

LIVING
IT OUT



**DAILY
BIBLE
STUDY**



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

The Gift of Peace – Finding Peace

September 14, 2020

Wow, what a wonderful message Lead Pastor Ben Snyder brought to us in our new series, *Finding Peace*. Ben talked about a powerful verse from the book of John that perfectly illustrates the topic.

John 14:27

“I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.”

Ben mentioned that God’s peace is not conditional peace based on circumstances around us but rather *provisional peace* given regardless of the circumstances in our lives. And understanding that God provides our peace is the starting point to living in it.

In our world, the word “peace” implies to be without problems, conflicts, or stress—which seldom happens. The peace that Jesus offers is something that the world cannot give or take away from us. It’s peace in spite of a world full of confusion. It’s the peace we receive in knowing we are living according to God’s plan.

Philippians 4:6-7

⁶ Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. ⁷ Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

Jesus is the Prince of Peace. If he can speak one word and calm the wind and waves, he can do the same thing within a heart full of fear, anxiety, and depression. Instead of worrying about our struggles, we can bring our worries to him and experience peace.

2 Thessalonians 3:16

Now may the Lord of peace himself give you his peace at all times and in every situation. The Lord be with you all.

Questions:

What areas of your life have you been trying to control?

Have you ever doubted God and wondered if we can have peace in a world full of confusion?

How do you find peace when you find your life is in pieces?

Next Steps:

Find peace in the middle of your troubles today. Ask Jesus to provide the peace that only he can offer. Do not let your heart be troubled, pray for him to bring peace into your life.

Prayer:

Lord, grant me your peace that is unlike any other. When I am tempted to be anxious, help me remember the promise of that peace. Thank you for giving me the ability to overcome anything before me and help me live by your ways through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Giving Peace a Chance - Finding Peace

September 15, 2020

Peace can be an elusive concept—in our world *and* in our souls. Perhaps that's why it is so frequently referred to in an aspirational manner and is the subject of countless songs, stories, and sermons.

In the first installment of the *Finding Peace* series, Lead Pastor Ben Snyder dug into the topic by demonstrating how we often get in our own way when it comes to our pursuit of peace. In doing so, Ben emphasized the relationship between our reactivity—the way we react to circumstances in our life—and the anxiety we introduce to ourselves and others.

To illuminate this point, Ben asked us to consider how we act:

- when we don't have control;
- when we don't get what we want; and
- when we don't know what to do.

Too often, I don't like my own answers to these questions. If I'm honest, it's because *my* God-like responses are not based on surrendering to him my expectations for the conditions and comforts I desire.

John 14:27

"I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid."

The irony in our quest for peace is that God has already promised it to us. The question is, will we accept his gift? And if we are willing to give peace a chance, just *how* are we to do it?

Philippians 4:6-7

⁶ Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. ⁷ Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

You've likely read or heard this verse many times. And perhaps, like me, it struck you at first as overly simplistic—or even wishful thinking. But one of the things I've learned in my spiritual walk is how often we complicate things when we try

to go it alone; and conversely, how God's Word, when we believe it, reduces even the most complex matters to a simple equation of faith, love, and prayer.

As Ben noted, fear and God's love are mutually exclusive. We cannot be gripped by them both at the same time. I love the imagery of being gripped by God because the Bible tells us how he longs to hold us, watch over us, and love us. And knowing that *perfect love casts out fear* can move us to understand that peace is attainable.

Questions:

How do you react to situations that challenge your comfort level? In these times, do you struggle to portray a “non-anxious presence”—either personally or to others?

How can you consistently evoke the promise of peace that is rooted in God's love? In what ways can doing this benefit you and those with whom you interact?

Next Steps:

This week, dedicate some quiet time to consider Ben's questions about your response to situations in which you don't have control, don't get what you want, or don't know what to do. Examine how surrendering your situation to God can change the nature of your reactivity, reduce the anxiety you convey, and help you be a more positive presence with others.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, I thank you for your love and promise of peace. Help me to receive and make use of this gift through my thinking, my actions, and my prayers. Also, grant me the wisdom to trust in the power of your perfect love that will cast out my fears and cause me to thrive. Amen.

What's Your Fear? - Finding Peace

September 16, 2020

Admittedly, I haven't experienced certain types of darkness, but I know that there are people whose minds and broken hearts have led them to the edge of a place where I lack understanding. Recently, Dallas Cowboys' quarterback Dak Prescott shared that his brother's death last spring was a suicide. Another brother, Tad, shared his own feelings of failure when it came to not protecting their late brother.

I know some of what Tad is feeling. Someone that means a lot to me deals with mental illness. He is still here, but the battle continues to push him to the point of no return. I've tried to dissect his situation and uncover his feelings in an effort to better understand why he has suicidal thoughts. I thought it was my duty to fix his problems, so his demons became my failure.

Lead Pastor Ben Snyder said, "Think for a minute, about what's going on under the surface of your life. Your reactivity is an indicator of maybe your tendency and anxiety."

Romans 8:1-2

¹ So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. ² And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.

As I thought about my fear of failing him and my false need to be the one to help him, I began to understand what I was doing. My anxiousness was coming from a place that wasn't necessary.

The thought of losing this dear individual was, and is, difficult to process. But my fear of failing him, pushed me to find the answers that I didn't have. Once I realized that I took a step back and gave it to God.

Questions:

Do you feel the need to dissect every problem? Do you think that knowing the answers will fix everything around you?

Next Steps:

It's okay to identify your problems or those of others, but understand that you don't have to be the solution. Seek guidance from those equipped to handle the situation. Invite others to join a [Group](#). Pray about the dilemma, and trust God with the outcome.

This month is Suicide Prevention Month. If you're thinking about suicide, are worried about a friend or loved one, or would like emotional support, the [Lifeline network](#) is available 24/7 across the United States at 1-800-273-8255.

Prayer:

Lord, help all who find themselves drowning in a world without you. For those of us who believe, continue to help us with our moments of unbelief. Humble us when we feel the need to be in control of everything or everyone. Thank you for continually leaving the door open to give our doubt, trouble, and pain over to you. Fill our hearts with forgiveness and love. Let us be anxious for nothing and remind us that it is not our place to understand everything. Amen

This post was written by Jaron Camp, a regular contributor of the LivingItOut.

Hide and Seek – Finding Peace

September 17, 2020

This past weekend, Lead Pastor Ben Snyder began a new series titled *Finding Peace*. His key takeaway, “Your REACTIVITY is an indicator of your ANXIETY” was based on a key passage from the book of John.

John 14:27

“I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.”

As a child, I remember playing the game “Hide and Seek” with my friends. (Note: This game was not played on a video screen. It was usually played outdoors with several neighborhood friends.) One person was chosen to be the seeker, “It,” and would cover their eyes while the other players hid. After counting to ten, It would seek out the other players, tagging them as they were found. This usually involved a lot of running from It, giggles, and some occasional tears when players were caught. The last found was rewarded by being the next It!

In an odd sort of way, Hide and Seek reminds me of our relationship with God (It). We hide, thinking we can successfully run away from God and not be found. But, somehow, God always finds us. Our faith in Jesus and God’s word has the ability to take away our anxiety and give us peace. That gift of peace is usually just what we need—fitting us perfectly and accounting for our weaknesses, our talents, our experiences, and our gifts. That truth lifts us up, giving us the confidence we can only find when we realize we are one of his perfect creations.

In my opinion, nothing is worse than public speaking. My overreaction is definitely an indicator of my extreme level of anxiety. I hide from it. And when I find that I have to do it, my heart races, my palms sweat, and my voice cracks at just the thought of speaking in front of a large group. My first bad experience occurred when I was in kindergarten and was cast to play Mary in our Christmas pageant. After several failed attempts, the music teacher replaced me and gave me a non-speaking role. Years later in college, this anxiety reared its ugly head again four weeks into my first education class when I realized that I did not want to speak in front of groups on a daily basis—even if the group was made up of little people.

Lately, I've been telling God about my anxiety and asking for guidance. I still run and hide but only for a little while. He is giving me the peace of mind that I need to grow in this area that has been hard for me. I know he has great plans for me, for each of us, and his love is showing all of us the way.

1 John 4:16

We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.

1 John 4:18

Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love.

Questions:

So what is your biggest fear? What is it that you are hiding from?

Next Steps:

Talk to God about it. He will give you what you need.

Prayer:

Dear heavenly Father, thank you for seeking me out, finding me, and giving me everything I need to overcome my anxieties! Amen.

This post was written by Pam Haynam, a regular contributor of the LivingItOut.

Fix Your Eyes on Him – Finding Peace

September 18, 2020

In the last few years, God has transformed me. I know I am his adored and treasured daughter, and his deep love for me has caused me to really trust him. I know in my heart and mind that he is faithful and good. His amazing love fills me with peace. I am learning to turn to him and surrender my difficulties. Sometimes I do well at this, and sometimes I fail miserably. I am grateful God is so patient with me.

In the past when a difficult situation was thrown my way, I would often react in one of several ways: attempt to figure it out, run from it, get busy trying to fix it, or try to control it. Fortunately, I have come to the realization that when I react in any of those ways, I tend to lose my peace and joy rather than gain it. I often need a daily reminder to depend on God and not myself. There are many Bible verses that I read frequently to do just that—remind me of his love and how to experience his perfect peace. I am so excited to share one of those verses:

Isaiah 26:3-4

³ You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!⁴ Trust in the Lord always, for the Lord God is the eternal Rock.

When I meditate on this verse, I realize that the only way I can experience perfect peace is through God. I need to fix my thoughts on him. Instead of trying to solve, fix, control, or run away from a problem that I was never intended to solve, fix, or control, I am reminded to surrender it to him. In other words, I have to trust him with the outcome. I need to remember all the ways he has proven his deep love for me. He is my eternal Rock.

Our eternal Rock loves us so much that he died for us. His perfect sacrifice made amends for sins and gave us the opportunity to experience God's love and peace in the present. How do we find peace in the present? By sitting in his presence, letting his love saturate us, and trusting him enough to surrender all our troubles to him. God, alone, determines the outcome.

In [John 14:27](#) (TLB), Jesus says, "I am leaving you a gift—peace of mind and heart! And the peace I give isn't fragile like the peace the world gives. So don't be troubled or afraid."

Questions:

How do you handle your troubles?

Have you placed your trust in Jesus? If so, how does it make you feel to know you are loved, treasured, and adored by God? If you haven't, what's holding you back?

Next Steps:

Meditate on [Isaiah 26:3-4](#). Look up some other verses that talk about God's love and peace. Write them on index cards and read them throughout the day. Post them on your desk at work or in a frequently used area in your home. Listen to the song "[Fix My Eyes](#)" by For King and Country.

Prayer:

Jesus, I am so overwhelmed by your unconditional love. You love me because I am your child. Help me to really trust you. Help me to fix my eyes on you at all times. Help me to surrender my troubles to you. Forgive me for the times when I try to act like you and attempt to fix, solve, or control the circumstances around me, and also for the times when I run the other way. Lord, I praise you—you love me so much that you not only save me from hell but also fill me with your peace. Please continue to change me and help me to bask in your precious love. In Jesus' name, amen.

This post was written by Marsha Raymond, a regular contributor of the LivingItOut.