



Christ, The Prince of Peace

Today, men everywhere are seeking for peace, clamouring for peace. "We want peace!" Many formulae are put forth to attain peace. The need for peace between nations is being given the most publicity. Yet while the leaders of the world are negotiating for peace and even fighting for it in the United Nations assembly, they are actually preparing for war. The peace they are seeking is not true peace; at best it is only a truce, a ceasefire between warring factions. The simple reason is that the world outside Christ has no genuine peace to offer, nor does it give peace. The presence of peace depends on the Author of Peace, the Source of Peace, the Giver of Peace, the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ. Only those who have made peace with Him will possess permanent peace.

What is Peace?

It is not just the presence of quietude, nor is it merely the absence of conflict. In its truest sense and in its most powerful form, peace is said to be the pervasive influence of God's love in us. And it is expressed to others in goodwill, harmony, contentment and good cheer. In other words, we need peace first on the personal level. This is the basic lack which only Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, can give and no one else because Jesus came into the world to reconcile us to God and to one another. Whereas once we were at enmity with God, but by His grace and mercy and through our faith in Him, and through the ministry of reconciliation of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, we are made God's children, made heirs and joint-heirs with Christ.

Christ's Mission on Earth

When He first came into the world, the promise of peace was made. It was "to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:79). The angels sang the chorus, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men" (Luke 2:14) on the night of His birth.

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Peace was one of the distinctive features of Christ's mission on earth. It was His ministry and message to men everywhere, "....have peace one with another" was one of His injunctions (Mark 9:50). To the peacemakers was given this promise by the Prince of Peace, "Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. (Matthew 5:9) When His disciples, the twelve and twenty were sent forth on their respective

missions, they were bidden to use "Peace" as their salutation. "And when ye come into a house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it" (Matthew 10:12-13). "And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace *be* to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it" (Luke 10:5-6). Peace was pronounced by Jesus, the Prince of Peace, upon those whose diseases physical or moral, were healed by Him. "And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague. (Mark 5:34) In another instance,

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Jesus said to the woman, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace" (Luke 7:50). And again the greeting with which He met His disciples after His resurrection, "And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you. (Luke 24:36) Then the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you. (John 20:19, 21, 26) Such greetings by Jesus are not just conventional forms of salutation or farewell, but were indeed blessings guaranteed by the Prince of Peace. And yet there is a paradoxical sense, in which Jesus came "not to send peace, but a sword" (Matthew 10:34, Luke 12:51). According to James Hastings: "For there is a false peace (Jeremiah 6:14; 8:11) and with that He could have nothing to do. Jesus would never compromise, or permit His followers to compromise, with falsehood or error or sin; and so in a world where these things abound, His coming inevitably meant division and struggle and suffering (Luke 2:34, 35). Yet, for all that, peace was the purpose of His mission, even though it had to be attained by sending forth a sword – sharp and two-edged, as the seer saw it (Revelations 1:16) – a sword which will ultimately secure the victory of the good in the conflict of evil, and bring in the peace that rests on righteousness (Psalm 72:7; 85:10).

Peace, a characteristic of Christ

Jesus said in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid". Peace is a characteristic of His Being. He said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest". (Matthew 11:28).

How can we possess this peace?

We must be reconciled with God through the ministry of reconciliation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul said, "Be ye reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:20b). "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). And this is "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7a). This is the peace which is promised to those who have made peace with God. "Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose* mind is stayed on *thee*" (Isaiah 26:3). This peace is one of the virtues of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22).

Dear reader, have you made peace with God? Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me" (John 14:1). May "the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord *be* with you all". (2 Thessalonians 3:16)

Amen

Elder Khoo Peng Kiat

Announcements

- ◇ 31 Dec : Prize-Giving Sunday
- ◇ 7 Jan : Promotional Sunday

Sunday School Exco for the year 2007

General Superintendent - Eld Ong Eng Lam
Assistant General Superintendent - Dn Lim Ching Wah
Secretary - Mrs Jennifer Goh
Treasurer - Mr Winston Chiam
Registrar - Mr Vincent Goh
Dept Superintendent (Adults) - Mr Ong Beng Hong
Dept Superintendent (Seniors) - Dn Roger Lim
Dept Superintendent (Young Teens) - Mr Heng Shao Sheng
Dept Superintendent (Juniors) - Mr Timothy Soh
Dept Superintendent (Primary) - Mrs Iris Loe

From the Editorial Team

As we come to the last issue of Lively Stones for the year, the editorial team wishes to thank every contribution and labour of love from the writers.

The team also hopes that the articles have been edifying to some if not all who read it.

As we near the end of 2006, let us take stock of the deeds we have done and the words we have spoken and be mindful if our walk with God have been considered good by our Lord. May we reconsecrate our lives and strive to walk better little by little in the year to come.

A Blessed Christmas and New Year to everyone.