

Peace Be Unto You

(Sermon Notes) By Warren Zehring 4/15/2017

The world is all wrong about an Easter sunrise resurrection. Jesus died on Passover afternoon – a Wednesday – and He was buried at sunset as the First Day of Unleavened Bread was beginning.

Matthew 12:39 But [Jesus] answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a miracle; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:

Matthew 12:40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Three days and three nights end at sunset on Saturday evening. When you study this out in the Scriptures you find that Jesus was in the tomb - not **more**, not **less**, but exactly three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. God gave the instructions for the wave-sheaf.

Leviticus 23:9-10 And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest:

Next we see “What” and “When.”

Leviticus 23:11 And he shall **wave the sheaf** before the Lord, to **be accepted for you**: on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.

Please pick up on that phraseology, “to **be accepted for you**.” We have been given the superb New Testament fulfillment of Jesus Christ as the wave-sheaf offering. The sheaf – Jesus – is presented to the Father on Sunday morning. It took place on the morrow after the weekly Sabbath, after Jesus had died on Passover. In the Old Testament, the wave-sheaf offering was offered to God by Israel's High Priest on behalf of the people.

The phrase, “**accepted for you**,” is most revealing. It pictures Jesus Christ, the true unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, being offered to God the Father and accepted on our behalf. Jesus was **accepted for us**. Sunday, is the anniversary of the wave-sheaf offering.

On the night before He died, Jesus spoke of peace with His disciples. Jesus wanted His men to have **peace** and assurance.

John 16:32-33 Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you, that **in me** ye might **have peace**. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

The apostles had a lot of persecution and tribulation – much more than we realize.

John 20:1 The first day of the week [Sunday] came Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher, and saw the stone taken away from the sepulcher...

She was totally caught off guard.

John 20:9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

John 20:14 And when she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

In fulfillment of the wave-sheaf offering, Jesus ascended to His Father on Sunday, the first day of the week.

But, in the darkness of the Sunday morning – it was not quite time for the presentation of the wave-sheaf to the Father.

John 20:17 Jesus said unto her, Touch me not; for I am **not yet ascended** to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

Notice how Jesus incorporates us. He makes **us** a part of the wave-sheaf offering to the Father. "I ascend unto my Father, and **your** Father; and to my God, and **your** God." When God the Father formally accepted the resurrected Jesus Christ, it became possible for us to become future sons and daughters of God.

That evening, after being accepted by the Father, Jesus appeared to His disciples, and the **very first** words out of Jesus' mouth were, **Peace be unto you**.

The title of today's sermon is from this verse:

John 20:19 Then the same day at evening, being, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and said unto them, **Peace be unto you**.

Had written of this very moment – John reiterated it.

Luke 24:36 And as they thus spoke, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, **Peace be unto you**.

But they could not bring themselves to believe that it was the risen Jesus.

Luke 24:37 But they were **terrified and affrighted**, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

Luke 24:38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? And why do [worrisome] thoughts arise in your hearts?

Brethren, these words are meant to bring a rest and contentment into our lives – the Peace of being assured that God's way is going to work out as He said.

Jesus had ascended to His Father. He was the very first to be raised from the dead in God's spiritual harvest of mankind. Jesus opened the way for all men to have the opportunity for eternal life. Jesus Christ's presented Himself to God the Father as the wave-sheaf offering to be accepted as the first of the "firstfruits" resurrected from the dead to eternal life.

We too, will be resurrected and accepted by the Father to eternal life as firstfruits. The wave-sheaf ceremony shows us the completion of the perfect plan of God and our salvation in it.

Ephesians 1:17 That the **God** of our Lord Jesus Christ, the **Father** of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

We are speaking of **God the Father** here:

Ephesians 1:18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the **hope of His calling**, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

God the Father wants us to know just how much **power** He is exerting – and how much **effort** He is going through to bring us to eternal salvation – which is the hope of His calling.

Ephesians 1:19 And **what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us** who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

The question is: Just how much power is God the Father expending on us to bring us to fruition – as His eternal sons and daughters? We are told that it is the **same power** that He used once before.

Ephesians 1:20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised Him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

Ephesians 1:21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

Ephesians 1:22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

We can now have hope and full assurance that God the Father will accept us to glory, just as Jesus Christ was glorified during the Days of Unleavened Bread so many years ago.

Sometimes we get to thinking that we have it tough today because of the dilapidated state of the church groups. We think we have it bad because... Feel free to fill in the blank...

We have it bad because:

- a) The church fell apart...
- b) Too many ministers are unconverted...
- c) You can't depend on people to do what they are supposed to do...
- d) There's no big congregation nearby like the good old days...
- e) The bad guys are getting away with murder...
- f) The people who I thought were my friends won't speak to me...
- g) People don't appreciate how hard it is to be a Christian these days...

Brethren, this is no time to get soft – it's time to **double down** on our Christianity. Let's go back to the time of Christ's public ministry and take a look at what "**tough**" really is.

A lot of what we will be looking at today took place around Passover and these Days of Unleavened Bread.

Let me ask you a question. What was "the expectation of the Jews?" Acts 12 speaks of the expectation of the Jews – we will see what that means...

Picture this religious climate at the time of Christ:

John the Baptist was jailed and **beheaded** – and nobody was able to do a thing about it.

Jesus was tortured and **crucified** – and his followers scattered.

Stephen was **stoned** to death – the first martyr of the New Testament Church.

Today, I want to **tell you about another man** that we do not speak of very much - but he was highly regarded by Jesus. I'm speaking of **James** – the brother of John the beloved apostle.

We know James as a son of Zebedee.

Matthew 4:21 And going on from thence, [Jesus] saw two other brothers, **James the son of Zebedee**, and John his brother,

James and John were business partners with Peter and Andrew when Jesus pressed them into the full time discipleship and ministry.

Luke 5:10 And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon.

James was one of three men that Jesus brought with Him to the transfiguration.

Matthew 17:1 And after six days Jesus took Peter, **James**, and John his brother, and brought them up into an high mountain apart,

Matthew 17:2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

You remember what happened – they were privileged to hear the voice of God the Father:

Luke 9:35 And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

Even though we do not know a great deal about him, do not think of James as the shy, reserved, quiet, reticent type. In fact, Jesus gave James a new last name:

Mark 3:17 And **James** the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and [Jesus] surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The **sons of thunder**:

James Boanerges – that was his new name!

Peter, James, and John were always together like the three musketeers! Jesus was training these men for great exploits – He was showing them miracles and works that very few were privy to. Like when Jesus was going to raise a little 12 year old girl back to life.

Can you imagine how tragic it was to the family to lose their precious young daughter? There are a few in God's Church today who have suffered the irreparable loss of a child.

Mark 5:37 And [Jesus] allowed no man to follow Him, except Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.

Mark 5:38 And he came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. [outside the house]

Mark 5:39 And when [Jesus] was come in, he said unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? [What is all the fuss about?] The damsel is not dead, she is sleeping.

Mark 5:40 And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he took the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, [Peter, James, and John] and entered in where the damsel was lying.

Mark 5:41 And he took the damsel [daughter of the ruler of the synagogue] by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.

And she rose from the dead – with a good healthy appetite:

Mark 5:42 And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment.

Mark 5:43 And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be **given her** to eat.

James was the eldest brother [often mentioned first] of the apostle John and that their father's name was Zebedee (He started the fishing business) (their mother's name was Salome.)

Salome was the sister of Jesus' mother Mary. Aunt Salome was a meddling old gal. She stirred up quite a ruckus.

It was just before Jesus' last Passover when He would be crucified when Aunt Salome came to Jesus - knowing in her heart that her boys were the most qualified to be first in the Kingdom of God - "Make my boys first," - was her simple request!

Matthew 20:20 Then came to [Jesus] the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him.

"One little request."

Matthew 20:21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

Make James – the #1 man, and John, the #2 man – under Jesus! Jesus turned His eyes from Salome and addressed James and John - face to face.

Matthew 20:22 Jesus answered and said, You do not know what you are asking for. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, "We are able."

Right here, Jesus prophecies that James and John will face martyrdom.

Matthew 20:23 And [Jesus] said unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: **but** to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.

Matthew 20:24 And when the ten heard it, they were **moved with indignation** against the two brethren [James and John].

Can you imagine the apostles being that carnal before their conversion?

James mother, Salome, is named as one of the women present at the crucifixion (Mark 15:40).

During Jesus' passion it was again Peter, **James** and John with Jesus:

Mark 14:32 And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and [Jesus] said to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.

Mark 14:33 And He took with him Peter and **James** and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy;

Mark 14:34 And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.

These men were some of the first to be called by Jesus:

Luke 6:14 Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, **James** and John, Philip and Bartholomew,

James was present **these three times** that Jesus appeared **after** His resurrection.

John 21:14 This is now the **third time** that Jesus showed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

John 21:15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

Jesus sent the apostles to all the world...

Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations... (Spain included)

It is thought that James was the apostle who brought the Gospel to Spain. More than a dozen years later – James returned to Jerusalem: Paul in his Epistle to the Romans (A.D. 55-60) expressed the intention to visit Spain.

Romans 15:19 Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

Then in a veiled reference to James Paul said:

Romans 15:20 Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, **lest I should build upon another man's foundation**:

James had already been working in Spain.

Romans 15:28 When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into **Spain**.

Acts 12:1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

This is **another Herod** – not the one who killed all the baby boys when Jesus was born. Herod launched a terrible persecution against the church brethren.

John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that **light is come into the world**, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Herod was an evil man. Little did King Herod know that his confrontation was not with the church brethren – but with God Himself.

Acts 12:2 And [Herod] killed James the brother of John with the sword.

We have almost nothing – no details telling us what led up to James death. James was the first apostle to be martyred – whacked in two by a soldier of Herod with a great sword. King Herod was the utmost politician.

Acts 12:3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take **Peter** also. (Then were the **days of unleavened bread**.)

Herod fully intended to have Peter whacked in two by a soldier with a great sword. And Peter knew without a doubt that Herod intended to kill him after the days of Unleavened Bread – as he had just martyred James – his very close compadre and lifelong companion. A little Spanish ‘lingo’ there – because James had recently returned from Spain. "Compadre" is a traditional Spanish term of reverence and friendship for a man.

So Herod issues an APB (all points bulletin) on Peter, apprehends and arrests him.

Acts 12:4 And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers [16 soldiers] to keep him; intending after **Easter** [Greek ‘Pascha’] to bring him forth to the people.

The King James Translators had a “Humpty Dumpty” moment right here. “All the king’s horses and all the king’s men, Couldn’t put Humpty Dumpty together again.” Well, “All the king’s translators could not sort out the difference between Passover and Easter!”

What was Peter apprehensive about... what was the **expectation** of the Jewish people? There was no way Peter would be able to escape. How much **peace** was Peter experiencing? His peace was certainly disrupted.

Those were the **days of unleavened bread** (vs:3) and Herod intended to make political hay after Passover and yield to the wishes of the Jewish people – to have their way with Peter as they had done to James. Herod was planning the execution of Peter.

That was the expectation of the Jews. But, all the church brethren were praying fervently that Peter could be spared.

Acts 12:5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church [brethren] unto God for him.

The time came when Peter would be arraigned the next morning. Peter would be brought before Herod’s court to answer a criminal charge. Herod was greatly looking forward to that moment – in order to please the Jews.

Acts 12:6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping **between two soldiers**, bound with **two** chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.

Acts 12:7 And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.

Acts 12:8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Put on your coat, and follow me.

Acts 12:9 And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.

Acts 12:10 When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leads unto the city; which **opened to them** of his own accord: [one of the angles had the clicker] and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.

Peter escaped! What just happened?

Acts 12:11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the **hand of Herod**, and from all the **expectation of the people of the Jews**.

Acts 12:19 And when Herod had sought for [Peter], and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death.

Herod had to place the blame for Peter's escape on somebody – he certainly was not going to credit God for His intervention.

Acts 12:21 And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. [a silver tongued political speech.]

Acts 12:22 And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the **voice of a god**, and not of a man.

Acts 12:23 And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he **gave not God the glory**: and he was eaten of worms, and he breathed his last.

Let's back up here a little...

Acts 12:11 When Peter was come to himself... he remembered what Jesus had said:

Jesus had prophesied that Peter would grow to be an **old man**. He was not going to die at the hands of Herod.

John 21:18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou were young, thou girdedst thyself, and walked whither thou would: but when thou **shall be old**, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou would not.

When Peter thought back on Christ's promise – can you imagine the **peace** that came over him? Peter was alive - he was free - and he was going to live to be old - and he felt the Peace of God coursing through him. Peter wasn't going to die for a long time – God was not through with him... Peter had places to go – brethren to teach – epistles to write... Peter had nothing to fear! Great was his peace! Later, Peter would write of **peace**:

2Peter 1:2 Grace and **peace** be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

2Peter 1:3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

Before He died, Jesus had often spoken to them about peace.

John 14:27 **Peace** I leave with you, **my peace** I give unto you: not as the world gives, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the **peacemakers**: for they shall be called the children of God.

The Hebrew word '*shalom*' was translated as *eirēnē* [pronounced i-rah'-nay] in the Greek language. Strong's has:

Probably from a primary verb εἶρω *eirō* (to join); peace (literally or figuratively); by implication prosperity: - one, peace, quietness, rest, + set at one again.

"Shalom" means: **Peace**, but it is so much more than the absence of war. We do not have a comparable word in English – but must rely on a multitude of concepts to grasp the intent of "Peace." "Peace" also means the tranquility and harmony of Justice, Prosperity, Salvation, Healthiness, Wholeness, Integrity, Soundness, Righteousness and Well-being.

We begin to see what an **all encompassing peace** – the **Peace** of God is.

This Peace indicates a reconciled relationship with God and with neighbor. "Peace" is the way God intended the world be when He created it.

John 20:20 And when he had said [**Peace be unto you**] , He showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

John 20:21 Then said Jesus to them **again, Peace be unto you**: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

Jesus was assuring them and encouraging them. Jesus was getting them to look at the "Big Picture."

Hebrews 2:14 ... that through death he might destroy him that had the **power of death**, that is, the devil;

Not even death on the cross had power over Him – **or us** – is what Jesus was telling them.

Acts 2:24 God raised him from death to life and destroyed the pains of death, because **death had no power to hold Him**.

That is the exact same greeting that Jesus has for us today – **Peace be unto you**.

Knowing that **we are a part** of what God is accomplishing – as assuredly as He worked His works in James and Peter and the New Testament church brethren, He is bringing about His will in us – gives us great peace.

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.

Philippians 4:5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

Philippians 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

Philippians 4:7 And the **peace of God**, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Philippians 4:9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the **God of peace** shall be with you.

End: Peace Be Unto You