

# What is Peace?

(Galatians 5:22-23; Genesis 1 and 2)

Yearly Theme: *“Peace is...”*

Series Title: *“Perfect Peace”*

January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020

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## Something to think about:

As we begin a new year and reflect on the year that’s passed, there is the hope for newness. There is the possibility of starting over. There is the expectation that we can make a new start of things, and hopefully do better than we’ve done before.

Every January brings with it a reset of sorts; a kind of “do over.” This is why “New Year’s Resolutions” are so popular.

Looking back over 2020, there are things that most of us never want to repeat again. Though there was good that came from 2020, there were many struggles and difficulties that most of us couldn’t have conceived of the year before in 2019.

Now, looking to 2021, we look with a sense of hope that things will get better than they have been (that is, unless you’re a pessimist).

I find it interesting that our theme for this year at North Main is “Peace.”

Three years ago, away at a leadership retreat at Whitehall Camp and Conference Center, the ministry staff solidified a yearly theme sequence centered on the Fruit of the Spirit as found in the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Church in Galatia (Galatians 5). As we began this journey, which started two years ago (2019), we focused on the theme of “Love,” the first fruit listed in verse 22. Last year (2020) we focused on the second fruit of the Spirit listed in Paul’s letter, the fruit of “Joy.” This year (2021) we move on to Paul’s third fruit of the Spirit, “Peace.” And how fitting that after the year we’ve just come through that our focus this coming year is on *peace*.

Turn in your Bibles and follow along: *Galatians 5:16-26*

What a perfect picture of peace. At least, peace this side of Heaven.

**Key Point:** “Peace isn’t merely the absence of evil, but more importantly it’s the presence of the goodness of God.”

Let’s look at some of the characteristics of peace this morning as we begin a year focused on this fruit of the Spirit:

## 1. The words for “peace” in the Bible are “Shalom” in Hebrew, and “Eirene” in Greek.

**Shalom (Peace):**

Hebrew Word: שָׁלוֹם

Transliteration: shâlôm

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<sup>1</sup> Strong’s Talking Greek & Hebrew Dictionary.

Phonetic Pronunciation: shaw-lome’

*safe*, i.e. (figurative) *well, happy, friendly*; also (abstract) *welfare*, i.e. health, prosperity, peace :- × do, familiar, × fare, favour, + friend, × great, (good) health, (× perfect, such as be at) peace (-able, -ably), prosper (-ity, -ous), rest, safe (-ty), salute, welfare, (× all is, be) well, × wholly.<sup>1</sup>

**Eirene (Peace):**

Greek Word: εἰρήνη

Transliteration: eirēnē

Phonetic Pronunciation: i-ray’-nay

*peace* (literal or figurative); by implication *prosperity* :- one, peace, quietness, rest, + set at one again.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Real peace comes from God through Jesus Christ.

*John 14:27 (NLT), “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.”*

*Philippians 4:6-7 (NLT), <sup>6</sup> Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. <sup>7</sup> 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.*

## Something to take home:

What is the true picture of peace? Is it the picture of a nesting bird with her eggs in a branch that is precariously hanging out in front of a torrential waterfall cascading down a steep cliff during a cold, blustery day with clouds of gray that threaten to break forth with explosive lightening, wind, and rain? Or is it something else?

Peace is found only in what you put your trust in. And, if what you put your trust in is anything other than God, then your peace will be fleeting at best. Consider the words of the prophet Isaiah in the Old Testament who wrote...

***Isaiah 40:27-31 (NLT), <sup>27</sup> O Jacob, how can you say the LORD does not see your troubles? O Israel, how can you say God ignores your rights? <sup>28</sup> Have you never heard? Have you never understood? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth. He never grows weak or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding. <sup>29</sup> He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless. <sup>30</sup> Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion. <sup>31</sup> But those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.***

This year (2021) let’s determine to put our trust completely in God through faith in Jesus Christ, and experience the “peace” that passes understanding; the peace of God that gives rest to the weary soul.

And let’s remember...

**Key Point:** “Peace isn’t merely the absence of evil, but more importantly it’s the presence of the goodness of God.”

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.