

The Fruit of Peace



Fruit of the Spirit (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again today, sharing with you concerning one of the most beautiful themes of all Scripture, "The Fruit of the Holy Spirit."

Yesterday, I spoke to you about the fruit of joy. Today, I'm going to deal with the third form of the fruit of the Spirit, "The Fruit of Peace."

From the negative point of view, peace implies the end—or absence—of conflict. Certainly, there can be no peace where there is conflict. But to end conflict requires reconciliation. It's important to see that. We who are so familiar today in the world with wars tend to think of peace as coming usually when one side has defeated the other. But that really isn't peace. True peace only comes when the two opposing persons, or nations, or whatever they may be, have been reconciled with one another. So where there has been conflict, peace is made possible only through reconciliation, through bringing the warring parties together, and taking away the war and the enmity in their hearts.

Now, a conflict was introduced into the Universe originally by sin. First of all, the sin of Satan, the fallen angel, and then by the sin of the human race on earth. Sin has introduced various forms of conflict. There is conflict between God and man, because man is at war with God and out of harmony with God. But there's also conflict between man and man. There is war, disharmony, strife, everywhere in the human race—in families, in nations, and internationally. To achieve peace, we have to have reconciliation. Reconciliation was achieved by God once and for all through the death of Jesus on the cross. But apart from the reconciliation that has been provided through the death of Jesus, there is no other way to peace. Listen to what Isaiah the prophet said in 53:5, and I believe that this was a prophetic preview of the sufferings of Jesus on our behalf. It says:

> "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed."

Notice that central phrase, "The punishment that brought us peace was upon him." As long as our crimes and iniquities had not been dealt with, there was no possibility of peace

because there was no reconciliation. But Jesus paid the penalty for our crimes. He took upon Himself the punishment that was due to us. In this way, God's divine justice was satisfied and the way was made open for us to enter into peace—peace with God. Just let me quote that phrase again: "The punishment that brought us peace was upon him."

In Colossians 1:19 & 20, Paul deals with the same theme—the reconciliation between God and man that was achieved through the atoning death of Jesus on the cross. This is what Paul says:

> "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him [that is, Jesus], And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross."

The purpose of the death of Jesus was reconciliation. God, through it, made peace; but the making of that peace required the shedding of the blood of Jesus. Only by His life, sacrificially laid down on our behalf, was it possible for us to experience reconciliation with God.

Now, there are two beams to the cross—vertical and horizontal. Each beam represents a certain relationship. The vertical beam—the up and down beam—represents our relationship with God, but the horizontal beam represents our relationship with our fellow men. Now through the cross, both relationships have been healed. Reconciliation is extended in both directions. First, from God to man and secondly, between man and man.

Let's look at the first direction of reconciliation, that which is represented by the vertical beam. In Romans 5:1, Paul says this:

> "Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Once we have been acquitted of our guilt, through the death of Jesus, we have peace with God. Reconciliation has been achieved with God. That brings peace.

Now let's look at the horizontal beam. The relationship between man and man. In Ephesians 2:14 & 15, Paul says this of Jesus:

> "For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, [that is primarily Jews and Gentiles] and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, [by His death, Jesus broke down the barrier between man and man.] By abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace."

Notice the peace here is on the horizontal plane—it's between one man and another man. Jesus, through His death on the cross, broke down the barriers that divided and separated humanity and made possible peace between men. Because of this, humanity can never know true peace except through the cross. There is no other way to peace, whether it be for individuals for families, for nations, for the whole human race.

Listen to what God says to the human race in Isaiah 57:19–21:

> "'Peace, peace to him who is far and him who is near,' says the Lord, 'and I will heal him.' But the wicked are like the tossing sea, for it cannot be quiet, And its waters toss up refuse and mud. 'There is no peace,' says my God, 'for the wicked.'"

Notice two things—peace leads to healing. God offers peace and then he says, "I will heal." This is true in every realm of human personality —the mind, the emotions, the body. Peace brings healing.

But then, on the other hand, there in no peace to the wicked—those who remain stubborn, rebellious, self-willed, unyielding; those who reject the reconciliation of the cross. There is no alternative way to peace for them.

I've said that peace is achieved through reconciliation. However, we need to understand that peace is more than just the absence of conflict. Of course, while there is conflict there can be no peace; but simply the end of conflict is not the full meaning of peace. The Hebrew word for peace is "Shalom"—the familiar greeting used by Jewish people today. "Shalom" is related to a root in Hebrew which means "to complete." "Shalom" means wholeness, completeness, well-being. That's the full meaning of peace. Not just the absence of strife, but it is something very positive—wholeness, completeness, well-being.

I want to suggest to you that there are two keys to peace. The first key is God's government. In Isaiah 9:7, this prophecy is given of the Messiah:

> "There will be no end to the increase of his government or of peace..."

Notice the relationship between God's government and peace. Notice also the order. God's government comes first and then peace. Only those who are under God's government can know peace. Those who reject God's government never know true peace. Often, in the Bible, the Gospel is referred to as the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Gospel means "good news." What is the "good news?" The good news is that God is prepared to govern us—to set up His kingdom over our lives—and that when He does this we can have peace, but without God's government there can be no peace.

The second key to peace, I believe, is hearing and obeying God's voice. In Isaiah 48:18, God speaks to His people, Israel. He reminds them of what they could have had if they had walked in obedience to Him. This is what He says:

> "If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your righteousness like the waves of the sea."

So what's the key to peace like a river? Paying attention to God's commands, listening to what God says, and then doing it.

The same principle is carried right over to the New Testament. In John 10:27, Jesus says about His disciples—His true followers—this:

> "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."

What is the mark of a true disciple of Jesus? It's not a denominational label. It's not even a certain doctrinal stand. It's this: "My sheep hear My voice and follow Me."

What are the two things that mark out the true believer, the true disciple of Jesus? First of all, hearing His voice; and secondly, following Him, and that brings peace. Jesus said to those who do this, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

I'm glad it's not as the world gives because that's not very enduring or stable or lasting. So what are the two requirements for peace? First, reconciliation through the cross with God and with man. Second, hearing and obeying God's voice.

Our time is up for today, but I'll be back with you tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow, I'll be speaking about the fourth form of the fruit of the Spirit, "The Fruit of Patience."

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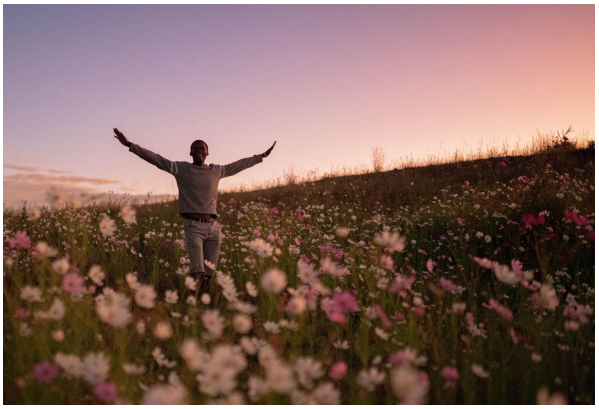

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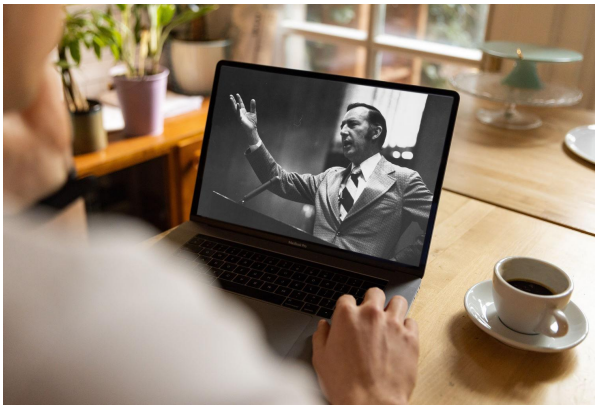

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