

We as believers are meant to be at peace. Our surroundings may be in total chaos. The storms of life may rage. We may see wars and rumors of wars around about us. The way ahead may look confusing, but Jesus said:

*"I am leaving you with a gift – peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid." John*

1. Fear is a powerful demonic force known to incapacitate many believers, including myself. I don't want to dwell on fear tonight, but I do want to point out that faith and fear are directly opposed to each other, polar opposites.

*"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." 2 Timothy*

- Our God is Perfect Love and perfect love casts out fear.

*♪ "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love." 1 John*

*"Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love." 1 John*

- When our faith is exercised, standing on the truth of God's Word, the spirit of fear leaves and the peace of God settles in. Need more faith? That's all about trusting God to be faithful to keep His Word.

*"Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God." Rom 10:17 NKJV*

- The absence of faith is sin.

*"But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin." Romans*

- Without faith, it's impossible to please God.

*"And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him." Hebrews*

2. Faith and peace run together with each other. When we walk in faith, peace will come. We know both are gifts from God. Reference our text, John 14:27 concerning peace, and about the gift of faith:

*"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another*

*discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.” 1 Corinthians*

*“The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing.” 1 Corinthians*

- Faithfulness and peace are also fruits of the Spirit. They are meant to be integral parts of our every-day walk with God.

*“But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!” Galatians*

3. A gift just sits there and looks nice until you open it. Otherwise, it's not very useful and just takes up space. Spiritual gifts are there just waiting for us to avail ourselves of them. We are meant to be fully equipped for battle. Regardless of where our path goes (even the valley of the shadow of death) we are to walk in peace.

*“Therefore, put on every piece of God’s armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God’s righteousness. For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared.” Ephesians*

- The Thief comes to steal God's gift. Satan is out to steal your peace. He can show up both before and/or after it is opened. Day in and day out, will he be successful taking away your God given gift? I say NO and encourage you to stand along with me!

Maybe tonight this word has hit home. Have you ever opened God's gift of peace? Do you know the Prince of Peace? If so, do you still have it? Has it been stolen? Have you let sin get in between you and your peace? Jesus promised peace to us. As God's children, it's part of our inheritance. It is time to take back what the enemy has stolen. If you are not able to "go in peace" tonight, I'd like to see that change. Otherwise, shalom. Let's pray.