

Prince of Peace

A sermon by Larry Kirkpatrick

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Jesus is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). That is not all that is in His name, but it is a part. Verse seven goes on to say that the increase of His government and of peace will be without end. It will be established with judgment and with justice. Hebrews 12:14 says that we are seek peace with all men, and holiness, and that if we refuse to seek that, we will not see the Lord. That is, we will not see Him in peace. He will come, we know, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who know not God (2 Thessalonians 1:8).

Today, as we are gathered in fellowship to recall the Lord's death until His Second Coming (1 Corinthians 11), it will do our hearts well to think on what it means that Jesus is the Prince of Peace.

Our Source of Peace: Christ Within

If we want to experience true peace, we must know the source. Who is the source? Christ formed within, the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27). You want peace? Go to Jesus:

It is a mistake to entertain the thought that God is pleased to see His children suffer. All heaven is interested in the happiness of man. Our heavenly Father does not close the avenues of joy to any of His creatures. The divine requirements call upon us to shun those indulgences that would bring suffering and disappointment, that would close to us the door of happiness and heaven. The world's Redeemer accepts men as they are, with all their wants, imperfections, and weaknesses; and He will not only cleanse from sin and grant redemption through His blood, but will satisfy the heart-longing of all who consent to wear His yoke, to bear His burden. It is His purpose to impart peace and rest to all who come to Him for the bread of life. He requires us to perform only those duties that will lead our steps to heights of bliss to which the disobedient can never attain. The true, joyous life of the soul is to have Christ formed within, the hope of glory (*Steps to Christ*, pp. 46, 47).

Some Christians find it difficult to see the connection between Christ and His law. But Seventh-day Adventists shouldn't. We know the promise in Psalm 119:

Great peace have they which love Thy law: and nothing shall offend them (Psalm 119:165).

Our source of peace is our echo of God's character. At first it is a very distant echo. But as we grow in Him, as Christ is formed within, a change takes place. We come to know Him, first in a primitive way, then increasingly we learn to trust Him. We begin to embrace His counsels. By experience we find His counsels wherever He has spoken to be right.

Seeking Out His Counsel

We seek out His counsel. We come into gospel order. Our God is a God of order. He wants order in His church. And doesn't this make so much sense? As the body attaches more firmly to the Head, the peace of the Head will become the peace of the body (1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 5:23, 24).

Let all things be done unto edifying (1 Corinthians 14:26).

God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints (1 Corinthians 14:33).

Let all things be done decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40).

Thus the church becomes a reflection of Heaven. Instead of our own agendas, we embrace God's purposes. And His blessings flow. We care what other members think, because we see them as connected to us, and we understand that in them are brothers and sisters through whom we may bless Christ or wound Him. Jesus explains:

When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: And before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared

for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: Naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me. Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee? Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me. Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave Me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in: naked, and ye clothed Me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not. Then shall they also answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee? Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal (Matthew 25:31-46).

Did you also notice that the Bible says that those who love God's law will be difficult to offend? It is actually stronger than that, isn't it? "And nothing shall offend them." Ellen White agrees with the Scripture:

There will not be strife and divisions. There will not be stubbornness in anyone who is bound up with Christ (*Our High Calling*, p. 173).

Speaking of Paul, she points out both his faithfulness to the divine counsels, and his interest in counseling with others.

While looking to God for direct guidance, he was ever ready to recognize the authority vested in the body of believers united in church fellowship. He felt the need of counsel, and when matters of importance arose, he was glad to lay these before the church and to unite with his brethren in seeking God for wisdom to make right decisions (*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 200).

People Who Cannot Be Offended

If we have Christ formed within, nothing will offend us. We will not seek out offense from others, and we will experience the strong desire that our own actions not be found offensive to others. We will model for others the truth of this counsel:

True Christian love cherished in the heart and exemplified in the life, would teach us to put the best possible construction upon the course of our brethren. We should be as jealous of their reputation as of our own (*Review and Herald*, April 15, 1880).

Jesus is either the Prince of Peace or the king of chaos. How we treat each other testifies to the one idea or the other. Let us break bread in peace today. Let us echo the Prince of Peace Himself in how we treat one another. Our Lord says,

By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another (John 13:35).

There is a part of the mission for this congregation. Jesus is coming again. We are to seek peace with all men, and holiness. He is ready even this hour to heal us, and break our hearts, and begin to make us whole as a church family.

Biographical note: Larry Kirkpatrick has served in the ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church since 1994. He is a pastor of the American West, having led churches in Nevada, Utah, California, and Idaho. His writings include the books *Real Grace for Real People*, and *Cleanse and Close*. Larry and wife Pamela presently serve in the Upper Columbia Conference, ministering to the Bonners Ferry and Clark Fork churches in the incomparable beauty of Northern Idaho.