



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Advent 2024

The Peace of God

1 Peter 3:11, John 14:27, Colossians 3:15

1. One of the things we celebrate at Christmas is the possibility of peace. Peace can be elusive in our culture today.

On March 4th, 2022, the World Health Organization made this statement “By examining the rising number of anxiety disorders, we can say without reservation the world is more anxious today than at any time in modern history.” What evidence do you see personally that the world is more anxious today than at any time in your lifetime?

Anxiety is not the only barrier to our peace. Frustration, anger, and irritation are also obstacles that stand in the way of our inner peace. Discuss what is currently causing you anxiety, frustration, or irritation. In what ways do you deal with these feelings?

2. Before we can know the peace of God we first must be at peace with God.

Take a moment to read **Romans 5:1-2 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.** What stands out to you from this Scripture?

What does it mean to be justified through faith? What does it mean to you to be at peace with God? Can you say with complete confidence you are at peace with God?

3. The Bible speaks of a supernatural peace that passes all understanding. This peace is called the *peace of God or the peace of Christ*. We find this peace as we pray in the heights of our anxiety or frustration, and experience God's empowering, calming, loving presence. Tell the story of a time when you experienced the supernatural peace of God.

4. In the sermon, I said God's supernatural peace is always available.

Take a moment to read **2 Thessalonians 3:16 Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.**

Commenting on this verse, John MacArthur says: "Paul uses the word "Himself." He asks may Jesus Christ, the Lord, personally give you peace because it comes personally from Him. It is the very essence of His nature. God is love; we don't argue about that. And God is also peace. He has no lack of perfect peace in His being. God lives in perfect calm, God lives in perfect tranquility, and God lives in perfect contentment. And He desires to give it to you that you would live in that very same peace."

Do you agree that God's peace is always available? Do you sometimes lose sight of the availability of God's peace? In what situations have you found that this most often occurs in your life?

David said in **Psalms 34 ...seek peace and pursue it.** Are you seeking God's peace and pursuing it? How might you pursue God's peace more diligently?

5. The way we pursue God's peace is through prayers of peace.

Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

In this verse, Paul calls upon us to pray for peace at the moment we experience any anxiety. I would add we should also pray for peace the moment we experience any irritation or frustration as well. Paul gives us two instructions for this prayer: petition and thanksgiving. To "petition" is to list, to give to God all the elements of your anxiety or frustration. Another way to think of petition is that through petition, we pour out our hearts to God. Have you ever poured out your heart to God? What was that like?

"Thanksgiving" implies that we are to turn our hearts towards gratitude and thank God for all He has done and what He will do in the future. How often do you pray for God's peace using Paul's two prompts, petition and thanksgiving? How do you think adding thanksgiving would affect your prayer for peace?

Verse 7 gives us the promise, **7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.** Do you need more of God's supernatural peace in your life? How do you need to adjust to experience more of His peace?