

PEACE

SCRIPTURE & OBSERVATION:

When we think about “peace,” we often picture of doves, calm nature images, and awkward yoga poses. But the peace Jesus shows us in the gospels has little to do with these images. Jesus demonstrates that peace, or *irene* in Greek, is about loving submission to the will of God. Peace is something received by those who understand that their security and worth come from Jesus, not anything in the world. We’ll take this examination of peace in two parts. First, we’ll look at a passage in John where Jesus prepares the disciples for his death and departure. Second, we’ll look at how Jesus demonstrates what real peace looks like in Matthew. Read the passages below and answer the following questions. Answers to the below questions are provided on page 3.

First, take a look at John 16:32-33:

“Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. I have said these things to you, that in me you may have *irene*. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

1. Where does Jesus get his peace?
2. Where do the disciples get peace? What are the similarities between where Jesus gets his peace and where the disciples get their peace?
3. What is the relationship between tribulation and *irene*? How do the disciples’ circumstances effect the *irene* Jesus is talking about?
4. What reassurance does Jesus give to the disciples? He doesn’t say “just have *irene*” – he gives the disciples something to have confidence in and remember. (Hint: The word “overcome” comes from the verb “to conquer.”)

Now look at Matthew 26: 36-46 in your Bible:

5. Why do you think Jesus heads off to pray with his disciples on the night he was betrayed? What do you think Jesus is feeling in this passage?
6. What is Jesus asking his Father for in vs. 39? Why is he asking it over and over again?
7. After Jesus makes his request, what does he tell the Father? Why do you think Jesus submits like this?
8. Why do you think Jesus doesn’t run away from the betrayer?
9. In what ways does Jesus’ experience at Gethsemane demonstrate the peace described in John 16:32-33?

APPLICATION:

What are the issues you are wrestling with right now? Work? Health? Relationships? Status? Wealth? Family? If peace is the result of relationship with the sovereign God, how should you be thinking and praying about these non-peace areas? If you were to follow Jesus' Gethsemane model, how would you proceed to talk to your Father about these areas? Can you be broken before him and express how hard it is to do what he wants?

PRAYER:

Jesus, I do not have peace. I am struggling and hurting, and it is really, really hard to look at my situation and believe that you still care and that you can control this. Help me to remember that you love me and that you have conquered each of my circumstances. Help me to find peace and reassurance in who you are and not look for it in my circumstances. Do whatever it takes in my life to make me a person who leans on you – in obedience and dependence – and finds peace in your presence. Teach me to depend on you so that in your nearness, your peace may abound in my heart. Amen.

OBSERVATION ANSWERS:

1. Jesus' peace comes from his nearness to his Father.
2. The disciples receive peace "in me" – that is Jesus. Peace is given to those who are in relationship with Jesus. Just as Jesus has peace because of his nearness to his Father, so the disciples receive peace when they are near/in-relationship-with Jesus.
3. Because peace is based on nearness to Jesus, not the circumstances in which the disciples find themselves, the tribulation that is coming does not have a bearing on the disciples' peace.
4. The disciples are to remember that Jesus has overcome the world, meaning that he has conquered everything in the world. Nothing in the world has authority over him, he is sovereign over every square inch of it. The disciples' peace is to be based in the reality of who Jesus is and what he has done. Though life may be difficult, they are in relationship with the sovereign Christ, who understands their needs and has the ability to meet them.
5. Jesus needs to be near God and experience peace in his presence. That peace doesn't look like freedom from worry or fear, instead it is resting in and submitting to the will of the Father.
6. Jesus is asking his Father for another way – a Plan B – so that he does not have to endure the crucifixion and everything that it involves. He asks again and again because of how deeply he does not want to go through with the crucifixion.
7. Jesus says, "not my will but yours be done." Jesus is submitting to his Father's will, though it will cost him everything. Jesus' obedience at Gethsemane – even in the face of unfathomable pain and heartache – appears to be because he trusts his Father. Though he does not want to endure the cross, he trusts the sovereign will of his Dad.
8. Because his Father has not given him permission to leave. Jesus submits to his Father's will and waits for the betrayer because it is the only way forward (vs. 42).
9. Jesus finds peace not in his circumstances, which are obviously less than pleasant. Instead, Jesus is at peace because of his relationship with his Father. Jesus has confidence that his Father is sovereign and good in this situation, and as such, he can trust him through his pain. Peace for Jesus – and for us - is loving submission to and trust in God and his will.