

Peace

Peace. People everywhere in the world say they want peace. What is it and how can we obtain it? The word peace is used in a variety of ways in Scripture. In both the Old and New Testaments it is used as a greeting and salutation. The word peace is also used to describe freedom from hostilities between the peoples or nations. Often peace is used to indicate a spirit of tranquility. There is also in Scripture an inward peace given by God.

Peace between nations of the world is something which people seemingly will hope and pray for until the end of time. Peace between Christians and the people of the world will continue to be an elusive goal for Christians. Jesus said, *Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, rather division* (Luke 12:51). However, we must try to the best of our abilities to live peaceably with everyone. Paul said, *If it is possible, as much as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all men* (Rm 12:18). There is, however, a better outlook for peace with our fellow Christians and inward personal peace.

This outlook begins with being at peace with our God. The God of peace will be with us if we will learn and receive the things written in His word (Phil. 4:9a). Jesus said, *Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.* (John 14:27). This peace is also described by Paul in Philippians 4:7, *...and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.* What is this peace Jesus gives that is different from the world and surpasses our understanding? What does it feel like when we experience this peace?

Clearly, inward peace cannot be had by accumulation of and reliance upon wealth as do those in the world. The stories of the rich fool (Luke 12:16-21) and the rich young ruler (Matt.19:16-22) emphatically say wealth does not bring the kind of peace Jesus promised. Jesus said, *these things which I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace* (John. 16:33a). The peace God gives that surpasses our understanding may come from an internal feeling of security derived from the knowledge that whatever happens to us in this life, God is in control. Jesus said, *be of good cheer, I have overcome the world* (John 16:33b). In Matt. 11:29, Jesus describes that in following Him, *you will find rest for your souls.* Tranquility and a sense that all is well with our souls lets us rest in God's peace, peace that surpasses our understanding.

-- For the elders (Don Denton)