

**Wk 14**

**Apr. 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**Call to Worship.**

**Psalm 98: 1-6**

Prayer

Doxology

Cornerstone

Are Washing in Blood

**Doctrinal teaching. God's Great Love to Us through Forgiveness.**

**Psalm 130**

When I Survey The Wondrous Cross

In Christ Alone

Hymn of Heaven

**Offering Prayer.**

**Sermon Text. The Great Love of Forgiveness.**

**John 20:17-23**

**I. Intro.**

**Everyone loves a good love story. Everyone wants to be loved, to be desired, to be sought after.**

Want is not the greatest act of love.

Desire is not the greatest act of love.

Forgiveness is the greatest act of love.

Want gets something out of the transaction.

Desire gets something out of the transaction.

Forgiveness gives to make the transaction happen.

**A Story of Love.**

Louis Zamparini. Movie: Unbroken.

Zamparini was an Olympic distance runner competing in the 1936 Olympics, just prior to being enlisted in the US Army and placed in the Pacific Campaign of WWII.

While serving as a bombardier his plane was shot down by Japanese combatants over the Pacific ocean. After spending many grueling days on a life raft at sea, Zamparini was retrieved by the Japanese and placed in a Prisoner of War camp.

While there, Zamparini was brutally beaten, and nearly starved to death weighing at one point 75lb's as a grown adult man.

During his 2 years of being a POW, Zamparini, was tortured both physically and psychologically.

When Zamparini returned he came to faith in Christ and began to dedicate His life to living after Jesus Christ's teaching.

Despite having come to faith in Christ, Zamparini's mind was still wrought with the horrors of war and a deep hatred for the man that tortured him.

It was ultimately found in the Scripture that Zamparini must forgive his torturers and pray for those who persecuted him.

It was when Zamparini finally embraced Christ's instructions of forgiveness that he finally found a lasting peace in His mind.

But forgiveness is not just about peace, it is also an act of love.

John has been known as the Apostle of Love.

In one of John's final sermons in Ephesus it is recorded in the Treasury of Scripture knowledge that John was carried forward in front of the congregation and simply said **'Little children, Love one another'**

Have you ever noticed that people will not tell each other that they love each other?

Have you ever noticed how people will tell you everything they don't like, they will tell you everything they disagree with, but rarely will people tell you good things.

How will you ever fulfill the command to love one another if you aren't even willing to tell one another?

And if you will not fulfill the command to love one another, how will you ever demonstrate that you are Christ's disciples?

In God's schoolhouse, He is giving you people who sin against you, so that you can learn to forgive them in order to be a disciple of Christ. God is giving you ample opportunities to obey.

There are always those people who talk the talk and don't walk the walk, and then you have people that don't talk the talk but do walk the walk, but Good Christians talk the talk and walk the walk.

## I. **Body of the Sermon.**

## **Covenant of Peace. (x16 in the OT)**

### **Ezekial 37:24-28. A Covenant of Peace.**

But Peace is only needed if there is hostility. Peace is only needed if there is a war.

Peace is not needed when there is no problem, peace is only needed when there is a problem.  
Why would God need to make a covenant of Peace?

Ezekiel, Covenant of Peace.

**(x10)**, Ez. 16:62, Ez. 20:37, Ez. 34:25

Ps. 89:3,4

### **A free offer of peace and mercy from God.**

Is. 55:3, Is. 59:21

Ez. 16:60, Ez. 36:10,11, 37, Ez. 20:40, Ez. 43:7

### **The Covenant of Peace is an act of God's Love for God's People.**

This covenant of Peace is a matter of forgiveness that only God can give.

God has made a Peace Treaty that is never going away.

### **Peace.**

**There are only two types of peace you can have. You can have God's peace and then not have the world's peace. OR you can have the world's peace and not have God's peace.**

Every time we see God's people losing God's peace is when they make alliances with wicked nations.

Every time we see God's people

You and I only have one option of peace and that is the peace offered to us by Jesus Christ.

### **Turn to Romans 5.**

Rom. 5:9-11 'Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.'

Enemies need defeated or they need peace.

I would be far less concerned with the enemies of this world and draw your concern from your peace treaty with God.

You need a peace treaty with God.

Here is what the Peace Treaty looks like.

**A Divine Peace Treaty. This is the only Peace Treaty in all human history that will last and be maintained. Because the person who made this peace treaty never breaks His word.**

**The Letterhead** says at the top, Holy Scripture.

**The 'TO line'** states 'To Whom it May Concern'

**The date** says "Eternal"

The body of the letter says

'you are dead in your trespasses' Eph. 2' – you're torn up from the floor up

'you are an enemy of the cross' Phil 3:18 – you loved the world so much that you were hostile to Me.

'you cannot do anything about this' -

So I made a decision, **I did something about this.** – then the letter starts to get interesting.

I came to the earth. I lived a life that fulfilled the Law. I was despised and rejected for living this life.

I was persecuted for your sake. I was reviled for your sake.

I was the Shepherd that did everything right, you were the sheep that went completely astray.

I committed no sin. You committed nothing but sin.

I could be nothing but righteous. You could be nothing but unrighteous.

But I was treated as if I was a chief sinner.

You fought Me. You wrestled against Me in the middle of the night. I defeated you.

You ran away from Me and I had you swallowed you by fish.

You were curious, you followed merely at a distance. You asked Me for Truth in the dark of night.

You climbed a sycamore tree to see what you could see.

You denied me in my darkest hour.

You scattered when I was arrest, tried, and crucified.

The trespasses you committed before God, I was punished for.

I died. I was buried. I rose again.

The payment for your trespasses. Has been paid.

**You have an option.** You can accept My terms of peace.

You can come under My Kingship.

You DO NOT make me your king, I already am your king.

If you accept My terms of peace there is fine print.

There are terms and conditions.

There will be a new download. New operating software will be downloaded.  
You're previous search history will be deleted.  
You will not be in the Matrix. You will be in My Kingdom.  
You will not be red pillled. You will be Red Hot.  
I will not send you on a rabbit trail, I will send you on a Narrow Trail.  
You will not get by, by the skin of your teeth, You will get by the skin of my backside.  
By my stripes you will be saved.

You're desires will change.  
You will be disgusted by Spiritual Junk Food. You will spit it out of your mouth.  
You will crave pure milk.  
You will crave My Word. You will crave My Righteousness. AND My promise is that I will fill you with it.

Your previous life was hostile toward Me, now it will be at peace with Me.  
You will be given new desires. You will be given a new heart.  
You will be given over to serving My Kingdom.  
You will devote the remainder of your breathing life to serving Me.

You will be all in or all out.

**These are My terms of peace.**

The Bottom Line of The Letter, the Signature Block states "Jesus Christ, Lord and Savior"

**God has made a covenant of peace.**

Col. 1:20-22 'and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven'

This does not communicate salvation to all people, as the Bible makes certain eternal hell, however, peace with God through Christ that is available to all people through the Cross.

2 Cor. 5:18-20 'Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.'

Christ is brought reconciliation to us by this covenant of peace.

Rom. 11:28 'From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved or the sake of the fathers'

In God's love, He chose the Israelite people for a covenant of peace, these are irrevocable terms.

Rom. 8:34 Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.'

Christ intercedes this covenant of peace in His resurrected life.

Heb. 7:25 'He/Christ is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.'

Christ is always making Priestly Intercession for us to God, upholding these terms of peace.

**There was an enemy force to God. A hostility toward God. To such a degree that God chose to take action against this hostility.**

**God has made terms of peace through Christ.**

**This is a demonstration of God's love for us that creates peace in our hearts.**

## II. Exposition.

v. 17 'Jesus said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'

Have not ascended.

The doctrine of the Ascension.

The ascension of Jesus Christ has been just as much of a rejected doctrine of Christianity as the crucifixion and the resurrection. Yet, the ascension is vital to the truth of the life of Jesus Christ.

**The Anticipation of the Ascension is seen in the Old Testament.**

Ascension is seen in the lives of Enoch, Elijah, Moses. The foreshadowing of this very connection is seen at the Mount of Transfiguration.

**The Royal Psalms refer to the Ascension of Jesus Christ.**

Psalms 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 61, 72, 89, 110.

In John 7:39, Jesus teaches at the last **Feast of the Tabernacles**, 'rivers of living water' and that the 'Spirit'

**'But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.'** John 7:39

**John 8:21 'I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come'**

Jesus even alludes to the ascension in 2 Parables in the Parable of the Talents and the Parable of the Pounds.

**Matt. 25:14 'For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them.'**

**Luke 19:12 'So He said, "A nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then return.'**

**3 times Jesus alludes to the Ascension in the Upper Room Discourses.**

**John 14:19 'After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also.'**

**John 14:28,29 'You heard that I said to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe.'**

**John 16:5 'But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?'**

**My brethren.**

This is the first place that Jesus refers to His disciples with family terminology.

Friends, we Christians are a family. It's that simple.

We are brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, Fathers and Mothers, Grandfathers and Grandmothers in Christ.

Look what Jesus says the portion of Unity in this family is, My Father and Your Father.

We have the same Father. If we have the same Father, we have the same family.

**My Father and your Father, My God and your God.**

**v. 18 'Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and that He had said these things to her.'**

**Mary continued to tell the truth of the situation.**

**Mary didn't 'hide it under a bushel'**

**Mary didn't whisper the truth of the resurrection, She announced it!**

**Mary announced the resurrection to her brothers in Christ.**

**That would not have been a casual announcement. That would not have been 'oh just another day of the week' announcement.**

**There would have been excitement. Vigor. Life.**

**v. 19 'So when it was evening on that day., the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you."**

**When the doors were shut.**

Jesus performs another feat of Deity by walking through the door or walls of the building. Jesus walked right through the closed door or a wall and stood in their presence.

**Peace.**

**Jesus immediately says to them 'Peace be with you.'**

**It is likely that the disciples were terrified. Jesus is aware of their terror.**

**Jesus was aware of their terror before they were even terrified.**

**John 14:1 'let not your heart be troubled, believe in God, believe also in Me, in My Father's house are many mansions.'**

**Jesus turns their attention to Heaven.**

**Jesus reminds them of the peace they have in Him.**

**And we do well to continually remind ourselves of the peace that we have in Jesus Christ.**

**v. 20 'And when He had said this He showed them both His hands and His sides. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord.'**

Jesus showed them His hands as an additional proof of His death on the cross.

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

**Peace be with you. Jesus intends for the disciples to be in a state of peace.**

**'as much as depends on you, be at peace with all men' Rom. 12**

**v. 22 "And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."**

Jesus makes a pledge to the disciples that they will receive the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost that occurs in the book of Acts.

**v. 23 "If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained."**

The forgiveness of sins is not contingent on the disciples. That is not what Jesus is saying. Forgiveness from God is not dependent on us.. That is not what Jesus is saying.



**Instead**, Jesus is commissioning the Disciples to proclaim this message of forgiveness.  
Jesus is commissioning them, 'send'ing them to proclaim Liberty to the captives.

### **Is. 61**

And it is this that demonstrates the receiving of the Holy Spirit and the peace that comes from knowing that your sins are forgiven.

### **III. Application.**

**We have a King that has made a covenant of peace.** This covenant is a contract. A treaty. It is a settlement.

It is a contract that has been made by God. Now, if God makes a contract that is going to be fulfilled.

#### **Ezekial 37:24-28. The Peace of the Davidic Kingdom. This is fulfilled in Christ.**

This New Covenant is the application of that Divine agreement in full force.

We see that Israel has never had a perpetual state of peace. This covenant

**Peace was a normal Hebrew greeting.**

**Shalom. In Hebrew. ειρηνη/eirene, in Greek. Where we get the English name Irene.**

Peace refers to a matter of total well-being. Peace in the Hebrew understanding refers to prosperity through a person's life.

Peace refers to the security that is associated with God's presence among His people.

God's peace and God's love is found through forgiveness.

The access to God is found in forgiveness of sins.

In the OT this covenant of on-going peace was conditional on the basis of obedience to God.

In the NT, the New Covenant, these terms of peace are made based on faith in Jesus Christ, His atoning work on the Cross, and His conquering work of the resurrection.

**This covenant of peace** is an act of love from God **on the basis of forgiveness for our sin.**

**Psalm 32:1-5 'How blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. When I kept silent about my sin, my body was wasting away, through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;**

**My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, I will confess my transgressions to the LORD; and You forgave the guilt of my sin.'**

**Friends peace from Christ comes from the forgiveness of Christ.**

#### **IV. Conclusion.**

God has made peace with us through Christ.

Today you can have this peace that comes from God and be held in this peace by God's love, through the forgiveness of sins, made possible by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This is a supreme doctrine of our life.

**Phil 3:7-10** 'whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings'

The things of this world are loss if we do not come to know Christ. And know Him in this way. In His sufferings and in His resurrection.

#### **Surpassing value.**

This Great Love of God through this Covenant of Peace is of Surpassing Value. And we only learn it more and more.

Growing closer and closer to the fullness of God and Christ.

#### **Communion.**

**1 Cor. 11:23-32**

#### **Benediction.**

**Rom. 8:37-39.** The Love of God to His People.

#### **Small Group Questions.**

1. Have a conversation about the covenant of peace that God has established through Jesus Christ.
2. Talk through the importance of the Ascension and how it is a critical doctrine to understand the ministry of Christ properly.

3. Consider Paul's statement to the Philippians about losing things and counting everything as rubbish other than knowing Christ and sharing in His sufferings and resurrection.
4. What is the basis of peace in our life? What is it that interrupts our peace of mind in Christ?
5. How can we encourage each other to focus on Christ and the peace that He gives us.