Verses: Psalm 85:8-10 and Ephesians 6:23-24 Occasion: Worship

Location: First Presbyterian Church of Lake Mary November 1, 2020

Pastor: Joe Raymond

**Song**

**There's within my heart a melody;
Jesus whispers sweet and low,
"Fear not, I am with you, peace, be still,"
in all of life's ebb and flow.**

**Refrain:
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus,
sweetest name I know,
fills my every longing,
keeps me singing as I go**

**All my life was wrecked by sin and strife,
discord filled my heart with pain,
Jesus swept across the broken strings,
stirred the slumbering chords again. [Refrain]**

**Peace and Love with Faith and Grace**

Scripture readings**: Psalm 85:8-10 and Ephesians 6:23-24**

**Psalm 85:8-10**

**Let me hear what God the Lord will speak,
    for he will speak peace to his people,
    to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.
9 Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him,
    that his glory may dwell in our land.**

**10 Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
    righteousness and peace will kiss each other.**

**Ephesians 6:23-24 (Paul’s benediction)**

**23 Peace be to the whole community, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace be with all who have an undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**This is the word of the Lord! Thanks be to God.**

**Let us pray**

 Heavenly Father, please quiet our minds and open our hearts

to Your truth,

and please

**…let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable to you,
   O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.**

**Amen**

**Sermon**

I want to start by thanking all of you who were praying for me this week, as I had asked! Most of you know that Friday I had the privilege of officiating at my own son’s wedding!

As I had both the wedding script and my sermon in mind this week, I noticed some striking parallels. This is not surprising; God intended earthly marriage to picture the relationship between Jesus and His church! At the heart of both is the concept of establishing a permanent union, entered into with full intention, characterized by

* trust
* devotion
* affection
* sincerity
* grace

Promises are given and received.

A new relationship of peace is established.

A new way of living begins.

Of course, our unity with God in Christ is infinitely deeper than any earthly marriage.

The mystery of the unity between husband and wife is difficult to define using our limited words, but unity in Christ, enabled by the Holy Spirit, is impossible to fully set out in words.

Knowing this, Paul’s desire in writing Ephesians was that all the saints (all believers) **may have the power to comprehend …what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge** (3:18-19)

From beginning to end, throughout Ephesians, Paul taught that a believer’s relationship with God is:

* established by grace
* rooted and grounded in love
* sustained by faith
* crowned by peace

This morning we heard the same theme, used in metaphor, in Psalm 85.

**10 Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
    righteousness and peace will kiss each other.**

The psalmist used the same concepts as Paul did in his benediction.

Paul talked about:

* Peace
* Love
* Faith
* Grace

These are such common words, maybe you have even seen them printed on a coffee mug or framed on someone’s wall.

But we know Paul did not intend the common meaning; rather, he meant the divine meaning for each. They carry significance from eternity past and eternity future.

As we study, notice their interrelatedness, their unity.

Each is intertwined with, supported, and enhanced by the others.

Peace and Love with Faith and Grace.

What is the deeper meaning of these?

* Peace: the result of reconciliation- we are no longer in “enmity” with God
* Faith: belief and trust
* Grace: unearned kindness
* Love: ἀγάπη agápē, sacrificial love that would voluntarily suffer, if necessary, for the benefit of another, demanding nothing back

Not one of us deserves any of these from God!

We were born sinners, and we sin every day!

We can never do enough to make our wrongs right!

This is the thrust of Paul’s first three chapters.

He tells us who we were:

 We “**were dead through the trespasses and sins and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else.** (Ephesians 2:1)

And then he explains what God has done on our behalf.

God’s love (ἀγάπη) and grace did not leave us dead in our sins!

(Ephesians 2:4-14 selected)

4 **But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us**5 **even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ** …

**8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— 9 not the result of works, so that no one may boast…**

**14 For he is our peace**

Do you hear the words intertwining?

We have peace because God, in His faithful ἀγάπη (love), clothes us with Christ’s righteousness. We receive this by faith, trusting in God’s grace toward us.

Isaiah wrote about this prophetically 61:10b

**…for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,**

 **he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,**

Jesus’s sacrifice, given freely in love and grace, received by faith, makes possible “the kiss of righteousness and peace.”

When a sinner comes to believe in and trust Christ, a new relationship of peace is established. A new way of living begins.

The reality of Ephesians 3:13 has begun. Christ dwells in believers’ hearts through faith as they are rooted and grounded in love.

With chapter 4, Paul has ended his discussion of doctrine and turns to the teaching of what to do now that we know who we were and who we are.

He taught:

5:5**1 …be imitators of God, as beloved children, 2 and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.**

This is simple to say but not simple to do, for Paul warned us we have a crafty, active enemy. And, Satan hates all believers.

We must remember to be wise warriors who wear God’s armor!

* belt of truth
* breastplate of righteousness
* shoes of the gospel of peace
* helmet of salvation
* shield of faith
* sword of the spirit

Wearing truth, righteousness, peace, salvation, faith, and the sword we are ready to stand firm!

To be successful, we must put off the old ways and put on the new.

Ephesians 4:22-24

* **put away our former way of life,**
* **be renewed in the spirit of our minds,**
* **clothe ourselves with the new self**
* **be kind and tenderhearted,**
* **forgive one another, as God in Christ has forgiven us.**

What we have freely received from God, we are to freely give to one another.

Having peace with God means we must extend peace to all others.

We received God’s grace, love, and peace by faith. We did nothing to earn them.

We must not expect others to earn them from us.

This takes perseverance.

We cannot do it on our own; thankfully, we do not have to.

Believers are all members of one body, and the members are to support each other.

Ephesians 4:4-6**There is one body and one Spirit…**5 **one Lord, one faith, one baptism,**6 **one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.**

Paul taught that to be effective, we must remain in prayer continuously for ourselves and for each other. Ephesians 6:18 **Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication.**

This picture of new life that Paul has painted for us throughout Ephesians sounds beautiful, does it not?

We can live in peace and love with faith and grace; God offers this freely.

A new relationship begins with Jesus as we accept God’s terms of peace: complete surrender to Him. We must fall fully into his loving arms!

Have you done this?

Once we do, we must also freely give peace and love with faith and grace, expecting nothing in return. In this way, we demonstrate God’s peace and love with faith and grace to others. We do this willingly, with continual prayer. In this way, we are privileged to show the way for others.

Friends, this is truly good news that is intended to be shared.

Please remember, this good news came to you on its way out to someone else, using YOU as a messenger.

To those of you who do not yet know this divine peace and love with faith and grace, I urge you, please call or come see me as soon as possible, so we can have that life and death conversation.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for allowing us to have Your Word that we can study and learn of Your peace, your love, and grace. Help us to grow in our faith that we might live to imitate Christ and bring others to know Your truth, leading to salvation.

Amen!

Friends, Paul’s letter has emphasized the unity we have in our faith. With the conclusion of our study of Ephesians, it is very fitting to celebrate this unity by gathering to share communion together today.

# INVITATION TO THE LORD’S TABLE

# Friends, this is the joyful feast of the people of God! They will come from east and west, and from north and south, and sit at table in the kingdom of God.

# According to Luke,

# When our risen Lord was at the table with his disciples, he took the bread, and blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him.

# This is the Lord’s Table.

# Our Savior invites those who trust him to share the feast which he has prepared.

**GREAT THANKSGIVING**

# Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

# It is right to give our thanks and praise. It is truly right and our greatest joy to give you thanks and praise, eternal God, our creator.

# You have given us life and second birth in your Spirit. Once we were no people, but now we are your people. You claimed Israel as your chosen nation and raised up the church as a witness to the resurrection, breathing into it your life and power.

# BREAKING OF THE BREAD

# The Lord Jesus, on the night of his arrest, took bread, and after giving thanks to God, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take, eat.

# This is my body, given for you.

# Do this in remembrance of me.

# In the same way he took the cup, saying:

# This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.

# Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.

# Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the saving death of the risen Lord, until he comes.

# PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

# Gracious God, may we who have received this sacrament live in the unity of your Holy Spirit, that we may show forth your gifts to all the world. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ.

# Amen.

And now:

**Peace be to the whole community, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace be with all who have an undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Ephesians 6:23-24

**Go in peace.**