

Fruit of the Spirit - Peace

INTRODUCTION

Shalom is used often when we greet fellow believers. It is a Hebrew word which means peace. When we say Shalom to one and other it mean “peace be with you”. However, how often do we feel peace? When we watch news from TV we often see protest, riots or wars in different countries around the world. When we look into our hearts, we often feel anxious or worried about the challenges in our lives. We all long for peace – inner peace and community peace. But how can we find the true peace?

SHARING

1. What we should cultivate:-

- a. **Peace in Christ** – true peace is rooted in Christ. *“Peace is what I leave with you; it is my own peace that I give you. I do not give it as the world does. Do not be worried and upset; do not be afraid.* (GNB Joh 14:27) Jesus promised his disciples his every own peace which is of the Holy Spirit. This very peace is the same peace that Jesus had when He calmed the storm (Mat 8:24 – 26). In time of crisis like the one the disciples faced in the storm, we must have faith in the Lord. Remember that God is in control of all things in all situations. If we trust in Him who is faithful and almighty then we will truly understand the meaning of “ A thousand [of enemies] may fall at your side, ten thousand [of enemies] at your right hand, but it [the enemies] will not come near you” (Psalm 91:7, ESV). When there are tough deadlines to be met, arguments, health issues, and worries we find it’s difficult to be at peace.

What we need in order to obtain peace from God is to cultivate an attitude of total surrender to God. Surrendering to God is an act of obeying God and allowing God to work in our lives as He abides in us. In fact, we are told to surrender all our burdens to God (1Pet 5:7)! Essentially, when we surrender to God we cease to struggle with God on the problem and stop worrying about it.

It’s a simple exchange, we give God our problems, and God gives us His peace. We ask God to give us wisdom to resolve the issues or challenges that we face and strength to move on but most importantly, we allow God to work in it. However, it also does not mean we do nothing about it but as wisdom or help comes to solve it, we need to work on it. Remember, God is never too late, never too early, He is always on time.

- b. **Prayer and Thanksgiving** – *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.* (Phi 4:6 – 7, ESV) When we feel anxious we pray and often we feel peace after prayer. In addition to requesting God for help in our prayer, we should give Him thanks. Thank Him for what he has done for us and thank Him for what He is going to do for us. This will remind us that God is in control in all situations. If we depend on Him, He will deliver us from troubles and dangers in due time.

Tommy Tenney gave an illustration on how praising God can give us a different perspective of our problem. As the airplane is still on the runway, all the buildings are quite big. As the airplane takes off higher and higher, the same building looks smaller and smaller in size. The same goes with our problem, as we give thanks to God and praise God (praising Him as a Mighty God and not for the problems), He will show us new strength and a fresh perspective that nothing is too big for God. In fact, God is bigger than all the problems in the world put together and He is definitely more than

able to overcome the issues or challenge we faced. Someone once mentioned that God the Holy Spirit reminded him as God's children that we should not tell God how big his problems are but instead tell the problems how big our God is!

2. What we should weed out that are against true peace –

a. Anxiety

Anxiety robs peace from our hearts. When we feel worried or anxious we focus on things or people that can help our lives move smoothly. When we worry or anxious we do not trust God who can deliver us out of difficulties. We can't have true peace when we allow anxiety to grow in our hearts. Notice this that when you are anxious and worried, your energy is also easily drained!

In Luke 12, Jesus told His disciples not to worry about food and clothes. Food and clothes were very important to the people in those days. It was their basic need at that time. However, Jesus told His disciples not to worry about these things for God know our needs and He will take care of it. He also taught them to seek the kingdom of God first and then all these things will be added to them and not to worry too much beyond today.

b. Strife, jealousy, factions and envying

Strife, jealousy, factions and envying are the other weeds we need to watch out. We are often tempted by jealousy when comparing ourselves with other peoples. In today's society, we tend to compare against our neighbours. When one of our colleagues gets promoted, we tend to think why we are not being promoted instead. If we dwell in this kind of thinking we will turn into bitterness and drive peace out of our hearts. The bible teaches us to guard our hearts with all understanding for the things of life comes out of it (Proverbs 4:23). We need allow the Holy Spirit to help us to uproot these weeds and let it not grow in our hearts. When the Holy Spirit moves into our heart, He will teach to be content for godly contentment is of great gain (1 Tim 6:6).

If you ask a group of children who would like to have the ice-cream first, literally every child will lift up their hands! We too as adults also tend to have this habit of self-centredness (me first). But as we allow God to work in our lives, we move away from self-centred to Christ-centred (which focuses on God and others). Pastor Rick Warren became a multi-millionaire as a result of his book, *The Purpose Driven Life*, but instead of splashing on himself, he gave most of the money for God (90 percent of it!). He is a good example of Christ-centred living.

DISCUSSION

- How do we obtain individual peace in our lives and family?
- How do we obtain communal peace in our Christian community (church, cell group)?

CONCLUSION

By faith in Christ, we obtain peace from the Lord. When you are in deep worry fix your eyes on Jesus and He will deliver you from difficulties and troubles. Make your request know to God by prayer and with thanksgiving and the peace of God will be given to you. May God give you the peace of the Holy Spirit as we trust in Him. Amen.