

8/18/13

In the Name of Jesus

Acts 3:1-9

Dear Fellow Redeemed by the blood of God's own Son,

There are images from our youth that we remember well into old age. One image that has stuck with me is that of my father lying on the living room couch just before Mom called us to supper. It was not that he was sick; he was hardly ever ill. Rather, Dad worked 10-12 hour days in a meat packing plant in order to provide for his family. When he came home at night he would say, I'm "beat."

There were also "beatniks" in those days. They could be seen sitting or lying down in the nation's parks, and college campuses – not because they were tired from a hard day's work, but because they were high on drugs! They would hold up two fingers and say, "Peace." We still see plenty of people today who abuse drugs and alcohol in a vain effort to find rest and peace from the toil and troubles of their lives.

People are always seeking rest and peace in this world, and their peace-seeking takes on a certain posture. But what about the peace which is from heaven, which Jesus says, **"the world does not know and cannot give"**? To His believing disciples Jesus says, **"My peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you."** (Jn. 14:27)

This is the peace which truly makes a "man for all seasons" – a Christian who is able to withstand each shock in life, because he or she possesses a freedom from anxiety **"which passes human understanding."** (Phil. 4:7)

## **THE PEACE OF CHRIST HAS ITS POSTURE,**

### **I.**

When Jesus ascended into heaven He instructed His disciples to **"wait in Jerusalem"** for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. There they SAT for ten days until the Spirit promised by Jesus was poured out on Pentecost. After Pentecost those early Christians continued to sit on the promises, so to speak. They went about their daily callings in that restful peace of Christ which filled their hearts with contentment and joy!

They shared one another's fellowship and friendship in Christ. They assisted one another in every way. Their restful posture enabled them to gladly hear the teachings of the Apostles and to gather often and regularly for worship and the Lord's Supper.

Resting peacefully on the promises of God in Christ, they were constantly praying in their homes and in places of worship that God's name might be kept holy by them, that the Lord's kingdom and rule of grace might come to their hearts and the hearts of others. They prayed that God's good and gracious will might be done on earth as perfectly as it is done in heaven.

They asked for daily bread, the forgiveness of sins, and deliverance from the many testings of life, so that they might not be overcome by Evil and lose their faith.

In their peaceful posture the early church praised their heavenly Father together, calmly and confidently acknowledging that to Him belongs the kingdom and the power and the glory forever! And . . . like us, these early Christians rested so calmly in their heavenly peace that they sometimes even fell asleep at night before finishing the Lord's Prayer!

Can you relate to this SITTING posture of Christ's peace? Sure you can! It moves us every day to be about our work with inner joy, to suffer pain, disease, and every trial with quiet confidence. For we know that one day soon, Christ will come again to take us to the painless, tearless, sinless mansions of His eternal heaven! So we carry on day after day, praying, hearing God's Word, raising our families, and pursuing our callings. We carry on in peace, both in the "good" times and the "bad," which our Lord gives us in His perfect wisdom.

## II.

But then our peace takes on another posture. We stand up to become peacemakers! That's right! We don't sit in the peace of Christ only to remain sitting. A couple of Saturdays back six or seven men sat down in the shade of the teacherage after a couple of hours of hard work. They sat down to rest so that they might regain their strength to get up and continue working!

John and Peter needed a rest. Sitting in the peace of their Savior, they were going up to the temple to pray. They were taking care of their "every day business." But on this particular day they came upon a certain "**lame man,**" Who was always being carried and laid at the gate of the temple so that he might beg.

When the lame man saw Peter and John, he asked them for "**alms**" or money for the poor. Peter then "**fixed his eyes**" on the lame beggar.

John also looked the poor man straight in the eye. Then Peter gave a strange-sounding command, **"Look at us!"**

When the beggar then looked at them with the hope of receiving something from them, Peter said: **"Silver and gold I do not have, but what I DO have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."** Then Peter **"took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength!"**

Several of you have little children with healthy legs, learning to stand, walk, and run. But this man, crippled from birth, did not learn! He immediately walks and leaps! In no way whatever did this miracle depend on the man's will or desire for healing. So it was with all of us. We were spiritually and morally crippled – even dead in sin from birth. We were unable to walk in peace with God, because we sat in the condemnation of our sins!

So it is with everyone in this sick and dying world, unless the gospel of Christ works the healing of peace through forgiveness in His name. From time to time the Lord permits us to freely give what was first and freely given to us. As John and Peter were permitted to give of their Spirit-power to heal, so also we are privileged to share the saving power of the Gospel of peace!

Our places of work, our neighborhoods and our families are full of spiritual beggars. Every day they are carried by their own lame human wills and desires to some gate called "beautiful" in the eyes of the world. Each day, whether consciously or not, they are begging for someone to show them the way to joy, eternal safety, wisdom and peace of conscience. Many of those who are poor and physically handicapped long for the bounty of their more prosperous neighbors. They think that by such worldly means they will be happy and secure.

As you go about your daily affairs, sitting on the promises of peace in Christ, you may see and visit with these lame, spiritual beggars. Then you may go your way, as Peter and John must have done many times before that particular afternoon. But your time, God's time, for that soul may still come! Pray for it! Look for it!

Pray that someone in need will ask you for money, advice, some time, or some other favor. Pray that Christ will permit you to assume the

posture of the peacemaker, who not only sits, but stands on the promises of God, so that another soul may be found by Christ and have life in His name!

### III.

The most obvious posture of Christ's peace is wonderfully demonstrated in v. 8. Upon being healed, the restored beggar was leaping up, **"standing and walking with Peter and John to the temple, walking, leaping, and praising God!"** This is what we wait for, pray for, and hope for, as the gospel of peace heals the broken and troubled hearts of spiritual beggars! We want to see those who have been made to stand on the promises of God with us, also walk in praise to God with us!

Nothing but the peace of Christ, poured into the hearts of sinners can truly make them walk together in the Lord. Few things bring us more heavenly joy on earth than to share this peace and its posture with others, so that our hearts, minds, and mouths are joined in the worship and praise of our Savior God! So David wrote in Psalm 122: **"I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the LORD!"** (Ps. 122:1)

Sitting, standing, walking. Do you see what a dynamic thing the peace of Christ is in you? While you are comfortably sitting in faith on the wonderful promises of your Savior, you may stand up on the basis of these sure promises in order to bring true peace to the afflicted and troubled souls around you, so that they may walk together with you in peaceful worship of Him Who loves us all!

Did you notice that lying down or sleeping have not been mentioned as the posture of our peace in Christ? That's because while we Christians will indeed rest in peace in God's own time, now is no time for lying down! Amen.