

Finding Peace Among Suffering and Trial

“Suffering and Trial... with Peace?”

Lesson 3

Lesson 1 – “Peace, What Is It?”

Lesson 2 – “Peace: Worship and Devotion”

Lesson 3 – “Suffering and Trial... with Peace?”

Lesson 4 – “Peace from the Cross”

pastor@alcportland.org – Send me questions or feedback

Review Lesson 2

Peace offerings – shelem and shalom

- 3 types: Thanksgiving, Vow, Freewill

The giver ate part of the offering as a celebration, with view to end times feast

Divine worship service includes peace in Christ during Service of the Sacrament

Peace with God (ultimate peace) includes a life for Him, Romans 12:1

Takeaway – giving our offerings and life to God in a sacrificial way is the ultimate life and peace

Bible Study

Dietrich Bonhoeffer – German Lutheran Pastor imprisoned and ultimately executed by the Nazis.

“The test of whether we have truly found the peace of God will be in how we face the sufferings which befall us. There are many Christians who bend their knees before the cross of Jesus Christ well enough, but who do nothing but resist and struggle against every affliction in their own lives. They believe that they love Christ’s cross, but they hate the cross in their own lives. In reality, therefore, they hate the cross of Jesus Christ as well; in reality, they are despisers of the cross, who for their part, seek to flee the cross by whatever means they can. Whoever regards suffering and trouble in their own life as something wholly hostile, wholly evil, can know by this that they have not yet found peace with God at all. Actually, they have only sought peace with the world, thinking perhaps that they could cope with themselves and all their questions with the cross of Jesus Christ; in other words, that they could find inner peace of mind. Thus, they needed the cross, but did not love it. They sought peace only for their own sake. When sufferings come, however, this peace quickly disappears. It was no peace with God because they hated the sufferings God sends....Whoever loves the cross of Jesus Christ, whoever has found peace in him, they begin to love even the sufferings in their life, and in the end, they will be able to say with Scripture, ‘We also rejoice in our sufferings.’”¹



Some additional Scripture references for reflection:

1 Peter 1:6–7

James 1:2–4

Hebrews 12:5–6

Questions for reflection:

1. Is all suffering the same?
2. What benefits do trials and suffering offer us?
3. How could Bonhoeffer believe that true peace in Christ allows a person to “love even the sufferings in their life”?
4. Have you ever considered the cross and suffering to be a part of your Christian life as a reflection of Jesus?

Romans 5:1-11

Romans 5:3 –

καυχάομαι (cow-KA-omai) – “to take pride in something, *boast, glory, pride oneself, brag*”² Can be negative as in false pride, or positive as in take pride or boast about something good. Many translations say, “rejoice,” but it is more accurate to say, “boast.”

θλιψις (THLI-psys) – “trouble that inflicts distress, *oppression, affliction, tribulation*. Of distress that is brought about by outward circumstances.”² “However, here and ‘in most cases the reference is to any “external pressure” ... that may afflict the believer in this life.”³

Key phrases and words in Romans 5:1-11:

justified by faith

peace with God

rejoice in hope of the glory of God

rejoice in our sufferings

endurance

character

hope

through the Holy Spirit

while we were still sinners, Christ died for us

while we were enemies we were reconciled to God

reconciliation (see Genesis 3:15)

Romans 8:1-39 – Life in the Spirit

Romans 8:1-2

Romans 8:6-7

Romans 8:16-17

Romans 8:18-25

Romans 8:28

Romans 8:31-39

Key phrases and words in Romans 8:1-39:

no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus

the mind on the Spirit is life and peace

adoption as sons

we are children of God

[we are] heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him

sufferings...present time...not worth comparing with the glory...to be revealed

[we] have the firstfruits of the Spirit

wait for [future glory] with patience

all things work together for good

If God is for us, who can be against us?

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

[nothing] will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord

Takeaway – None of us love to suffer or go through trials, but the key is to place our trust in God over anything else. Peace comes in knowing God is not our enemy but our loving Father.

References:

¹ Burton Nelson, Geoffrey Kelly (editors), *A Testament to Freedom: The Essential Writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, HarperOne; Revised ed. (2009)

² Bauer-Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, The University of Chicago Press; Third Ed. © 2000

³ Middendorf, M. P. (2013). *Romans 1–8*. (D. O. Wenhe & C. P. Giese, Eds.) (p. 384). Saint Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.