**Peace**

John 14:24-31

This chapter opened with the wonderful word from Jesus:

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.” John 14:1

Jesus knew that there would be plenty of challenges in front of his followers. So he provided many words of encouragement, and several incredible promises to sustain the disciples through great struggle, suffering and persecution. The key, as we saw a couple of weeks ago, is knowing God’s character to build up our faith in Him.

* God is gracious to forgive and transform us.
* God is faithful to keep all of His promises to us.
* And God is generous to give us everything we need.

So as we know God and trust Him, we should grow in our love for Him and therefore OBEY Him and walk closely with His Spirit, as we saw last week. ***The sign of our love for Jesus is that we obey His commands.***

The central provision Jesus promised for His followers is the Holy Spirit.

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth… he dwells with you and will be in you.” John 14:16-17

Jesus didn’t just send out the disciples to make disciples and build up the church globally. In fact, he overtly ***commanded them NOT to go rushing out of Jerusalem*** until the Holy Spirit had come upon them and filled them and empowered them to complete that task.

A lot of what this whole message is about in John 14-17 is **the Holy Spirit**. Jesus hinted at the Spirit’s coming role in other places, but these chapters are where we find the fullest teaching from Jesus Himself about the Spirit’s role and our relationship with Him. Look again at verse 26.

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things… Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you… Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” John 14:26-27

***How does Jesus give his followers peace?*** Through the Holy Spirit. We will see three keys to experience resilient peace, even in the face of great opposition and persecution.

**Anyone need some peace today?**

Hear these words from the Lord Jesus. “Let not your hearts be troubled. PEACE I leave with you. MY PEACE I give you.” ***Jesus IS the Prince of Peace.*** He IS the Good Shepherd. The Holy Spirit is the Comforter, the Helper, the Giver of the gift of peace.

So how can we experience the peace Jesus offers?

**How to experience resilient peace:**

1. Study God’s **Word** to know God’s **Will**

“Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me.” John 14:24

Jesus gave his followers two priceless gifts: **His Word and His Spirit**. The two are inseparable. If you want to know and walk with the Spirit, you have to study and apply God’s Word. If you want to understand and obey God’s Word you have to listen to and walk with the Holy Spirit. The two are never at odds with one another, but always work in perfect harmony.

For over 100 years there has been a large ***division in the global church between pentecostals and charismatics*** on one side and conservative, non-charismatics on the other. The pentecostal side emphasizes the Holy Spirit. The conservative side emphasizes the Holy Word.

But the two should NEVER have been separated or placed at odds with one another. There is no conflict between the Spirit of God and the Word of God.

And let’s be Biblical here. ***All of us are “pentecostal”*** in the sense of being fully dependent on the Holy Spirit who came upon the church at Pentecost. The Holy Spirit was not originally poured out in 1906 on Azusa street. The original pentecost was in Jerusalem 50 days after the crucifixion. That’s why it was called Pentecost, going back to the Old Testament tradition following the Passover.

If you aren’t pentecostal in terms of being filled with the Holy Spirit and being committed to walking with the Spirit then you aren’t a follower of Jesus. The Trinity is not Father, Son and Holy Scriptures. Let’s not displace the Holy Spirit from the Godhead.

Whoa… hold on… After the sabbatical, are we suddenly going all charismatic? Keep your shorts on. Charis is the word for GRACE - and I’m pretty sure we all want that. The charismata are the gifts of grace God gives to the church through the Holy Spirit, so we are all charismatic as much as we are pentecostal. It’s just that those words have become so loaded with problematic applications that many Christians have been trained to say, “I’m not pentecostal” and “I’m not charismatic.”

Well. I realize I’m not going to fix this 100 year old issue in one sermon or series. My only point for now is that ***your relationship with the Holy Spirit matters.*** We’ll come back to that in the second key to experiencing peace.

The first key is to study God’s Word to know God’s will. ***The Bible gives us clear instructions*** and guidelines for the whole Christian life. There are specific boundaries for the practice of the spiritual gifts. I’m not opposed to people speaking in tongues and praying for miraculous healings – if they follow the well delineated guidelines in Scripture. Tongues, in public, should be translated by someone with the gift of interpretation. Otherwise es como hablando en otra idioma que muchas personas no pueden entender. No es un buen idea por que no ayuda la gente.

And yes, I know, my Spanish isn’t great. But you see the point. There’s a time and a place - potentially - for the gift of tongues. And, notice, ***it’s A GIFT - not THE GIFT*** - so there shouldn’t be an expectation that every believer speaks in tongues or even that most believers will, any more than we would expect every believer to have a gift of preaching and teaching or of leadership and administration.

The way to grow in your understanding of God’s will is to ***STUDY God’s Word on issues like this.*** It’s all in here. You want to pray for miraculous healing? Let’s go! **The elders are always available to meet and pray with anyone** who wants to apply James 5. But be warned, we follow that text as it is written. It’s not a magic formula to get what you want. And it overtly directs you, the person coming for prayer, to CONFESS YOUR SINS. So before you email to meet with the elders, you might read and study James 5 and decide if that’s the process you want to follow. Because that is the BIBLICAL process.

I’m really not trying to be edgy today. But have you noticed that ***Jesus was VERY edgy*** at times? Look again at verse 24, there on the screen. If you don’t keep the commands of Jesus, what it means is that you don’t love him. Translation: you’re not a Christian. You’re kidding yourself. You’re in danger of that terrifying interaction Jesus says will happen to MANY people on the day of judgment when they stand before Him and say…

“On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’” Matt. 7:22-23

Did you catch that short list? These were PENTECOSTALS! ***These were miracle workers!*** They were prophesying and casting out demons and performing mighty works. But it wasn’t out of love for Jesus or in obedience to Him. They were deceiving themselves.

Does that verse give you the opposite of peace? There should be a twinge there for all of us – because all of us can have wrong motives at times. All of us should ***“Work out our salvation with fear and trembling.”*** No one in this room should be resting on our laurels and complacently assuming all is well. The heart is deceitful and the flesh is remarkably resilient.

Come back to John 14.

**How to experience resilient peace:**

1. Study God’s **Word** to know God’s **Will**

“Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me.” John 14:24

***Do you treasure God’s Word?*** Do you prize the teachings of Jesus? Do you love to study and dig into Scripture? I’m not saying you have to become a theologian or a preacher, but every follower of Jesus should actively study God’s Word in order to know God’s will.

How can you know what God wants from you if you don’t know **what God wants in general**?

* What made Jesus angry?
* What made Jesus sad?
* What amazed Jesus?
* What delighted him?

Or get into the Old Testament.

* What did God set up in His Law?
* What made God angry?
* What promises did God make?
* What miracles did God perform and why?

To know God you have to know His Word. But we don’t study the Bible simply as an academic exercise in order to know things. We study the Bible so we can DO what lines up with God’s will. So we can actively please Him, as Jesus did.

“The word you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me.”

***Jesus did everything in obedience to the Father’s will.*** Even die on the cross. He agonized in the garden as he envisioned that ultimate suffering. But in the end, Jesus said, “Not my will, but yours be done.”

***Do you have a Bible reading plan?*** The YouVersion app makes it very easy to choose one, and it will remind you every morning or every evening to do your reading. You can set your level of reading - from a couple of verses every day to several chapters.

Our family has been ***reading through the whole Bible every year*** for a long time, following the Bible with Nicky Gumbel plan. We like that reading plan because it gives you some OT, NT and a Psalm or Proverb. Nice variety.

We’ve found it helpful to read the whole Bible because you see **the whole story** of God’s work in history and you get a feel for God’s activity and His will in different situations. If you’re newer to the Bible I recommend you read through the whole NT and also read a Psalm every day. Keep it simple, but be consistent. That’s the most important thing. Listen to Romans 12:2.

**How to experience resilient peace:**

1. Study God’s **Word** to know God’s **Will**

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.” Rom. 12:2

How are we transformed more into the image of Christ? How do we resist the pressures and temptations of the world? ***By the renewal of our MINDS in God’s Word.*** By studying God’s Word, immersing ourselves in it; memorizing passages; meditating on key passages like this one in John 14. Then BY TESTING, by practicing, by confirming God’s will with other believers, we will increasingly discern the good, pleasing and perfect will of God.

That is the first key to resilient peace: study God’s word to know God’s will. Second:

**How to experience resilient peace:**

1. Listen to God’s **Spirit** to keep in **Step** with God’s will

“These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name…” John 14:25-26

For the three years they traveled and served with Jesus **they had his teachings to guide them**. They had HIM. They could ask him questions. They were trained to rehearse and repeat his parables and lessons as they went out to teach about the kingdom of God. But Jesus didn’t stay with them long. Three years is quite a short period of time.

But Jesus knew that it would be ***better to send the Holy Spirit*** to be with ALL BELIEVERS than for him to remain on earth and only be with a few at a time. Jesus had the beautiful limitation of a fully human body. And these pesky devices can only be in one place at one time; they need sleep and food; they get sick and weak. The Holy Spirit has none of those limitations. And look what the Holy Spirit does for us.

**How to experience resilient peace:**

1. Listen to God’s **Spirit** to keep in **Step** with God’s will

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said.” John 14:26

Did you catch that? HE WILL TEACH YOU ALL THINGS. All of them.

***How? By reminding us of all that Jesus said.***

That’s a one verse explanation for ***how we got the rest of the NT***. How did Matthew, Mark, Luke and John get the details right on all the parables, miracles and teachings? The Holy Spirit reminded them and taught them and led them along. He INSPIRED them.

And the Holy Spirit inspires us – not in the sense that we get to write more Bible; that creates other problems if you attempt it. ***But the Holy Spirit illumines the Scriptures for us***, helping us understand what we read and get to know God better. He reminds us of the teachings of Jesus and highlights key passages that apply to us right now.

The point is that ***you can’t understand the Bible on your own***. Spiritual things must be spiritually discerned and only the Holy Spirit knows the mind of God in order to show them to you. So we must read the Bible with humility and with a submissive heart, asking the Holy Spirit to show us what we need to see, to hear what we need to hear and to DO what He leads us to do.

Studying the Bible helps us know God’s will in general. ***But we need the Holy Spirit to show us God’s will in PARTICULAR.*** He shows you how a verse or passage applies to YOU right in that moment. He leads you into all truth. And He empowers you to take the steps you need to take.



We use a little tool called an **SOS** with Bible reading. Read a few verses slowly and prayerfully and ask the Lord what He wants to say to you through those verses. Then consider how you should obey those verses in order to be like the wise man who built his house on the rock and not the foolish man who built his house on sand.

We know from the teachings of Jesus ***the general will of God that we should OBEY*** the truth from Scripture that we know. We also know that part of God’s will for us is that we influence others, that we make disciples, that we train other people to know and love and walk with Jesus. So the SOS leads to the question “who can I share this with”? So everything we learn from God’s Word becomes an opportunity to pass it on – to share with someone else.

If you’ve been in church for years and decades like I have, ***unfortunately you have most likely been trained NOT to use an SOS*** or other obedience based approach to Scripture. Most of us who have been to Bible studies and small groups and Sunday School classes have been trained in the “just keep learning” approach to the Bible.

You sign up for another Bible study – why? **To learn more.** Learning can be good. But Jesus warned that “knowledge puffs up, love builds up.” And Jesus repeatedly confronted the Pharisees and other religious leaders who KNEW everything there was to know about the Bible but didn’t live a life of love. They had become proud and self-exalting because of their superior Bible knowledge.

We are all in ***danger of being Pharisees*** who know a large amount of Scripture but obey a very small amount.

And we wonder why we don’t feel a great sense of peace.

***Peace comes from KNOWING God’s will and DOING IT.***

***What happens when you know God’s will but DON’T do it?*** Your heart hardens a little. Your conscience becomes resistant to the Holy Spirit. Your flesh – the old, sinful part of you – becomes a little stronger and it is expert at hiding itself from you. So you can feel perfectly justified in your life exactly as it is, even though it is not at all in line with God’s actual will for you.

And periodically, you’ll feel a little twinge of guilt, a little nudge from the Holy Spirit to do something different. But over time, even that can go away. Or you can medicate it away with any number of distractions.

The antidote to this stagnant, joyless, peace-less life is to ***study the Bible in open relationship with the Holy Spirit.*** Learn to LISTEN for the Spirit’s voice as you read the Bible. Ask Him to speak to you. Ask Him to guide you. Share what you’re learning with 1-2 other believers. Process God’s will together. And OBEY together.

Your relationship with the Spirit of God should be first – to seek His fullness in you. Eph. 5:18 commands us to “be filled with the Spirit.” Fill your heart and mind and life with God’s Spirit by immersing yourself in God’s Word. Be filled.

1. Listen to God’s **Spirit** to keep in **Step** with God’s will
	* Be **Filled** with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18)
	* **Walk** with the Spirit (Gal. 5:16,25)
	* Grow in the **Fruit** of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23)

Second, walk with the Spirit. Keep in step with Him. You don’t have to run. He doesn’t lead you through complicated obstacle courses. He just shows you the next step. One step at a time. But you have to listen and you have to be willing to actually take the step.

As you seek the Spirit’s filling and you learn to walk with Him ***the result will be FRUIT***. The Holy Spirit will help you BECOME more loving, more patient, more joyful, more peaceful, more gentle.

PEACE is one of the fruits of the Spirit. He naturally gives peace to those who know Him and walk with Him.

**How to experience resilient peace:**

1. Listen to God’s **Spirit** to keep in **Step** with God’s will

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you. Not as the world gives do I give to you.” John 14:27

Jesus gives with pure generosity. The world gives only to receive something in return. The world uses a contractual, give and take approach. Everything is a transaction. Don’t do marriage that way – it gets ugly in a hurry. Don’t do small group that way.

Jesus gives without any NEED of receiving anything back from us. His love, as C.S. Lewis puts it, is pure GIFT LOVE. Our love is always tainted by our own need. ***But as we grow we can have more gift-love and less need-love in our relationships.***

Now hear me on this. It’s no surprise to any of you that **I’m a talker**. A lot of times when the Holy Spirit leads me to do something, it involves talking with someone. The Spirit highlights a person in my life and gives me a little mission to engage with them. It might be spur of the moment – approach that stranger at Panera. It might be several weeks in the making, to prepare for a sit-down meal.

Words tend to come easily to me in almost any setting, so it’s not hard for me to start up a conversation or to continue a relationship. Sometimes the Spirit’s leading is as explicit as “say this exact phrase.” Nothing mystical or weird – just ask about his kids, go sit beside that guy, see how he’s doing.

I realize not everyone is wired to talk all the time or to approach strangers. Some of the superheroes of this church are **worker bees who fix things** and get so much done that most of us never know about. That is no less important, no less significant. It’s the same process – they listen to the Holy Spirit, and He leads them to see a need and go take care of it.

But ***the consistent reality is LOVE.*** The Spirit will always lead us to love other people. To help. To listen. To serve.

***What is the Spirit leading you to do right now?*** Who is on your heart?

You won’t have real, lasting peace until you follow that leading.

You know God’s will from studying the Bible. Peace comes from walking with the Spirit IN LINE with God’s will for YOU right now. One more key to lasting peace.

**How to experience resilient peace:**

1. Trust in God’s **Promises** to endure **Opposition** to God’s will

“Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” John 14:27

The rest of this section is Jesus giving ***comfort and reassurance to his disciples*** who are about to see him arrested and killed. They would all run for their lives, expecting the same treatment themselves. And it wouldn’t be long before James the brother of John would be killed. As would Stephen as Saul’s persecution spread throughout the holy land.

But Jesus fills this message – this whole chapter of John – with comforting promises. “I go to prepare a place for you.” “If you have seen me, you’ve seen the Father.” “If you obey my words, the Father and will come to you and make our home with you.”

**How to experience resilient peace:**

1. Trust in God’s **Promises** to endure **Opposition** to God’s will

“You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father.” John 14:28

***Jesus is coming back soon.*** Right now He is at the Father’s right hand, interceding for us. Jesus is praying for you – right now. At this minute. This is why we can pray with such confidence because we pray in Jesus’ name.

He said, “It’s way better that I go to be with the Father, because then I will hear every one of you and will do what you ask of me.” So pray boldly, pray with confidence. Ask Jesus for help.

**How to experience resilient peace:**

1. Trust in God’s **Promises** to endure **Opposition** to God’s will

“And now I have told you before it takes place so that when it does take place you may believe.” John 14:29

Jesus foretold his arrest, his trial, his death and resurrection. He told the disciples they would be treated the same way. ***But HE WOULD BE WITH THEM.*** He would send His Spirit to be with them forever.

So whatever opposition and challenges you are facing, you can have peace in the face of them if you do these three things.

**How to experience resilient peace:**

1. Study God’s **Word** to know God’s **Will**
2. Listen to God’s **Spirit** to keep in **Step** with God’s will
3. Trust in God’s **Promises** to endure **Opposition** to God’s will

Study God’s Word. Listen to God’s Spirit. And hold on to God’s promises.

What has the Lord highlighted for you in this passage today? A promise to encourage you? A command to motivate you? An exhortation to spur you to greater faith and obedience?

We want to introduce a tool we’ve been working on most of the year so far. It’s called the **SPIRITUAL LIFE WORKSHEET**.

It’s something for you to pray through on your own, and then process with one or two other believers. It simply asks four questions:

**The Spiritual Life Worksheet**

1. How are you **Trusting** God right now?
2. How are you **Worshiping** Jesus right now?
3. How are you **Walking** with the Spirit right now?
4. How are you **Working** with God right now?

You’ll see it goes right along with our baseball diamond. Love God. Grow in Christ. Serve the church. Reach the world. Trust starts the whole process. Worship fuels it. And you grow as you learn to walk every day with the Holy Spirit, and increasingly join God in His work in the world.

Let’s take a minute right now just to **ask the Lord to guide us** over the next couple of weeks as we invite Him to speak to us. Then in a month or so we will state these are commitments to the Lord.

**Our Commitments**

1. We will trust Jesus completely
2. We will worship Jesus passionately
3. We will walk with Jesus faithfully
4. We will work with Jesus diligently

We could stand and make those promises now but they wouldn’t have any meat to them – any substance. Take a few weeks to search the Scriptures and listen to the Holy Spirit for His will for you right now, in this season of your life.

Then grab 1-2 other believers to meet and share what the Lord is saying to each of you. You’ll find that process both clarifying and encouraging.

Listen to how Jesus closes this chapter.

“I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.” John 14:30-31

The arrest, trial and crucifixion of Jesus appeared to be the devil’s victory. But he had no real claim on Jesus, so death could not hold Him. Jesus was not submitting to the devil but to the Father’s will, thereby proving His love for the Father and His love for us.

Jesus showed us how to have deep and lasting peace. The obedience of faith. Take your next step. Use the spiritual life worksheet to help you clarify what it should be.

Let’s pray.