

Open your heart to Him right now. Acknowledge your sin before God and believe that Christ's atoning blood has made your forgiveness possible. Receive Christ as your Saviour and find truly PEACE WITH GOD (Rom. 5:1).

### PROMISES OF GOD'S PEACE

Isaiah 26:3 "Thou wilt keep him in perfect PEACE, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee".

Isaiah 9:6 "For unto us a child [Jesus] is born, unto us a son [Jesus] is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of PEACE".

Luke 2:11-14 "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:11-14 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. {12} And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. {13} And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, {14} Glory to God in the highest, and on earth PEACE, good will toward men."

Galatians 5:22 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, PEACE, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith"

Colossians 3:15 "And let the PEACE of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful".

1 Thessalonians 5:23 "And the very God of PEACE sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ".

2 Thessalonians 3:16 "Now the Lord of PEACE himself give you PEACE always by all means. The Lord with you all."

Hebrews 13:20-21 "Now the God of PEACE that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, {21} Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom glory for ever and ever. Amen".

Romans 15:33 "Now the God of PEACE be with you all. Amen."

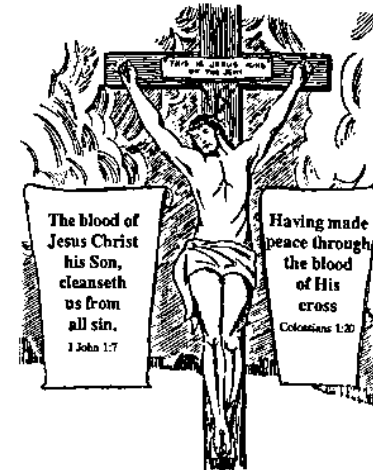
### SERVICES

Sunday School .....	9:45 A.M.
Sunday Morning Worship .....	11:00 A.M.
Sunday Evening Worship .....	7:00 P.M.
Wednesday Prayer Meeting .....	7:00 P.M.

# THE CORNERSTONE

BIBLICAL ANSWERS TO CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

## PEACE WITH GOD



## Greenwich Baptist Church

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Many times you will here the following expression in the context of a recent death of a loved one. "I wonder if he made his peace with God?" or "He looks so much at peace." or "He's at peace now". What does it mean to have peace with God and how does one really obtain it. The answers are found in the following pages.

**LACK OF PEACE BECAUSE OF HUMAN EFFORT** -- Many don't have peace in their life because they are trying to gain God's acceptance or favor by what they do for God. Their relationship to God is based on a system of works. They think that if they live a good enough life, if they keep the ten commandments, if they do the best they can, if they live like Jesus wants them to live; then they can obtain God's blessing and be made right with Him. In the midst of all their moral efforts and religious activities they still have no peace in their life, because they know they can never attain to God's perfect standard of righteousness and holiness. "...All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). "There is none righteous, no not one" (Rom. 3:10). As hard as a person might try to please God by his human efforts of good works, he never quite measures up! The Bible clearly says "...by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight..." (Rom. 3:20). God didn't give the Ten Commandments and the law so that by the keeping of them people could be saved; He gave the law so that all people would recognize their need of a Saviour, because of their inability to keep the God's law.

"Knowing that a man is NOT JUSTIFIED BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and NOT BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW: for by the WORKS OF THE LAW SHALL NO FLESH BE JUSTIFIED" (Gal. 2:16).

"Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. {22} But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. {23} But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. {24} Wherefore the LAW WAS OUR SCHOOLMASTER to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:21-24).

"Therefore by the DEEDS OF THE LAW there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for BY THE LAW is THE KNOWLEDGE OF SIN" (Rom. 3:20).

Suppose a neighbor is trespassing on your property. You go out and buy a no-trespassing sign and post it on the boundaries of your property. It informs all those who come near your property where your boundaries are and that you intend to prosecute those who trespass to the fullest extent of the law. Your neighbor continues to trespass as before. Your sign didn't make him a trespasser. He was already in violation of the law. Your sign revealed his violation and gave you proper grounds for charges. God's law doesn't produce sin in us, it reveals sin! We stand justly charged as guilty of trespassing God's law. Our only hope is to look away from the law to the one who suffered the curse of the law for us (Gal. 3:13). As we look to the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross and believe he bore in his body the penalty of our violations against God's law we can be saved from the just punishment we deserve. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter 2:24)

**DISTINGUISHING THE PEACE OF GOD FROM PEACE WITH GOD** -- Peace with God is received by when we initially trust Christ to be our Savior. At the moment we humble ourselves and receive Christ's forgiveness of sins we are no longer an enemy of God but have become a child of God at peace with Him. Listen to the following Scriptures: Romans "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. {10} For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom. 5:9,10). "Therefore if any man in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. {18} And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; {19} To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:17-19). God's wrath has been propitiated and we have been reconciled to God. We have been born into God's family as a child of God. Our position in God's family will never change. Having come to God by faith in Jesus Christ we now have permanent peace with God and can be sure of having eternal life. But, even though we have peace with God we cannot lose, it is possible to lose the peace of God. Our relationship to God as His child will never change. We will always be His Son. But our fellowship with God each day and our experience of the peace of God is dependent upon our walking in obedience to His Word. When we sin we grieve His Spirit within us -- "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30). We don't lose our salvation, we lose the joy of our salvation (Psalm 51:12). When we fail to take our burdens and cares to God in prayer with thanksgiving, we forfeit the peace of God. "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6,7).

## CONCLUSION

Many today are trying to cover their sin like Adam and Eve did when they sinned. They tried to cover their nakedness and guilt before God with fig leaves (Gen. 3:7). Those fig leaves represent man's religion. Religion is man's attempt to please God with his own righteous living. Christianity is the recognition of a sinner that he stands condemned in the sight of God because of his sin and nothing he could ever do by self effort can make himself right with God. He humbly pleads for God's mercy and forgiveness through the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 18:9-14; 1 Cor. 1:18; 15:1-4; Acts 2:37-40). God demonstrated the way to have peace with Him when He made clothes for Adam and Eve with the skins of animals. There had to be the shedding of blood. It is only through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ that there can be remission of sins and the receiving of salvation from God (Heb. 9:22; 10:1-18). I plead with you to believe the Word of God concerning Christ's blood: "In Whom (Christ) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins..." (Eph. 1:7), "In Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:14), and finally "...having made peace through the blood of His cross..." (Col. 1:20).

a sinner. A dog doesn't become a dog when he barks, a dog barks because he is a dog. From the moment of our conception in our mother's womb we have a sin problem within us that leads us away from God. "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies" (Psalm 58:3). "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5). Man has a heart problem! His heart is full of sin. But thanks be to God he offers us a new heart through His Son the Lord Jesus Christ (Ezk. 36:26; 2 Cor. 5:17). This explains why Jesus said it is imperative that a man be "born again" (John 3:7). Just as we had a physical birth and inherited the sinful heart, when we believe on Jesus Christ we inherit a new heart of righteousness -- the righteousness of the perfect Son of God. By His blood we are cleansed from our former iniquities and we have new life in Christ (Isaiah 1:18; 2 Cor. 5:17). If you will confess your sins to God and receive his cleansing of your conscience from the guilt of your sin you will find the peace with God He offers in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ (1 John 1:8-10; Heb. 10:19-25).

### **THE OFFER OF GOD'S PEACE THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST --**

The peace and security that God offers to every individual must be received from God as a gift (Rom. 6:23). It is not granted as a reward or payment for righteous living. Those who have peace with God receive it BY FAITH! "Therefore, being justified BY FAITH, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). What is it that robs us of peace in life? It is the awareness of our guilt before God. We carry the weight of sin's guilt with us throughout our life until we recognize and believe that God has made a way for our sins to be forgiven through the shed blood of His Son "And, having made [peace] through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven" (Col. 1:20). When I acknowledge my sin and guilt before God, and confess I am indeed worthy of His judgment then I have taken the first step to find peace. I must recognize it was my sinful ways that nailed Jesus to the cross. Realizing what my sin did to the Son of God, I repent of it. I turn from it to the Saviour who can cleanse me of my guilt and sin (Heb. 10:19-25) and make me a new person able to have victory over sin. Then and only then is our heart in a condition that we can receive the peace that Jesus spoke of: "My peace, I give unto you..." Maybe peace and security are lacking in your life because you are caught up in the "works system" of trying to make YOURSELF right with God. Will you believe today that God has done for you what you cannot do for yourself? Will you admit you cannot save yourself, Will you acknowledge you cannot make yourself right with God by good works? Will you receive God's "gift" of salvation (Rom. 6:23)? Will you let Him lift the burden and weight of sin? Jesus bore all your sin and guilt when He hung on Calvary's cross for you (1 Peter 2:24). "... He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Is. 53:5). If you will call upon His name (Rom. 10:13) and receive His salvation, you will indeed find peace and rest for your soul Jesus invites every man "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. 11:28,29).

PEACE WITH GOD

**THE EXAMPLE OF ABEL IN FINDING GOD'S PEACE --** Genesis 4:1-7 reads as follows: "And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD. {2} And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. {3} And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. {4} And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: {5} But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. {6} And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? {7} If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." Both of these men brought an offering to God. God rejected Cain's offering and received Abel's offering. Cain thought he deserved God's favor. He came to God on the basis of human works thinking he was good enough in himself to please God. The proof of his attitude was revealed in his anger towards God when his offering was rejected. In contrast, Abel came to God on the basis of faith (Heb. 11:4). Abel recognized that there was no goodness in him or his life that could allow him to gain God's favor. His offering to God was not to gain acceptance with God, but was an expression of His love to God for God's mercy towards him a sinner (Luke 18:9-14). Cain was covering his sin in self-righteousness, Abel was confessing his sin in humility before the Lord. What would have happened if God had rejected Abel's offering? Abel knew he was not worthy of God's blessing or acceptance because of his sin. There would have been no anger. He might have possibly responded, "God you are right, there is nothing I have to offer you to gain your favor. My only hope is your mercy towards me." It was this attitude of heart that allowed him to find favor with God. Both men brought an offering to God. The critical factor was not the offering but the ATTITUDE OF HEART of the offerer. That's what separates men and women from God today -- THEIR HEART ATTITUDE. Yes, in many cases compared to most people they are living a good moral life. They have never robbed a bank, killed anybody or committed adultery. They go to Church every Sunday and occasionally pray and read their Bible. When they approach God with these offerings of righteousness in their hands, their attitude of heart is "I deserve God's acceptance". They come to God as a "Cain" and not as an "Abel".

**HOW OUR INIQUITY KEEPS US FROM GOD'S PEACE --** Jesus speaks of those who have the attitude of Cain on Judgment Day in Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. {22} Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? {23} And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" Jesus reveals here that multitudes of people will be shocked to learn at the final judgment they will be rejected by God just as Cain was rejected. For those at the final judgment the rejection will be final and permanent. There is no further hope of salvation! There is no second chance after death (Heb. 9:27). The word "iniquity" in this verse is critical to understand.

When the Lord Jesus bore the judgment of sin in His body, God specifically describes it as "iniquity". "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him [Jesus Christ] the INIQUITY of us all" (Is. 53:6). Sin is my violation of God's Word. Iniquity is my violation of God's will. Iniquity is when my will is over and above God's will. For example: suppose I tell my son to go up to his room and pick up his socks. He promptly responds and goes to the kitchen. He sweeps and mops the floor, he takes out the garbage, he washes and dries the dishes and makes sure that all tables and shelves are cleaned and neatly arranged. And he did all that without having to be told to do it. Then he proceeds to wash three baskets of clothes and hang them on the line. He brings them in when they're dry, folds them and puts them away where they belong. And he does all this without having to be told to do it. Under most circumstances any father or mother would be beaming with happiness and want to tell their son how proud they are of his demonstration of such character and good works. But, in this case my son did "many wonderful works" as those described on judgment day in the verses above, but he failed to do the one good work I instructed him to do. His will, even in the doing of good works was put over and above his father's will. That's "iniquity" -- doing good works at my bidding and choosing rather than doing the good works at the direction of the will of God. If God prompts me to witness to someone at the post office and I ignore his prompting and come home and memorize verses out of the Bible, I have committed "iniquity". Memorizing the Bible is certainly something God wants me to do, but not at the expense of ignoring God's directions for my life. Righteousness and obedience to God on our terms is self-righteousness. What is self-righteousness value to God? "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our [righteousnesses] are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (Is. 64:6). Please note the connection here between "self-righteousness" and "iniquity". Jesus perfect obedience and righteousness was without iniquity. It is described in John 8:29: "And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; FOR I DO ALWAYS THOSE THINGS THAT PLEASE HIM THE FATHER". Righteousness is "iniquity" unless it is done with our will totally surrendered to God the Father.

### **HOW OUR SIN (SINGULAR) KEEPS US FROM GOD'S PEACE**

There's a difference between "sin" and "sins". Most of us understand Jesus Christ died for our sins (lying, stealing, cheating etc.). But, He also died for our "sin". The middle letter in "sin" is "I". When I am the ultimate boss of my life and make the final decisions of my actions, even to choose to do that which is right, then "I" am Lord of my life. Coming to salvation is to acknowledge Jesus Christ as my Lord. Romans 10:9,10 gives us the proper confession that brings salvation: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Every moment, every minute I am to be led by Him. "For as many as are [led by the Spirit] of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14). Many have sorrow for their "sins". But genuine repentance requires a sorrow and brokenness over my "sin". What was the violation of Lucifer (Satan) that gave birth to sin even before sin came into world of mankind (Romans 5:12). The account of

his fall is given in Isaiah 14:12-14: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! {13} For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: {14} I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High." Please notice the "I" problem. He refused to place his will under the will of God. He wanted to be "equal with God". When my will refuses to yield to God's will then I have begun to worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator (Romans 1:25).

### **HOW THE VIOLATION OF ONE SIN KEEPS US FROM GOD'S PEACE**

What was Adam and Eve's violation brought sin into the world? Was it adultery, murder, jealousy, anger, envy, etc.? The violation was the eating of a piece of fruit! But, it was the one piece of fruit in the whole garden upon which God had put a restriction. Think about it! There were not hundreds of commands to obey. There were not thousands of instructions to follow. The issue was whether or not they would yield their will to God's will concerning just one command. Suppose you live an almost perfect life. The only sin you ever commit in your entire life is a swear word you say when your boss makes you angry. Just one swear word in your whole lifetime. According to God's Word, if you have sinned in just one area of life, you are guilty of all. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one, he is guilty of all." "For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law" (James 2:10,11). If the Philadelphia Phillies baseball team loses the World Series by one run or 50 runs, it is either way recorded a loss in the record books. They don't get the trophy! Dr. Curtis Hutson in his book "Salvation" relates the following illustration: Dr. Joe Henry Hankins once asked his doctor, "Doc, what is the strongest poison known to man?" The doctor replied, "Potassium cyanide." Brother Hankins said, "Doc, how much potassium cyanide would a man have to drink in order for it to kill him?" The doctor's answer was, "Brother Hankins, it is so strong that if a man took the stopper out of a bottle of potassium cyanide and touched underneath his tongue where the blood vessels are nearest the surface, he wouldn't live to get the stopper back into the bottle." Brother Hankins continued: "What difference would it make if he were to drink the whole bottle?" The doctor replied, "I don't see what you're getting at, Brother Hankins. It wouldn't make any difference. The man would be dead either way." Then Brother Hankins explained, "Doc, a lot of people in this country think they have to commit every sin in the catalog to be lost. The truth is, they are lost whether they ever commit another sin or not."

**GOD'S PEACE IS AVAILABLE TO SINNERS** "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save SINNERS; of whom I am chief" (1st Timothy 1:15). To admit you are a sinner is to admit to God that at the very core of your being you have a nature that is rebellious towards Him. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). You don't become a sinner when you sin. You sin because you are