

4th Sunday after Pentecost  
June 28, 2020

“Confessing Christ brings the right kind of peace” (Matthew 10:34)  
By Rev. Ed Weber

“Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today’s text is from our Gospel reading, Matthew 10:34

**“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.”** Here ends our text.

What startling words from Jesus who is called the Prince of Peace! Jesus did not come to bring peace? Well, there is a right kind of peace and a wrong kind of peace. The right kind of peace is what the angels sang of when Jesus was born. “Glory to God in the Highest! And on earth peace goodwill to men”. The Savior came to establish peace between heaven and earth by offering Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.

And, this is what Jesus accomplished so that the first words that Jesus uttered to His disciples when He showed Himself alive to them after 3 days in the tomb were “Peace be with you!” The resurrected Christ showed the nail print hands to His disciples as the proof that there was lasting peace between God and man.

This peace Simeon knew in his heart as he sang **“Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation.”**

Yes, as we heard last week in the verses right before today’s text **“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.”**

Simeon, who confessed his faith in Jesus the Savior before Mary and Joseph, could be absolutely sure that this baby in his arms would confess him before His Father who is in heaven. That’s the right kind of peace. Peace with God through faith in Jesus.

And each of us who confesses Jesus has peace with God and can expect our Lord to confess us before His Father in heaven also.

Also, however, we heard last week, that there's a corresponding verse to confessing Christ. For all the world is divided into two groups...those who confess Jesus and those who deny Him.

And those who deny Him cannot expect peace, but only a denial by Jesus on the last day, and a denial of entrance into heaven and a condemnation to an eternity in hell...where there is no peace.

Those who would strive after their own utopian peace on earth, and their own good life, a world without troubles or problems will fail. For it is the wrong kind of peace and the world will never be without its troubles. **“Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”**

Jesus did not come to bring that kind of peace on earth. As we heard in Paul's salutation to the Galatians last week, God's grace and peace come only through the sacrifice of His Son.

**“Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”**

Jesus came to deliver us from this present evil age, not to try and make it more livable. He doesn't want us to cling to this present evil age but to put our faith in Him to be delivered from it. Confess Him and Jesus will confess you before His Father.

So important is this correct understanding of what the right peace is all about, that Jesus says that He brings the sword. There's always the right tool for the right job. And Jesus brings the right tool for His job. He brings the sword to expose what is the wrong kind of peace and separate people from it.

Luke puts it this way in chapter 12:51

**“Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division.”**

Christ is a divider? Wow, He's so politically incorrect in today's world. Anyone who divides is seen as a hater. Yet, Jesus doesn't want us to strive after the wrong kind of

peace, that is, a temporal kind of peace where everybody just agrees to accept everyone else's sinful actions. That will result in eternal destruction.

Of course, Jesus message met with strong opposition for the people wanted the kingdom to be established on earth. This opposition ultimately led to Jesus' death, but through it, the will of the Father for the salvation of the world was accomplished.

Now, Jesus calls all who confess Him before men to take up one's cross and follow Him. **“He who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.”**

What is Jesus asking His disciples to do? To bring the right kind of peace to the world.

1. First, that often starts with bringing Christ's peace to our own families.

**For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law’; and ‘a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.’**

Confessing Christ before men means to follow Christ by bearing the cross in the most intimate group of people we know – our family! It's a cross to bear because there is not always a unity of beliefs within the family. Yet, Christ wants peace in the family and true peace, the right kind of peace, can only be received by an acknowledgement of sin and forgiveness...much forgiveness!...daily forgiveness!

There is so much discord within the family because of sin. There are arguments and fighting and restraining orders and divorce orders and anything but peace. Only when a Christian in love calls on another family member to be reconciled through Christ can true peace be achieved.

A family can try to find harmony by earthly ways but it will never calm the unrest. Only by the power of the Gospel, can enemies within the family be at peace with one another. Will it be easy? No. The devil does not want to relinquish his grip on prideful hearts and wants them to continue to deny Christ. But the Christian never gives up praying and bringing the message of Christ crucified to the family circle. And the Holy Spirit will guide the Christian's efforts!

2. And second, a confessing Christian will never forget that one's own sinful flesh is a cross to bear and needs to receive the right kind of peace daily!

**“He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.”**

Our own sinful flesh causes us to seek after the wrong kind of peace. The world entices the believer to think that everything will be well if a certain level of success, fame or fortune can be achieved. Yet, when these things diminish, for example, as we go through this pandemic and the economic downturn, stress levels are raised. The wrong kind of peace evaporates, and the world becomes a tinder box for violent protests, drug and alcohol abuse and increased hatred. How easily lost is the life dependent on this world's peace. And most sadly, the one who thinks he has found his life in this world, will lose it eternally.

The Christian must continually humble oneself before God and repent of trying to find one's life through earthly contentment and gain. When a Christian loses his life through repentance, for Jesus' sake, he or she will find it. True peace and contentment will be found in Jesus' gift of forgiveness through Jesus' Word and Sacraments. And most importantly, a Christian will be found worthy, not unworthy of Christ, because Jesus' righteousness covers the sinner's guilt and makes him or her holy in God's eyes, an heir of heaven itself.

3. And finally, a confessing Christian bears the cross by bringing the right kind of peace to other believers

**“He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.”**

A Christian is called to confess the faith by showing love and kindness to prophets, righteous people, and to the youngest disciples, the little ones. Unkindness and discord between Christians must be repented of and reconciliation given to give the right kind of peace between the brethren. And when one receives another Christian, one is receiving Christ. When one gives a drink of water to the least of these my brethren one is giving a drink to Christ. Remaining in Christ, the reward Jesus promises is eternal life – a world free of any strife, hatred, or evil.

Jesus freely gives this right kind of peace through faith to all who would confess His name, take his cross and follow Him. He'll lead you in the right path and show you the right kind of peace which gives comfort and joy to the believer's heart in this world and an eternal reward in heaven. “I tell you the truth,” Jesus says, “assuredly, I say to you” he shall by no means lose his reward.” All glory to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen

**“The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Galatians 4:7)**