

Dear members and friends of St. John,

Jesus said, *"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."* John 14:27.

Peace and quiet. People will pay a lot of money for it. Why? The chaos of the world makes the mind unsettled. News reports of floods, and famines. Wars and stock market crashes. Street violence, and child molesters. The mind becomes unsettled, and the result is that over-the-counter and prescription remedies for indigestion and heart burn is a billion dollar industry. High blood pressure is becoming a greater problem, even in adolescent children. Insomnia and irregular sleep habits are common. Is it any wonder that people want to escape to a deserted island somewhere (or a mountain top), where there is peace and quiet?

So people seek the peace that the world has to offer. The world provides a peace that is an absence of demands, conflict, competition, unreasonable expectations, and excessive noise. A quiet stream in a large meadow; waves washing up on an isolated beach. Even then, how long will it be before a four-wheeler comes by, or other people invade your space? Even if you could somehow find such a remote location that no one would ever interfere with you, who can live there? Can you honestly remain by that stream, or on that beach and never leave it? We have commitments in this world, to family and friends. Peace the world has to offer comes, and quickly departs.

The Hebrew word for peace is 'shalom'. We know it from the Jewish custom of greeting people with this word. But 'shalom', or peace, also means *restoration*. It's a request, really, for the person to be restored in the presence of God. It's a call for the restoration of all that is good in the person's life. When you think about it, true peace, is true restoration between man and God. It's the reconnection with God that was lost in the Garden of Eden. It's the receiving of new life in Baptism. It's the forgiveness of sins that comes from the Lord's Supper. It's an internal peace - a quiet confidence that no matter what the consequences, no matter what the circumstances, God is in control and will take care of us.

It's not uncommon for me to hear peoples say that they get as much from communing with nature (a quiet walk in the woods, or a tranquil time by a stream or river) as they do worshipping in church. However, that's only Satan's attempt at getting you to think that both worldly peace and peace with God are the same. They are not. Worldly peace may distract you from the reality of sin and death (for a brief period of time), but Christ's peace restores the soul so that we can find calm, even in the very midst of a raging storm. There is no substitute for the peace that passes all understanding.

With the peace that Jesus offers, we can sleep soundly during times of severe testing and trial. We can maintain our calm when others are fighting around us. We can control our tempers and refuse to get angry. We may not know what tomorrow will bring, but we know who is in control of all our tomorrows, and we believe in our Lord – for He is faithful and He will do it. May God

grant you His peace, and help you to see that the peace the world offers can never provide you with everlasting peace.

Pastor Travis