Peace

Over the last several weeks in the *NEWSLETTER*, we've been looking at the "fruit" that Paul tells us in **Galatians 5:22-26** that we should have. Again, this is what Paul calls the "fruit of the Spirit":

"...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control..."

In this edition, we'll spend some time looking at the fruit of the Spirit – **PEACE**. When the angels announced the coming of Jesus in Bethlehem, these were the words that were spoken:

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." **(Luke 2:14)**

Jesus came to this earth in order to give us God's peace, something internal as opposed to external. During Jesus' time, there was a period of peace called Pax Romana, peace that Rome maintained through force. There were no wars to speak of, since the Roman army was so superior to anything that could be mounted against it that no one went against Roman rule. Jesus did not come to bring that kind of peace. As a matter of fact, He promised division. In **Luke 12:51ff**, Jesus promises division. Families would not be at peace with one another, based upon whether or not they believed in Him as the Messiah. But to those who did (and do) believe in Him, He promises an internal peace that is brought on by the assuredness of one's salvation and the hope of an eternal home in Heaven.

In **John 14:27**, Jesus says to all of us who believe: ***"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."*** No matter what our situation here is, we can be at peace knowing He will take us to be with Him when this life is over. Of His preaching, He said: ***"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)***

His gospel was heralded by His apostles as ***"the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all." (Acts 10:36)*** According to Paul in **Ephesians 2:14-17** and **Colossians 1:20**, God's peace is for all mankind, Jew and Gentile alike. It is felt by all believers who trust in Him to see them through all of the trials and difficulties of this life. As Paul told the people of Rome (and us) in **Romans 15:13** ***"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."***

Perhaps Paul said it best, telling the Philippians the effect God's peace should have on all of us when he said in **Philippians 4:4-7**:

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

We are God's children because of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That is the gospel that brings us peace. How? Because we are God's children, we can have assurance that He will take care of us. We won't have peace in this life—we will have trouble. But, because of our assurance of a better life waiting for us, we can be at peace. As David so wonderfully put it: ***"I trust in God and am not afraid. What can man do to me?"*** **(Psalm 56:11)**

– Johnny Stephens