

Pursuing Peace



Together to Shalom



Shalom is a beautiful Hebrew word that enriches our concept of peace.

TR: It has a range of meaning that includes . . .

**the opposite of war,
the well-being that comes from God,
prosperity, bodily health,
contentedness, salvation,
good relations
between nations and men,
wholeness, completion, harmony,**

READ SLIDE

TR: It has been said that . . .

**“Shalom is the gift of God,
and can be received
only in his presence.”**

J.I. Durham in NIDONTT, Vol 2, p. 778

READ SLIDE

TR: As the great blessing that Aaron the first High Priest was told to speak over the people said . . .

The Lord bless you and keep you;
²⁵the Lord make his face to shine upon
you and be gracious to you;
²⁶the Lord lift up his countenance upon
you **and give you peace.**
²⁷"So shall they put my name upon the
people of Israel, and I will bless them."

ESV

READ SLIDE

- Who wouldn't want more SHALOM in their marriage, their families, the church, their workplace, their world?
- Isn't that the standard Miss America answer, "I want world peace."

TR: But the reality is that all of us are sinners, and as Romans 3 quotes Isaiah 59 when it says . . .

and the way of peace
they have not known.
¹⁸There is no fear of God
before their eyes.

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: With this yearning for SHALOM and the reality of our sin, what does a guy like me contemplate while on sabbatical?



Though this picture may not reflect it, I really did wait on God asking . . .

-- why does revival tarry?

-- why do people like my teaching on conflict resolution but most don't practice it?

-- and, are these two questions related?

-- I had a breakthrough in my little tent one afternoon and wrote furiously in my journal.

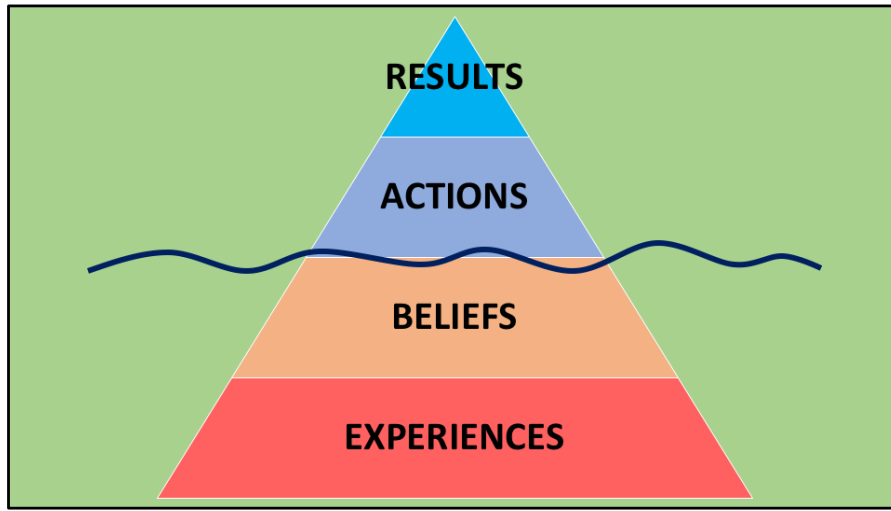
-- God helped me see that the techniques and tools of conflict resolution are delightful concepts to ponder, but extremely challenging things to put into practice. I became convinced that there were 5 core commitments that people need to make in order to help them press through the difficulties.

TR: At first it seemed as simple as . . .

**COMMITMENT →
PRACTICE**

READ SLIDE

TR: But at the leadership retreat Patrick Shea shared something from a book entitled, “Change the Culture, Change the Game.”



He reminded us that while we may want to change the **RESULTS** by changing people's **ACTIONS**, that there is a lot more going on beneath the waterline.

-- I agreed that a person does live out their **BELIEFS**.

-- But I needed to ponder what was meant by our **EXPERIENCES**.

-- The culture of a group, let's say a church, is mostly caught from what we experience.

-- We can say our culture is one of warmth but if people **EXPERIENCE** the cold shoulder, then our culture is something very different than what we profess.

-- So, I thought, what do people need to experience in order to move their professed beliefs into action and results?

-- What do we need to experience in order to be a people who

see the results of more SHALOM in our lives?

TR: Beginning with our experiences is not some self-centered thing. We find the logic used by the Apostle Paul.

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ²complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- He is reminded the Philippians of their **EXPERIENCES** of encouragement, comfort, participation, affection and sympathy . . .

-- . . . **IN CHRIST** and **IN THE SPIRIT**.

-- These **EXPERIENCES** become the foundation to his challenge to have the same mind as that of Jesus, not looking to our own interests.

-- That is, because we have experienced God **NOT** looking out for His own interests, but ours. We, too, can share that experience with others by looking not to our own interests.

TR: All this pondering over the past 5 months has forced me

to ask a question, first of myself.



Have we experienced His
peace and presence?

*We can't give what we
haven't received.*

*We can't share what we
haven't experienced.*

READ SLIDE

TR: God wants us to experience His peace through His presence.

Luke 1:79b

... to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

ESV

In Zechariah’s prophecy regarding his son, John the Baptist, we read that part of his ministry would be to . . . READ SLIDE.

TR: This peace is received in God’s presence. The benediction at the end of 1 Thessalonians tells us . . .

1 Thessalonians 5:23

Now may **the God of peace** himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: The end of 2 Thessalonians is similar . . .

2 Thessalonians 3:16

Now may **the Lord of peace himself** give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all.

ESV**READ SLIDE**

TR: Jesus, the Prince of Peace, says to his confused followers as his arrest and death drew near . . .

John 14:27

“Peace I leave with you; **my peace** I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- So, **SHALOM**, comes from the Lord of peace Himself, it is His peace that gives us peace.

TR: Our experience of peace is foundational to becoming peacemakers. Again it is the Apostle Paul who tells the Ephesians to REMEMBER their experience of coming to Christ in repentance and faith.

Ephesians 2:12

-- remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Remember how bad your experience was without Christ, and then . . .

Ephesians 2:13-15a

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴**For he himself is our peace,** who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances,

ESV

**. . . remember what changed . . . READ SLIDE
-- Jesus made peace with God AND peace between Jew and
Gentile.**

TR: Jesus is Himself our peace and . . .

Ephesians 2:15b-16

. . . that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, **so making peace,**¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

ESV

**. . . He has created in Himself one new man . . . READ SLIDE
-- If we are to see the results of a culture of peace, of SHALOM, then we must first experience peace with God through God the Son through the cross.**

TR: To the Colossians, the Apostle writes . . .

Colossians 1:19-20

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, **making peace by the blood of his cross.**

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: This peace, if we have fully experienced it, will leave you exulting or rejoicing, as Romans 5 tells us . . .

Romans 5:1-3a

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, **we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.** ²Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we **rejoice** in hope of the glory of God. ³Not only that, but we **rejoice** in our sufferings . . .

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- Jesus made peace by the blood of His cross . . . we have peace with God . . . and we rejoice **EVEN IN OUR SUFFERINGS.**

-- The experience of Christ's peace changes the way we look at all things, even the hard things.

TR: This EXPERIENCE of peace starts to control us . . .

Colossians 3: 15

15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- Let His peace be like an oil on the water that settles things down.
- This peace is to be our experience with God AND with each other.

TR: This peace is something beyond just stress management.

Philippians 4:5b-7

The Lord is at hand; ⁶do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷**And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,** will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- It is in our communion of prayer with God that we have a peace that passes understanding.

TR: Has our experience of peace been like that promised by Jesus?

John 16:33

“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have **peace**. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- You and I face tribulation but that does **NOT** mean we cannot have peace.

TR: It is tied to prayer, to the teachings of Jesus, and to the power of the Spirit . . .

Romans 8:6

⁶For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but **to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.**

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: This SHALOM, this peace is what the kingdom of God is all about.

Romans 14:17

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of **righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.**

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: It is part of the aspects of the fruit of the Spirit

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, **peace**, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- Review two questions: Revival tarry? Why not pursue peace?

TR: SO, the first question of the day is . . .



Have we experienced His
peace and presence?

*We can't give what we
haven't received.*

*We can't share what we
haven't experienced.*

READ SLIDE

- The Bible often talks about God's peace as peace with Him, both legally and relationally.
- It talks about an inner settledness that is content even in the tribulations and sufferings of life.

- If our family, church, community culture is based on our experiences . . . if we have never experienced this peace that passes understanding, how can we share it?

TR: How can we give to others what we haven't received?

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³²Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, **forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.**

ESV

READ SLIDE

- Perhaps the reason people don't make the five commitments, that I will talk about next week, is because they never truly have experienced the peace that the forgiveness of God brings.
- In the same way that a person's actions betray their true beliefs . . . it makes sense that our beliefs are intertwined with our experiences.
- Why do I want us to pursue peace? Because the Prince of Peace has made peace, He is peace, He gives peace . . . and I worship Him for it.

TR: If you have truly experienced this peace that passes

understanding, then a second question comes to mind . . .



Do we want others to have
the same experience?

*For those
within the body of believers.*

*For those not yet
in the body of believers.*

READ SLIDE

TR: There is a world full of people who have virtually no experience of this kind of peace. Not escape or denial, but true SHALOM.

They have healed
the wound of my people lightly,
saying, 'Peace, peace,'
when there is no peace.

ESV

We live in a world of false prophets who . . . READ SLIDE just like in Jeremiah's day.

TR: What a contrast between what the Lord offers and what the world offers.

“Peace, peace, to the far and to the near,” says the LORD, “and I will heal him. ²⁰But the wicked are like the tossing sea; for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up mire and dirt. ²¹There is no peace,” says my God, “for the wicked.”

ESV

READ SLIDE

**TR: Do not our hearts ache for those who know no peace?
Jesus' heart did.**

And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, ⁴²saying, **“Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.”**

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: How do you answer this question?



Do we want others to have
the same experience?

*For those
within the body of believers.*

*For those not yet
in the body of believers.*

READ SLIDE

-- If we've never truly experienced the peace of God and worshiped Him for it, then I doubt we want to share for we have nothing to share.

TR: But those who know the sweetness of His peace, maybe not every moment but we remember the taste of delight, then to pursue peace especially with other believers for the sake of the unbelievers is a given.

“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, **so that the world may believe that you have sent me.**”

ESV

Jesus’ prayer for our unity, that certainly involves peace, has a purpose or a result clause at its end . . . READ SLIDE

TR: Why does Jesus want us to experience His peace, not just with Him but with other believers?

“I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.”

ESV

READ SLIDE

- Why do we not pursue peace?**
- Why won't more of us make the 5 core commitments next week?**
- Because we can't give what we haven't got.**
- Revival comes when church-goers become those who experience . . . not just hear about . . . but experience God's peace.**
- Revival comes when we remember what it was like before and what it is now . . . and we worship with song and our lives.**

TR: It will be when we have experienced God's peace AND

our hearts break for those within and without the church who are not experiencing that peace that commands like this will be more than words in our Bibles . . .

Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- [you] = plural

-- They will be words of hope within our souls . . . because we yearn above all things for the presence of the God of love and peace to be with us ALL.

TR: How can I convey to you my heart?



(BLANK SLIDE)

- My tent experience was with the five commitments.**
- My continued pondering, confirmed by Patrick's words, were focused on our experience of Jesus.**

- Have we forgotten? How far away we were? Do you remember the rejoicing of knowing our sins were forgiven, never to be brought up again? The consolation? The comfort? The affection and sympathy of the Spirit ministering to us? The peace that passes understanding . . . that carried us through those tribulations and suffering with unexplainable joy?**

- Perhaps there are some who have never know such peace?**
- Perhaps you are a second chair "Christian."**