

Ephesians 1:1 The Possibility of Peace

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful¹ in Christ Jesus: (NIV)

CAN THERE BE PEACE IN OUR WORLD?

The Car in front of me on Stemmons Freeway in Dallas, had a bright blue sticker on the rear bumper. As I drew nearer, I read this simple plea:

One Planet

One People

...Please

I thought, is there any force that can bring us together before we destroy ourselves?
Can there be peace in our world?

There is a malignant disease at work destroying the human family. This dread disease is sin, stalking man in the form of separation. Man is at war with God, with his fellow-man, and with himself.

Our world is broken and bruised. Dividedness is one of the dominant factors of our existence. Jews and Gentiles, east and west, black and white, rich and poor, labor and management, male and female, old and young, conservative and liberal, traditional and progressive, parent and child, bond-man and free-man. Powers, mights, dominions, and names, all divide us.

There are cleavages of nation, race, color, class, religion, and culture which engender bitter hostility and threaten our world with annihilation unless they are removed.

There is a malignant disease at work destroying the human family. This dread disease is sin, stalking man in the form of separation. Man is at war with God, with his fellow-man, and with himself. The abnormal has become normal, right and wrong have traded places.

¹ He must dwell in the heart that returns His affections.

In 1992, the vice president of the United States suggested it would be better for children to be raised by two parents than one. He was verbally lynched. A year earlier, a famous basketball player revealed he was HIV-positive after having sex with hundreds of women. He was hailed as a hero.

In 1995 a bomb blew up a federal building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 people. A mother in South Carolina drowned her two sons so they wouldn't interfere with a relationship with her boy friend.

In 1996 a mother in Rowlett, Texas brutally murdered her two sons and turned the knife on herself, for "No one knows why?"

Crack Cocaine, Drive-by shootings, Video Poker, Trashy Talk Shows, Greedy Athletes, Computer Pornography, Run Away Law Suits, Shock Radio, Sexual Abuse, Grandparents raising children because parents are on drugs.

In 1999, two teenagers were murdered in cold blood; eleven classmates and one teacher in Columbine High, Littleton, Colorado.

You are considered a fool for worshipping some obsolete God when you should be searching for your inner child, winning by intimidation, awakening the warrior spirit within.

Hugh Downs told his 20/20 audience that people teaching family values are fueled by the same intolerance that fueled Hitler and the Klan.

Children need notes from their parents to get their ears pierced. In Oregon, they could legally have an abortion without parental consent. Schools enthusiastically pass out condoms but ban children from handing out Christmas cards. Is this crazy or not?

In the land of the free, the U.S. Prison Population Tops 2 Million living in prisons. (1 in 142 US residents are now in prison). That is larger than the 5th largest city Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In the home of the brave, men who exude great public courage are routinely uncovered as Wizards of OZ: all style, no substance.²

Can there be peace in our world?

Can peace come to nations?

Can a man find peace in his heart?

² Welch, Bob, "If You Could See Us Now, Pop Youngberg", Focus on the Family, July 19968605 Explorer Dr., Colorado Springs, Co. 80920-1051 (719=531-5181)

What is God doing?

Does God have a plan to bring humanity together? Will we self-destruct before we accept His plan? Is God doing anything to unite humanity? Is there a force that can unite us?

The answer to the question, "What is God doing?" is in the Bible, the Word of God. God's purpose is to 'sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth'. (Eph. 1:10)

God's purpose is to bring all creation to the point where it finds its true head in Christ. In Christ there is grace. In Christ there is peace.

In the New Testament there is a letter written by the Apostle Paul to a church at Ephesus. The letter speaks of grace and peace. It is called the letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

**THE EPISTLE OF
PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO THE
E P H E S I A N S**

¹Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

The introduction of the Ephesians letter is Chapter 1, verses 1. Mark these words of the Apostle Paul, a messenger from God. These words are pregnant with meaning about God's great plan to bring peace to man. In the Lord Jesus Christ, His dear Son, God offers man grace and peace.

In 60 A.D. Paul wrote this letter to the Ephesians from a Roman prison. It was a circular letter intended for use by churches in and around the city of Ephesus.

Perhaps the list included the seven churches of the Apocalypse: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphi, and Laodicea.

Paul begins the letter with his own personal name. He writes in full awareness of his office as AN APOSTLE OF CHRIST JESUS.

Paul boldly included himself as an apostle on the basis of his having seen the living Christ. *"Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are not ye my work in the Lord?" (1 Cor. 9:1)*

Paul, "an apostle", was one who was sent. This was his authority to speak as an inspired leader. His apostleship was "by the will of God." A major theme of Ephesians is that God is a God of purpose. He called His servant Paul to take part in accomplishing His purpose.

Paul's authority came as a personal ambassador from the risen Lord. Jesus had appointed the apostles as His representatives. Jesus appointed Paul and gave him His message.

The second section in the text is Paul's greeting to the readers.

1. They are THE SAINTS, (hagioi).
2. They are identified as "FAITHFUL".
3. They are "IN CHRIST JESUS."

1. The readers are "saints". The word means "holy people". Set apart for God, God's people. This was a way of saying that they were a continuation of the Old Testament people of God. As Israel was to be a holy nation, so people called into the body of Christ are to be holy.

To Israel God said,

Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation," (Ex. 19:6a)

"Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy," (Lev. 19:2b)

A holy people unto the Lord thy God, the Lord chose Israel to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth, (Deut. 7:6).

This calling and identity has been handed on to the church. The church is the body of Christ. His body is made up of "saints", holy or set-apart ones. Paul does not use the term saints in the sense of a select few whose dedication surpasses that of ordinary Christians.

"Saints" is a name for all Christians. The saints are to be faithful. This means full of faith, full of trust in the person and work of the Lord, Jesus Christ.

2. They are identified as "FAITHFUL".

Forsaking all I trust Him. Faithful unto death.

[1 Corinthians 4:17](#)

For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church

Colossians 1:2

To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father

Colossians 1:7

just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf,

Colossians 4:9

and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of your number. They will inform you about the whole situation here

1 Timothy 3:11

Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.

2 Timothy 2:2

The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also

3. They are "in Christ Jesus."

Israel's vocation as God's elect, holy, and witnessing people is passed on to a united company of believing people, both Jews and Gentiles, who find their true calling by sharing in Christ a fellowship and unity as His people, "one new man".

Listen to Paul rehearse this chorus over and over - we are one in Christ.

Hear Eph. 2:15,

"Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;"

Paul says, *"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."* (Eph. 5:30)

Union with Christ is the central theme of the Ephesians letter. It is this union that brings peace to nations, races, clans, tribes, and individuals. Forty-one times in the one hundred fifty-five verses of Ephesians, Paul mentions union with Christ in phrase after phrase; "in Christ", "in the beloved," "in Jesus", "in Him", "through Him", "by Him", "in the knowledge of Him", etcetera, etcetera.

Union with Christ is the force which can bring families together, races together, and nations together. As members of His body, we are made one.

The letter to Ephesians shows the nature of the church and the Christian life to those who come to Christ.

The Gentile Christian is reminded that **salvation - history never disown the Jewish background out of which the predominantly Gentile church came.** But, rather, the Jews and all believers **are made one through Christ for God's eternal purpose of peace to all men.**

CONCLUSIONS

Psychiatrists constantly remind us that man is fragmented, separated, at war in himself. Our own experience proves this is true.

Jesus makes man complete by opening his eyes to the sin which separates him from Himself. He offers healing and new life to fragmented people who accept Him as Lord and Savior, the Promised One.

A missionary once said to me, "Pastor, all kinds of people are coming to me for counseling: alcoholics, drug addicts, people with broken lives, and broken homes. I've been introducing them to Jesus. He is changing their lives before I can get them into counseling sessions."

Will you come to Jesus now and experience the change from war to peace? Hear and receive the word of truth. Trust the good news for your salvation. Believe and you will be sealed with the Holy spirit of promise into eternal peace, (Eph. 1:13).

In the Gospel accounts, people with fragmented lives found faith in Jesus brought instant wholeness. Jesus came to give abundant life to all who would believe.

The redeemed Samaritan woman found peace in Jesus. Bartimaeus found in Jesus the light his eyes had not seen before. Zacchaeus found in Jesus the meaning of life which his wealth had obscured.

"In Christ" all barriers are destroyed. Iron curtains, color-bars, class warfare, and all other divisions are brought to an end.

It is only Christ, our peace, who can bring together the people on either side of the barricade by first bringing them to Himself.

As Christians, all are on equal terms. We are one. Express that oneness in personal relationships and the way you behave.

"In Christ" God "unites all things." He gathers us together and presents us as a whole. The Greeks added a column of figures and put the sum at the top. "Unites all things" describes that process. It describes a speaker summing up a speech. It portrays the unifying of all things with Christ as the Head.

Paul said that all of reality, both physical and spiritual, is included in the unity in Christ. Jesus ENDS THE SEPARATION BETWEEN MAN AND GOD. The separation started in the Garden of Eden; gained force at a place called Babel, and reached its climax at Calvary.

Jesus is the force that brings together. He brings us to God. He brings us to each other. Jesus is the answer, Christ Himself is our peace.

"(God) made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in (Jesus), With a view to an administration suitable to the fulness of the times, . . . the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth, in (Jesus)." (Eph. 1:9-10)

Invitation

I invite you now to enter into union with Christ, the Prince of Peace. Accept Jesus now as your Lord and Savior. Acknowledge His peace in your life. You may take a pen and paper and write out your acceptance.

I confess that Jesus is the Lord.

I confess that Jesus is the Savior.

I confess that Jesus is the Promised One.

I hereby declare that the Lord Jesus Christ is my Savior.

Thank you Lord for saving my soul, A-men!

Celebrate His presence in your life every minute and every hour. His grace I offer to you. His peace I declare unto you!