

Peace on Earth

(Sermon Notes) By Warren Zehrung – 9/22/2013

The Bible speaks of a “Covenant of Peace” and a “Gospel of Peace.” The word “Peace” is in the bible - 400 times even! Everyone speaks of peace! We need to ask the question, “What brings Peace?”

We have all heard that there will be peace on earth as Jesus begins to establish His Father’s Kingdom over all the earth – beginning with His chosen people Israel. God says in:

Isaiah 65:

18 But be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

Jerusalem means “Vision of Peace” [*Yireh + Shalom* Genesis 22:13-14] Do we have that vision?

Isaiah 65:

19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

Psalms 46:

8 Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth.

Peace is coming: We will usher in Peace and prosperity, wealth, abundance, health, joy, happiness, fullness, completeness and security...

Psalms 46:

9 [God] makes wars to cease [peace] unto the end of the earth; he breaks the bow, and cuts the spear in sunder; he burns the chariot in the fire. [Army tanks]

There is more to Peace than the absence of war. The primary peace – is peace with God.

Reconciliation is to be **At Peace** with God.

Reconciliation implies a relationship established with God to continue a close peaceful communication with Him.

The specific purpose statement of this sermon could not be more clearly stated than right here is the Book of Hebrews:

Hebrews 12:

14 adds "Pursue peace with all men, and holiness, without which **no one will see** the Lord."

Unless we are actively pursuing peace within every aspect of our lives, we will not be in the Kingdom of God. We see the first step that we must take here in the Book of Romans. Paul writes in Romans of those who have peace with God and access to Him:

Romans 5:

- 1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have **peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:
- 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice **in hope of the glory** of God.

“In hope of the glory of God” is synonymous with the phrase we just saw in Hebrews 12:14 — “without which **no one will see** the Lord.”

The pursuit and practice of Peace in our lives is a salvational requirement.

Romans 8:

- 6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is **life and peace**.
- 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

The New Testament provides considerable evidence that God's peace process is far from finished! As called out brethren — we have much yet to learn. Let's try to understand what the Bible says about the Peace of Christ:

John 14:

- 27 Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

There does not exist a Godly-Peace within God's Church. There are three or four big Church of God groups keeping the Feast of Tabernacles – meeting within fifteen minutes of us at this minute. There is no Godly-Peace between these groups – and that is wrong!

There is no motivation for any of these groups to reconcile or make peace with any of their neighbors. In fact, fellowshiping between these groups is strongly opposed by most of their leaders.

The leadership of these Church of God groups only wish to prevent their members from crossing the line to greet members of the other groups.

Jesus Christ has only One Church! Where can we find Peace?

We have spoken often on the subject of Unity of the Spirit. Why is it so lacking within God's Church? Where does Unity of the Spirit reside? Here is the answer.

When **I** make every effort to spiritually grow into the fullness of God – to be near to God – to have a right relationship with God and to be like Him...

And when **you** grow spiritually to be near to God – to have a right relationship with God and to be like Him...

Then, and only then, will we begin to approach a Unity of the Spirit. That is because when I am near God, and you are near God — **then** we also come near to each other in Spirit.

If between two entities, people or organizations, only **one** truly seeks Peace — there will be on Peace — there can be on Peace.

Peace will only be fleeting and transitory – not a Godly Peace.

Why do we find so little Peace within the Church of God today? What has robbed us of Peace and left us with fear? Let's understand how God defines Peace.

Brethren, it is OK to be **angry** at rogue ministers who will not allow peace to exist between the brethren. I know that some have been taught – not to be angry at any cost. That is not a correct posture. It is OK to be angry at rogue ministers who steal third Tithe from needy widows. It is OK to take a stand and be angry at bad ministers — and yet remain Peaceable in God's eyes.

It is proper to expose false — lawless ministers who are deceiving the brethren — and yet remain Peaceable according to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

How do we walk the fine line of exposing false ministers, hirelings and “company men” — while truly representing God's Peace in our lives?

Everyone here knows that Jesus Christ was the most Peaceable man to ever live! — And yet, He turned over the tables of the money changers in the temple! Do we know the difference?

Matthew 21:

- 12** And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves,
- 13** And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

John 2:

- 13** And the Jews' Passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,
- 14** And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:
- 15** And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;
- 16** And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.
- 17** And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

Jesus was truly a Peaceable man. Do we seek peace on our terms — or on God's terms?

We in God's Church must learn now how to become Peace Makers within the Church ... **if** we are to assist Jesus Christ in maintaining **Peace on Earth** during the millennium.

Remember what we saw in the Scriptures a moment ago: "**Pursue peace** with all men, and holiness, without which **no one will see** the Lord."

Do we find strife in our lives? Are we more warriors than we are Peace makers? Could it be that within the Church of God we are not as Peaceable as we think we are? Could we be seeking peace at any price — rather than the Peace that comes from God? Do we capitulate with the enemy and call it "peace?"

Brethren, that is being a part of the problem — and not a part of the Peace.

In this world, it is the powerful — those who win the wars — who dictate the so-called "terms of peace."

God says, "It shall not be so among you."

Ask yourselves this question: In the millennium — which we are celebrating this week — "Will we bring Peace to the millennium, or will we bring an angry spirit, contention and continuing clamor?"

Will we learn to use tactfulness and diplomacy when communicating with others — or do we blurt out hateful words. James says that the tongue's power is to burn down a forest and destroy lives.

James 3:

- 5** Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasts great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindles!
- 6** And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

The Feast of Tabernacles pictures: "Coming, a time of world Peace!" I do not believe that those who issue unfounded accusations against others understand how debilitating they are to some brethren.

The bullies — those in positions of power — those who are secure — often do not realize that some members who have been treated roughly, abused and taken advantage of — have been broken to the point where they cannot **take it anymore**.

In the Church, it is like "shell-shock" in the military. It is like Post traumatic Syndrome that result from the horrors of war.

And in the Church of God — that is what it is — spiritual warfare — that has left the “walking wounded” among us. Many true brethren will not go anywhere to attend services anymore. If they try to attend Sabbath services, they are further victimized by those who enjoy the skirmish and lack empathy for the brethren.

There is one thing that I have come to realize – and it is this:

There is a time to **speak out**.

When the innocent are being hurt and put-out of the Church — the offending minister should be “outed.” That is a new word that means he should be revealed for what his “true colors” are. He should be exposed and dealt with for what he is.

Brethren, according to the Scriptures it works like this:

If you know of a miscarriage of justice — and you hold your peace — you do not utter it — you do not mention it — you do not properly deal with it... God says that you are then also **guilty** – you bear the **iniquity**. That is because it came to your attention and you did nothing to ameliorate the situation or make it better.

Leviticus 5:

- 1** And if a soul sin, and hear the voice of swearing, and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of it; if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his **iniquity**.

God allowed the wrong situation to come to your attention so that “**good**” could inevitably come from it through you.

Romans 8:

- 28** And we know that all things work together for **good** to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.

Brethren, if you refuse to fight the good fight – you are not a Peace maker. You have become an enabler of those who are abusing the true saints. You are aiding and abetting the bad guys – actually encouraging them to continue bashing the weak.

If you say, “I’ll just put it in God’s hands, because I don’t want to get involved,” — then you are just running away from your responsibility. You are washing your hands like Pilate did – thinking erroneously that you can divest yourself of your responsibility and leave it to others to handle –when you cannot.

Matthew 27:

- 24** When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and **washed his hands** before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.

Understand this, brethren. We are at the Feast of Tabernacles learning to reign and rule with Jesus Christ in the coming millennium.

At the beginning of the millennium – we will need to know how to teach the physical remnant – those God allows to live over into the World Tomorrow – how to be **Peace makers**.

You might think that after the war, tribulation, plagues, death and destruction – that they will be tired of war – that's true.

But I find, that after the battles and wars that we fought in the apostasy — the injured, persecuted, disfellowshipped, abused and maligned survivors — continue to lash out, attack and be critical of their tormentors who hurt them.

Even the good ministers who were put-out, fired and disfellowshipped for Truth — are now scorned and mistreated because of the backlash.

Allow me to relate a personal memory with you:

When I was a very young boy my grandfather kept his black and white hound dog in the house next to his rocking chair. That old hound dog was old and hurting from arthritis. “Old Sam” just wanted to be left alone — and certainly not be fooled with.

Whenever we cousins got too close, that good old hound dog would growl, snarl, and snap at us. He just hurt too much to put up with anything else.

How can we stop biting everyone who gets too close to us?

James 4:

- 1 From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?
- 2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.
- 3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

In the same way brethren, we fight and carp against the faithful of God's people — brethren and ministers alike. Why?

Because there has been no closure – no equity – no recognition – no justification – no acknowledgment of our pain.

Jesus Christ said of His persecutors:

Luke 23:

- 34 ... Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

There used to be a song about peace:

“Let There Be Peace on Earth and let it begin with me.
Let There Be Peace on Earth, the peace that was meant to be!
With God as our Father, brothers all are we.
Let me walk with my brother in perfect harmony.
Let peace begin with me. Let this be the moment now.
With ev'ry breath I take, let this be my solemn vow;
To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally!
Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me!”

Brethren, who takes that to heart? Do we have to have the first and last word? Do we speak a cutting remark — and then expect Peace? Do we shout someone down — and expect Peace to result?

From whence comes the Peace of God? Is it not in a soft answer?

God knows when to Shout — and He will.

1 Thessalonians 4:

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

For those who steadfastly refuse to be Peace makers — God will thunder out His answer from heaven.

Vengeance is His — not ours.

Romans 12:

19 ...Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

God's Justice is measured and perfect. What does Jesus Christ say about Peace.

Matthew 5:

9 Blessed are the **Peace Makers**: for they shall be called the children of God.

Matthew 5:

- 1** And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:
- 2** And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,
- 3** Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 4** Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
- 5** Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
- 6** Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.
- 7** Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
- 8** Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.
- 9** Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.
- 10** Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 11** Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.
- 12** Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

When we have been hurt and abused – let us call upon the Name of the Lord. Will He hear our petition – you bet!

Does a mother hear her baby when he cries for milk?

Does a dad bring his children to safety?

Psalm 94:

9 He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see?

He that created a mother's love – has He no heart?

There is no doubt that God hears His children. And we are the Children of God when we are Peace makers. "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."

Will God hear our prayer of request?

1 John 3:

22 Whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

Whose children are we when we are being contentious?

John 8:

44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.

Ephesians 2:

3 Among whom also we all had our conduct in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the **children of wrath**, even as others.

Are we still children of wrath; does wrath still follow us – or have we learned to become children of Peace?

Do we examine ourselves with respect to being peacemakers in every situation? If we do not – we will end up like those heavy handed abusers whose actions we despise so much.

Isaiah 9:

6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The **Prince of Peace**.

All of mankind's history gives evidence of almost continuous warfare motivated by the weaknesses of character natural to man. "Peace, peace!" men cry, "When there is no peace."

It will not be that way in the millennium.

Jeremiah 6:

14 ...saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.

Romans 3:

15 Their feet are swift to shed blood:
16 Destruction and misery are in their ways:
17 And the way of peace have they not known:
18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

God's use of the word "heart" shows us that the peace in which He is involved while we are in this world is of a spiritual nature.

John 16:

33 These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world **you will have tribulation**; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

Isaiah 57:

21 There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Isaiah 65:

- 25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They **shall not hurt nor destroy** in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.

Micah 4:

- 3 And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their **swords into plowshares**, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.
- 4 But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and **none shall make them afraid**: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it.

God will advance all who have suffered reversals.

God will reign and rule in Peace.

Isaiah 2:

- 2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

Isaiah 2:

- 4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their **spears into pruninghooks**: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Ezekiel 34:

- 25 And I will make with them a **covenant of peace**, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall **dwell safely** in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.

Ezekiel 37:

- 26 Moreover I will make a **covenant of peace** with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.

Romans 10:

- 15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the **gospel of peace**, and bring glad tidings of good things!

Numbers 25:

- 11 Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath **turned my wrath away** from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy.
- 12 Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my **covenant of peace**:

Ephesians 6:

- 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the **gospel of peace**.

Nahum 1:

- 15 Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that **publisheth peace**! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off.

Isaiah 52:

- 7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that **publisheth peace**; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

Because of obedience to His laws, countless millions of human beings will come to know only wondrous blessings of good health, sound minds, healthy, happy children, success and prosperity!

Gone will be all disease, drug abuse, murder, rape, arson, burglary, gang wars, racism, extortion, violence and war! Satan will be bound for one thousand years; cast into a figurative "abyss," not allowed access to the earth (Revelation 20:1-3).

Isaiah 11:

- 9 They shall **not hurt nor destroy** in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

Man clearly does not know the way of Peace. It is necessary that we re-evaluate our ways.

Luke 1:

- 78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,
- 79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet **into the way of peace**.

We all seek peace and serenity but it is hard to find because of our proclivities ...whether between nations, families, individuals and at times even within ourselves.

The dictionary will define "peace" as freedom from war, harmony, concord, agreement, calm, tranquility, serenity, quiet, undisturbed state of mind, absence of mental conflict, contentment, acceptance of one's state and the absence of anxiety.

One kind of peace is the absence of war, enemies, anxiety, disorder, disturbance, disruption, conflict and commotion.

Peace connotes the sense of "joining what has previously been separated or disturbed."

Thus, it frequently is used to signify "setting at one; quietness; and rest."

Peace is the inner satisfaction, the contentment and serenity that derive from living a full life.

Now is the time to recover and stand and offer sacrifices of Peace. It is noteworthy that Peter writes that we, as a holy priesthood, are to offer up **spiritual sacrifices**, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 2:

5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up **spiritual sacrifices**, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

If we can actively practice Peace today – we can look forward to being with Jesus Christ in the millennium. A time of **great peace** and prosperity never known in the history of man will arise.

End: Peace on Earth