

Sermon Notes

Romans 16:20

"The God of Peace Who Conquers"

A Sermon Series on Romans

June 16, 2019

Introduction – Peace

- 1) Paul gives a glorious, yet simple, benediction¹ as he brings his Epistle (letter) to the Romans to a close in Romans 16:20.

"The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you."

- 2) Paul describes God in a simple and profound way: He is a "*God of peace*."

- 3) Can you define the word "peace"?

- a) Commonly and biblically, peace implies, at the least, the opposite of war, conflict and dissension. Luke 14:32; Acts 12:20;
Rev 6:4

- b) So peace is about "harmony, tranquility, a state coming from reconciliation; To be at health, blessing, prosperity, and every kind of good".²

- 4) Even the main biblical words for "peace" sound beautiful.

- a) In Greek: **Eirénē** (εἰρήνη).

This is where we get the English adverb "*irenic*" meaning "*favoring, conducive to, or operating toward peace, moderation, or conciliation*."

- b) You all know the Hebrew: **Shalom** (שָׁלוֹם)

For Jews this is both a greeting and a farewell.

- 5) Wishing someone peace is a good, gracious and godly thing.³

- a) David commanded his men to greet Nabal & Abigail graciously.

"So David sent ten young men; and David said to the young men, 'Go up to Carmel, visit Nabal and greet him in my name; and thus you shall say, 'Have a long life, peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have.'" – 1Sam 25:5-6

- b) God the Father declared peace to Gideon.

"The LORD said to him, 'Peace to you, do not fear; you shall not die.' Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and named it 'The LORD is Peace.' (YHWH-shalom) To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites." – Judg 6:23-24

- c) The Lord Jesus commanded His disciples to offering well-wishes of peace, as He Himself did. Luke 10:5; 24:36;
John 20:19,21,26

"Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house.'" – Luke 10:5

"So Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.'" – John 20:21

¹ A "benediction" is a short concluding blessing by invoking the name of Triune God, especially at the end of worship.

² For examples see: Judg 6:23; Is 14:30; Ezek 38:8,11; Matt 10:34; Luke 1:79; 2:14,29; 10:6; 11:21; 12:51; 19:42; John 16:33; Acts 7:26; 9:31; Rom 8:6; 14:19; 1Cor 14:33; Eph 6:15; 1Thes 5:3.

³ Gen 44:17; Judg 6:23; 19:20; 21:13; 1Sam 25:6; 1Chr 12:18; Ps 85:8; 122:7-8; 125:5; 128:6; Is 57:19; Dan 10:19; Zech 9:10; Luke 10:5; 24:36; John 20:19,21,26; Rom 2:10; 15:33; 1Pet 1:2; 5:14; 2Pet 1:2; 3John 15.

d) Paul, Peter & John concluded their epistles with such a blessing. 1Pet 5:14; 3John 15

"Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen." – Rom 15:33

6) Be careful, however; there is a false worldly type of peace which is from Satan.

a) Such as hypocrites who wish others peace, Ps 28:3; Jer 9:8;
but who are evil and desire to do harm. James 2:16

b) More dangerous is the false man-centered view of peace, trying to avoid dissension and difficulty while ignoring godliness, faithfulness, truth and justice.

i) To be at peace with evil, sin, Satan, and this fallen world isn't peace,
but to be at war with God.

ii) *Example:* "I've learned to be at peace and accept my heroin addiction."
(That is not peace but delusion.)

iii) *Example:* "I ignore my mother stealing from my sister because I don't want to cause
strife in the family." (How is this loving your sister, mother or one's family?)

iv) *Example:* "I want to be at peace with the world so I hide the fact I am a Christian."
(You should go read Matthew 10:32-33.)

c) To have a false sense of "peace" is a common delusion and dogma for secularists as seen
by their use of such totalitarian terms as: "Being triggered", "micro-aggressions", and
having "safe spaces" at college campuses.

d) But let us follow our Lord's teaching and first look to the plank in our own eye. Matt 7:1-6

i) How much do we in the church (both liberal and evangelical) 2Tim 4:3-4
want to have our ears tickled by false messages of peace?

ii) One of the sure signs of a false prophet is one who promises peace,
but where there is no peace.

iii) You see this particularly in the book of Jeremiah. Jer 8:11

iv) The corrupt priests and prophets told a corrupt people what they wanted to hear:
That they were at peace, and didn't want anyone to tell them about their
idolatrous and wicked behavior.

v) Look at Jeremiah 6:13-16:

*For from the least of them even to the greatest of them, everyone is greedy for
gain, and from the prophet even to the priest everyone deals falsely.*

*They have healed the brokenness of My people superficially, saying, 'Peace,
peace,' but there is no peace.*

*"Were they ashamed because of the abomination they have done? They were
not even ashamed at all; They did not even know how to blush. Therefore
they shall fall among those who fall; At the time that I punish them, they
shall be cast down," says the LORD.*

*Thus says the LORD, "Stand by the ways and see and **ask for the ancient paths,
where the good way is, and walk in it; And you will find rest for your souls.
But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'**"*

e) Sounds a lot like modern America and much of the popular Evangelical church.

The God of Peace

- 1) True peace only comes from God, thus Paul's declaration "the God of peace."
- 2) Peace is a common theme in Romans. Rom 1:7; 2:10; 3:17; 5:1; 8:6; 12:18; 14:17,19; 15:13,33; 16:20
 - a) Most important is the peace we sinners have with God only through Christ.
 - b) As Paul wonderfully declares back in Rom 5:1 – "*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*". This is the Gospel!
 - c) This justification leads to sanctification in living by the Spirit, by daily dying to sin and living for Christ.
As Paul writes in Rom 8:6 – "*For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace*".
 - d) So we Christians try to be at peace (in the godly, not worldly sense) with everyone.
Which Paul teaches in Rom 12:18 – "*If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.*"
- 3) If we live out this peace we have with God through Christ's Gospel it will cause division.
 - a) As the Lord Jesus clearly taught, "*Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division;*" – Luke 12:51 (Matt 10:34ff)
 - i) Again, we have perfect peace with God through Christ's Gospel (Rom 5:1), as the angels heralded to those shepherds during that first Christmas (Luke 2:14).
 - ii) But because the world is fallen, this good news will be hated and resisted by the world and its prince, the devil.
 - b) Our ego, however, should never be a cause of division, but the Gospel will divide.
 - c) We pray for this every Sunday! Matt 6:9-13
 - i) If you pray "*Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*", you are praying for division and that the evil have no peace.
 - ii) That is why we also pray, "*And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil (or "the evil one")*".
- 4) So we have perfect peace with God which will cause division.
 - a) As the Lord Jesus teaches, from our Call to Worship: "*These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.*" – John 16:33
 - b) The fact we have peace with the Father through the Son is far greater than any temporary strife we might have with the world.
- 5) We see this in Rom 16:20, that "*The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.*"
 - a) There is no contradiction whatsoever that God is a God of peace, and that He will destroy Satan.
 - b) In fact, if God didn't destroy Satan, evil, and sin then He wouldn't be peaceful!
 - i) Would it have been "peaceful" for the United States to simply ignore imperial Japan and Nazi Germany in 1942?
 - ii) Because God is Holy, He must destroy evil.

- c) What a great promise that we know our tempter and tormentor, Satan, will soon (or quickly) be crushed!⁴
- d) What does it mean that Satan will soon/quickly be crushed?

When Will Satan Be Crushed?

- 1) Many biblical prophecies have multiple layers, especially with regard to time.⁵
 - a) Example: Read Joel 2:28-32 and ask when the prophecies should take place: The first or second advent of Christ? (The first Christmas or the end of the age?)
 - i) The answer is “yes, both.”
 - ii) See: Acts 2:14-20; Rev 6:12-13
 - b) Or do a study of such biblical phrases as “the day of the Lord”⁶ or “in/on that day”.
 - i) It usually refers to a time of immediate judgment by God, and future eschatological (i.e. end times) judgment.
 - ii) For example: Is 2:12; 10:3; 13:9; 34:2, 8; 61:2; Ezek 30:3; Amos 5:18; Zeph 1:7.
- 2) Pastor Doug thinks Paul's statement that Satan will soon be crushed also has several layers.
 - a) First, and foremost, we should go with the context.
 - i) In the preceding verses (v.17-18) Paul warned about false teachers.
 - ii) So the primary reading should be Paul's belief that God will soon crush Satan by protecting the Roman church from these heretics.
 - iii) Whether this is a statement of confidence (i.e. faith) on Paul's part, trust in God and the Roman church's obedience (v.19) and/or apostolic prophecy, is debatable.
 - iv) But what a wonderful thing to pray for, let alone receive, that God in His mercy would give a church pure doctrine.
 - b) Maybe this was a prophecy by Paul that some trouble plaguing the ancient Roman church would soon be removed.⁷

⁴ The verb "soon crush" in Rom 16:20 can be translated "quickly crush" (NET Bible), focusing more on the dramatic nature of the action than its chronology.

⁵ To give a few more examples:

- 2Samuel 7:8-17 is both about King Solomon & Jesus Christ.
- Isaiah 7:14-16 is about a baby born during the reign of Ahaz & Jesus Christ.
- Ezekiel 28:11-19 is about the fall of Satan at the beginning and the king of Tyre.
- Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11 is about the destruction of the Temple in c. 167 BC, the destruction of the Temple 70 AD and the near destruction of the church in the end times during the Great Tribulation. (Matt 24:15; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:20)

⁶ Is 13:6,9; 58:13; Lam 2:22; Ezek 13:5; 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:1,11,31; 3:14; Amos 5:18,20; Obad 15; Zeph 1:7-8,14,18; 2:2-3; Mal 4:5; Acts 2:20; 1Cor 5:5; 1Thes 5:2; 2Thes 2:2; 2Pet 3:10.

⁷ Most scholars date the writing of Romans to around 54-58 AD. The emperor Claudius (reign: Jan 41 – Oct 54 AD) expelled the Jews from Rome around 49 AD (Acts 18:2). The infamous emperor Nero (reign: Oct 54 – June 68 AD) greatly persecuted the church, especially after the great fire in Rome in 64 AD. According to well documented Christian tradition, both Peter and Paul were executed in Rome sometime on, or soon after, 64 AD.

- c) More importantly, Paul is referring back to Genesis 3:15 to the fall in the Garden of Eden.
- i) In Genesis 3:15 God curses Satan by declaring, "*And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.*"
 - ii) This is a prophecy that there will be a spiritual war between Satan & demons against Eve and her children, i.e. mankind. Eph 1:21; 2:2; 3:10; Eph 6:12; Col 1:16
 - iii) Of course the supreme man who comes from the line of Adam is the Lord Jesus Christ. Rom 5:14-18; 1Cor 15:22,45
 - iv) Satan will "bruise" Christ on the heel, i.e. persecute Jesus during His earthly ministry and will attack His church (Christ's spiritual body on earth).⁸
 - v) But Christ has defeated Satan at the cross and will finish His conquest when He returns in glory at the end of the age.⁹
 - vi) This is Christ and His church bruising/crushing Satan on the head.
 - vii) Gen 3:15 has been called the "*protoevangelium*" by many theologians throughout history, as the first reference to the Gospel in the Bible.
- d) So the big picture is that we know who wins in the end: Jesus Christ.
- i) At the end of the age, Christ returns and Satan, sin, and death are forever defeated. Rev 20:7-22:21
 - ii) We have been in "last days" for 2,000+ years for three reasons:
 - Christ is the final revelation of God; what more could there be than God sending His Son to die for the sins of the world? John 5:39; Luke 24:25-27; Acts 13:27; Heb 1:1ff; Rev 1:8; 21:6; 22:13
 - The reason it has been so long is that God is getting all the elect; and praise be that it has been so long! Eph 1:3-4; 2Pet 3:8-9
 - No individual Christian or local church knows when "the day of the Lord" will come upon them.

Conclusion: Our Weapon of Warfare – Grace

- 1) Paul concludes his benediction with a simple declaration: "*The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.*"
 - a) This is a common benediction. 1Cor 16:23; 2Cor 13:13; Gal 6:18; Phil 4:23; Col 4:18; 1The 5:28; 2Thes 3:18
 - b) But it is profound.
- 2) The only way we know God's peace through Christ and have the courage to stand up to the world, but in kindness and gentleness, is by the grace of God.
- 3) As, the Lord teaches, "*Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.*" – John 14:27

⁸ Matt 4:10; 16:23; Luke 10:18; 11:15-28; 22:3,31; Eph 4:27; 6:11; 1Thes 2:18; 1Tim 3:6-7; 5:15; 2Tim 2:26; 1Pet 5:8; Revelation.

⁹ Dan 7:13-14; Matt 13:49-50; 16:27; 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; 12:31-33; Acts 10:42; 24:15; Rom 8:37-39; 14:9-12; Eph 1:20-22; Phil 2:9-11; Col 2:10-15; 1Thes 4:16-18; 2Thes 2:6-12; Heb 2:14; 1Pet 3:22; Rev 12:5-17.