

## Sermon- Unwrapping the gift of peace

Scripture: John 14:22-31

Sunday, August 11, 2019

If you follow YouTube videos you may have noticed that “unboxing videos” is a thing. Many of the high-end products like i-phones etc. have these videos that show you step by step how they unwrap the product. I even saw an unboxing video for a whole car. Now the pleasure of unboxing or unwrapping is proportional to the value of the thing you are trying to unwrap, right? Today, Jesus is offering us an extremely special gift and so we need to take great care to unbox this gift. So today we are going to unbox the gift of peace that Jesus wants to give us.

But before we can get to the gift of peace we have to appreciate its setting. For that we have to go to the setting that Jesus was in when he offered this gift to his disciples.

You see at this point in John 14 we are at the beginning of what is considered Jesus’ Farewell Discourse. While the disciples don’t fully get it, Jesus knows what is going to unfold in the next few days and it ain’t pretty! Jesus is seeing what is coming when he says, *“I don’t have much more time to talk to you, because the ruler of this world approaches.”* To fully appreciate what this means let me remind you of the big picture here. When Jesus was born into this world, Satan tried to eliminate Jesus right at his birth through King Herod’s plan to kill all the boys under two. When Jesus started his active ministry he faced opposition fairly early and it kept building up. He was also tempted by the enemy in every possible way and managed to resist every one of them. Imagine how enraged the enemy would have been by this point. But the entire period of Jesus’ active ministry years, He was divinely protected from the enemy’s wrath because, in Jesus’ own words, “his time had not yet come”. Now as Jesus was about to go to the cross, he realizes that his time has come. By that he meant, the leash the enemy was on was about to be fully released. At the same time you have to remember that Jesus’

divinity fully constrained. Let me explain that a bit. You see Jesus was fully God and fully human right? But during his life on earth his divinity was constrained in some way. Phil 2:6 and 7 says Jesus Christ “Though he was God,<sup>[a]</sup>

he did not think of equality with God  
as something to cling to.

<sup>7</sup> Instead, he gave up his divine privileges<sup>[b]</sup>;  
he took the humble position of a slave<sup>[c]</sup>  
and was born as a human being.

When he appeared in human form,<sup>[d]</sup>

<sup>8</sup> he humbled himself in obedience to God  
and died a criminal’s death on a cross.

When it says He gave up his divine privileges it means he gave up the “omni” attributes. The power to be all knowing, the power to be everywhere and the power to do anything. But during his earthly ministry he did let a tiny bit of his divine power flash through when he did his amazing miracles. Now he was about to give up even the tiniest exercise of his divine power as he was about to subject himself to the enemy’s wrath. Kind of like a bird why can fly but stands on the ground when a big wolf is about to attack and it decides to simply stand there and take it.

And one final thing. The one thing that Jesus exercised fully when he was on earth was his connection to his Heavenly Father. In the days ahead, He knew that he would have to give up even that connection for a time, while being under the power of the enemy. So no divine power exercised, no connection to the Father for the first and last time ever and being subject to the full power of the enemy. This was the situation Jesus was about to enter. If you think you have troubles, think again. Because Jesus was about to step into a situation so intense at the physical, emotional and spiritual level that it was

sufficient to bring someone who was, think about this, fully God and fully human, down to being fully life-less. This is the setting.

And in this setting, Jesus is telling his disciples. I have a gift for you. It is the gift of peace. Now remember Jesus is giving something that he has. So in spite of the storm approaching Jesus has peace. Why? Jesus tells his disciples, the ruler of this world has no power over me, he tells them I am doing what the Father requires of me. He tells them that this peace is not the kind of peace that the world gives you.

Three things about that gift that I want to point out to you. The first thing I am going to talk about is that the peace Jesus has is not the same as the peace the world gives. Remember, for everything that God gives us, this world has a cheap imitation. When Jesus was talking about “peace that the world gives” his disciples understood this in very specific terms. Jesus was directly referring to something called the Pax Romana or the Roman Peace. Now Israel at Jesus time as you know where under the Roman Empire. The way empires work is that when a territory is captured, it has to be ruled and peace maintained. The way you do that is by a display of overwhelming force. When you see pictures of Roman soldiers in armor and uniform, holding powerful weapons, it is to overwhelm people into submission. And when people are overpowered they don’t fight back. When you don’t fight back there is “peace”. We practice such a thing all the time. Have to noticed the way cops operate on the streets? They have cars that light up like a Christmas trees. When they get out of the cars they look like a walking weapons display. Even the skies are being patrolled by fighter aircraft that mark up the whole sky to let people know that they are watching from above. All this overwhelming display of power helps to maintain a kind of peace. But this peace is a surface peace. It is also a fragile peace that can be broken at any time. But it is the only kind of peace that the world can give. The Pax Romana kind of peace.

But this kind of peace it is not true peace at all because it is merely external. It only looks like peace. Like a construction brick painted with gold paint that pretends to be a real gold nugget. You can make it look pretty similar from a distance. You see external peace only covers over inner turmoil and sometimes that inner turmoil can build up inside a person like a rumbling hot lava deep in the earth that then can suddenly explode messing even the external peace. But Jesus is saying, I am here to give you peace that is real. This peace is an internal peace. It is a peace inside of you. A peace in your inner most being. This kind of peace remains even when there is no external peace. Jesus' own situation shows exactly how this works. Jesus offers his peace when he is about to enter the most horrendous external situation. But internally in the deepest part of him, he is actually at peace. And Jesus is saying, this is the kind of peace I want to give you. A real, deep kind of peace that no external circumstances can take away.

The second aspect of this peace that Jesus had was that it came from the special knowledge that he had. The knowledge that the enemy had no power over him. Jesus was about to be stripped of everything by the power of the Ruler of this world and yet he says the Ruler of this world has no power over Him. How does that work? You see it is like this. Power over your circumstances is not the same as having power over you as a person. Any eternal spirit or individual may have power over your circumstances but the fact is, they don't have access to the real you. You see you are made up of your body, mind and spirit. People have the capacity to harm your body, but they cannot make you think, feel or do anything that you don't want to think, feel or do, if you are a fully developed adult. What you think, feel and do is your soul. And people only have access to your soul if you give them access, nobody has any real power over your soul. We have been created as autonomous beings with souls that we get to control and nobody else. So Jesus had peace in his situation because he knew that the enemy could wreck full havoc of his circumstances up to killing his body, but the enemy had no power

over Jesus' mind or spirit. Jesus also knew that being stripped of his physical body was what the Heavenly Father required of him for an amazing world transforming purpose. So when you have a special knowledge that the enemy cannot do anything to the real you, and what the enemy is doing to the outside of your life is a step towards God's amazing plan for your life, then you can have this deeper inner peace. It is a peace of mind and soul that comes from seeing the super big, "from above all of creation" perspective. Jesus' peace came from knowing that no matter how bad the next few days went, it was all good. That is some serious inner peace.

There is a third aspect of Jesus' peace I want to touch upon. This is the peace that is not just in your soul but also in your spirit. Because remember over the soul is the spirit. Now remember the Ruler of this world is also a spirit being. And spirit beings come against our spirit. They want to come and take the human spirit hostage. Or like a parasitic leech that sucks the blood out of its host. When someone gives their life to Christ, the enemy has lost its authority over that person. It is like this. You can do whatever you want in your yard or anywhere on your property, right? You have a certain authority over the land you own or the house you live in. But if someone else decides to come and make a shed on your lawn and decide to stay there that would make you upset right? And you might try and talk to the person or some people might even try to use force. But if you have tried whatever you can try and the person is too big and strong for you, you may not be able to directly do anything. But you can call the higher authorities, the cops. And the cops will be able to take any unauthorized person off your property for sure right? That is how your spirit realm works. If you are a Christ follower, no spirit being has authority over you. But sometimes they might try to mess where they have no business. When that happens you can call on a higher authority, the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit has to simply speak to the invading spirit and it will be sent away, so even your spirit can be at peace. And Peace, apostle Paul in Gal 5:22 says is a fruit of the spirit, referring to the Holy Spirit. In other words, real peace is the result

of the Holy Spirit residing on your spiritual property. So instead of some neighborhood ruffian setting up shop on your yard, imagine Jesus Christ Himself being invited to set up a place to stay in your property. Now would you be stressed about worldly things if you knew that anytime you were overwhelmed you could simply go to Jesus who would take care of the situation for you in a snap? So the peace that Jesus Christ gives you is a peace that emerges from your spirit from being connected to His spirit.

So when your spirit is at peace, that peace flows to your mind. How? By your thoughts being shaped from the “above all of creation” perspective. Now remember having peace does not mean you won’t have pain in your life. You can be in pain but still have an inner peace.

So how should we respond to such a gift from Jesus Christ? Three things. First, receive it. If you don’t have peace right now and you are not a Christ follower, then ask Christ to come into your life. It will change everything. If you already have Christ in your life and you still lack peace, then simply ask for a filling of the Holy Spirit because Christ’s peace is a fruit of His spirit. The more filled you are the more peace you will have. So the first thing you need to do is receive this incredible gift of peace that Christ is offering you.

Secondly, enjoy this gift. Try it out. See if it works in your life. Peace comes with the ability to experience stillness. Remember the good shepherd said he would lead us to quiet waters? And when you are at peace and your insides are quiet, you can hear God better. That is what it means when Ps 46:11 says “be still and know that I am God”. So if you have received the gift of peace, take time to enjoy it. It is for you to enjoy.

Thirdly, if you have the gift of peace, share it. That is what Jesus did. The gifts that Jesus gives us has this strange way of multiplying as we share it. We can pass this gift of peace to others around us, because we are not giving our finite peace that can get depleted, we are giving Christ’s peace that is infinite and cannot get depleted. Praying for world

peace is all well and God but passing Christ's peace to those around you is where real peace emerges from.

If you are a Christ follower, I want you to feel the peace of Christ flowing like anointing oil being poured onto your head and running down your face and washing your whole body. Yes even your body can have the peace of Christ because your body may be in pain but your body is controlled by your mind. When you are stressed, your body feels it. When you are at peace, your body feels it too. And guess what, tell your body that one day it is going to be transformed into a form that will be perfect, with no pain or death or decay. Even your body will feel happy about that

This my friends is Christ's gift of peace. It is an expansive peace. It is an inner peace. It is a peace that emerges in your spirit and flows into your mind and even takes over your body. It is a peace so big that it passeth all understanding. May Christ's peace be with you all. Let us pray.