witness,” Alan Noble explains the idea that sharing Jesus with a non-believing world has become more difficult today because having a conversation with people has become more difficult. He said that most people are not asking themselves the fundamental philosophical questions: where did we come from, where are we going, what determines good & evil and what is the meaning of life. Most people are not asking these questions because they are distracted. Noble wrote, “a culture of technological distraction inclines us to look for meaning in preoccupation, novelty, consumer choices, and stimulation. So long as we are moving on to the next thing, we feel that our life has some direction and therefore meaning.”

Distraction makes it difficult to share Jesus with others, but those same distractions also keep us from listening to Jesus. In a world promising direction, meaning and even peace in the distractions, our Gospel reading from John 14 says that **through Jesus, we have peace the world cannot give!**

Many today are distracted from asking themselves some of the fundamental philosophical questions. There may be a lack of philosophical thought in

our society but that is why we watch television, so that someone else will do it for us. In a recent interview on a popular talk show, a famous actor was asked, “What do you think happens when we die?” There was a pause as the conversation suddenly turned deeper, then the actor responded to the host, “I know that the ones who love us will miss us.” The response got applause from the audience and since airing, the video has gone viral on social media.

There is a problem with the response though, it did not answer the question. The answer given spoke to those left behind but did not address what happened to the person who died. The answer satisfied many of the viewers because it distracted them from the unsettling reality that they do not know what to expect when they die.

Jesus revealed the answers to life’s most difficult questions to his disciples. In our Gospel reading from John 14, Jesus answered the question, “What happens when we die?” He told the disciples that he was going to heaven to prepare a place for them, so that he can come back and bring them there.

This also meant that Jesus was going to be leaving for heaven before them, so he was going to send them the Holy Spirit. Jesus told them, **26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.**”

We have to pull ourselves away from all the distractions to understand what Jesus was telling the disciples here. They followed him as the Savior watching his power and listening to his preaching. When they were with Jesus, they were seeing a glimpse of heaven, but he was not going to stay with them. It was easy for them to have peace when Jesus was standing with them, but if he was gone, what would they do?

The search for answers to life’s most difficult questions and the desire for distractions both feed our universal need for peace as human beings. Jesus answered all life’s most important questions for the disciples, but his physical presence was also a tempting distraction. Jesus’ purpose was not to remain on the earth, but to come from heaven, save us and return to heaven.

Any one of us would have been tempted by the false peace the disciples had in the mere physical presence of Jesus. The peace that lasts from Jesus only

comes from the Holy Spirit. In our reading from Acts 14, Paul and Barnabas brought the message of Jesus to the people of Lystra. While Paul was teaching there, God allowed him to miraculously heal a man, which substantiated the powerful claims Paul was making about Jesus and the resurrection. The miracle was meant as a good thing, but the crowd quickly misunderstood, distracted by its power.

They began to treat Paul and Barnabas like they were gods forgetting all they had said about Jesus. The crowd saw a chance to meet their need for peace in Paul and Barnabas, but they did not have the Holy Spirit to give them faith in Jesus.

The Holy Spirit gives faith allowing us to see Jesus despite all the distractions in our lives. I cannot help but think of commercials when talking about distractions. There is one commercial I have heard a lot lately about a prescription weight loss pill that will drop up to 20 lbs. a month without diet or exercise. The premise of this commercial like so many others is to point out how we don't have peace in our lives because we don't have what the commercial is selling. The false peace we literally buy into is that all the things with catchy slogans, from an Amazon box or a screen will give us peace, but they cannot give us peace.

Nothing can give us that real peace we get from Jesus because he forgives us for our sins. Even those words can be a distraction though. Let's not talk about our sins then and talk about others' sins. When you see someone else caught in a sin, what do you do? Do you show them their sin, then offer them a way to buy their way out like a commercial? Do you distract yourself with something else and leave them in their bad behavior?

Let's go back to your sins now. When you have fallen into sin, how many times have you been met with judgment? How many times have those around you been no help or made you earn your way back into good standing with them? Or do you distract yourself with people who leave you to your sinful ways? Every day, you and I face all kinds of distractions that rob us of the peace only Jesus can give.

Through Jesus, we have peace the world cannot give. As Jesus spoke to his disciples, he said, **27 "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."** Nothing in this world can take that troubled feeling away from your heart when you think about all

that you lack. Nothing in this world can keep you from being afraid of death. Only Jesus give you forgiveness for your sins and only Jesus can take away your fear of death. Jesus gives us true peace that the world cannot give because he gives us life.

The peace Jesus gives us allows us to walk a path of peace through this world. As Jesus was about to leave his disciples, he told them, **23 “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching.”** The word Jesus used for teaching was the Greek word, λόγος. The word captures all of the words written about something or by someone. Our English word “anthropology,” is a combination of the Greek words ἄνθρωπος meaning mankind and λόγος meaning teaching. Therefore, anthropology means the teaching of all things to do with mankind. Jesus’ λόγος or teachings are what he has revealed to us. It is his whole Word, the Bible. Through the Word of God, the Holy Spirit gives us faith in Jesus and a path of peace to walk.

The Holy Spirit works through God’s Word to keep Jesus as our foundation while we live in this world. We face lots of distractions in this world from our phones constantly notifying us that our friends are out on a date at a fancy restaurant, from reality tv shows trying to answer life’s biggest questions, from judging sin too harshly or letting sins become acceptable.

With Jesus as our foundation for life, forgiveness and peace, we can live in this distracted world. When our phones notify us, we can pick it up to respond with a kind word, even a Bible verse or prayer, or we can turn our phones off realizing our peace will not come from seeing or responding to all notifications. When tv shows or commercials try to sell us on lifestyles or products, we can be glad for things that line up with God’s Word, we can also hit the mute button or even stop watching certain things realizing we still have peace from God. Also, from what I hear, even after eight seasons, some tv shows don’t have season finales everyone likes anyways.

Finally, as we face sins, God’s Word reminds us that we are not the judge, but we know who is. God tells us what is right and wrong. He also tells us what to do when we and others do right or wrong. When others do right, we celebrate with them and thank God for his blessings. When others do wrong, we show them their sins, remind them of Jesus’ forgiveness and help them stay away from those sins in the future.

We also surround ourselves with believes who will do this for us as we do what is right and wrong, so that with Jesus as our foundation and the Holy

Spirit working through the Word of God, so that together, we will have peace in this world looking forward to what John saw in our reading from Revelation 21. As God revealed to John what heaven would be like, he said, **22 “I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.”** There will come a time when we will stand with our God in heaven and he will be our peace forever.

We are constantly bombarded by what the world projects as peace. Whether through commercials, products or devices, these things cannot give us peace. The things that keep us distracted eventually run out or we run out of life, and no catchy slogan, Amazon box or screen can distract us from the reality of the end of life. In Jesus we have peace because the answer to what comes after this life is answered. We have heaven through Jesus and this foundation of our faith allows us to live with peace.

This foundation of peace also guides us in all we do. We get to look at the world through knowing eyes, not through distracted and frenzied, peace chasing eyes. We look at our family, friends, jobs and worship life in a whole new light. These lives are given to us by God to be his people. We are here to love him and one another. We learn how to do this and want to do this by the power of the Holy Spirit. And at the end of each day, **through Jesus, we have peace the world cannot give! Amen.**