

Sermon #24

Not Peace But a Sword?

God is One, undivided.

God is whole and true, perfect and intact.

God is All.

God calls us to be one with Him,
just as Jesus Christ is one with Him.

He loves us all and calls us all,
but only those who respond are chosen.

God earnestly nurtures His chosen ones so they can unite with Him.

God unites with goodness and truth, but not with evil.

God cleans evil out of our hearts and minds so we can fully
unite with Him.

God is a jealous God, but not in a selfish way.

Here is one definition of “jealous”:

“Earnestly vigilant in guarding or keeping something.”

This is the definition which describes God’s jealousy.

It’s not that God want to hoard me all to Himself for His own
gratification; rather, He wants me to have the very best!

God is the best, and He made me in His image and likeness.

He desires that I receive the fullness of my true identity in Him.

Anyone or anything that comes between God and me
diminishes the life He has given.

This is like going to the IMAX movie theater to watch the greatest
movie of all time wearing ear plugs and dark sunglasses.

Although the movie is still the same, my perception,
understanding and enjoyment of it will be diminished.

Anyone or anything that draws me closer to God
enhances the life He has given.

This is like removing the ear plugs so I can hear the beautiful music and discern what the actors are saying; or like removing the dark glasses so I can see all the beautiful shades and colors.

Now God calls us, for our own benefit, to focus on Him, to keep our eyes on Him, to follow where He leads. When I do this, I experience righteousness, wholeness, peace, joy and fulfillment, regardless of circumstances.

This sounds simple, but it is the greatest challenge of all time. To keep my eyes on Christ and follow His teaching and guidance seems impossible at times, yet it is not, for all things are possible with God.

In the beginning, all that man knew was God, goodness and truth. When man listened to and believed the lying tongue of the serpent, lies and deception mixed themselves into man's knowledge of God, goodness and truth.

Man became double-minded, knowing both good and evil, and believing both truth and lies.

The more man becomes corrupted by false philosophies, lies and deceptions, the further he goes into sin, deception and confusion, desperately trying to find happiness and fulfillment but always coming up lacking.

The good news is that we have a Savior to deliver us from evil. His deliverance doesn't come in the form of alcohol, pot, sex, flattery, movies or greed. If you're using these to try to deliver yourself from evil, you will never succeed.

Jesus said that He did not come to bring peace on earth, but a sword—to set people against each other
This is one way that God delivers us from evil.

Jesus also said that this sword would set people within the same family against each other. Thus, the war against evil will be fought in your own house and heart.

On the surface this teaching about a sword seems like a contradiction to His teaching of peace, but it isn't. God's sword and the resulting conflict are part of the peace process.

The sword Christ brings is the sword of truth, the sword of God's jealous love, a sword that separates into two opposing sides. Just like a sword separates flesh, God's truth separates people.
It sets those who hate truth against those who love truth.
It sets those who believe lies against those who believe truth.
It sets those who tell lies against those who tell truth.
It sets those who hide from truth against those who desire truth.

God's sword of truth also divides me from myself.
It sets my false identity against my true identity.
It sets my worldly wisdom against the truth within me.
It sets my evil desires against my good desires.
It sets my false notions against
the testimony of the Spirit of truth in me.
It sets my worldly delusions against
the reality of the kingdom of God in Me.

Thus, when Christ brings His sword of truth into my life and heart, the battle lines draw up and the battle begins.
If I persevere, He will defeat all evil in my life and purify my heart.
If I am totally corrupt, His sword will put my soul to death.
Then He will resurrect me into a new life,
giving me His own Spirit and Heart.

Whenever there are two opposing sides:

Whoever stands firm in the truth and love of God will overcome and be freed from evil.

Whoever holds on to lies and selfishness will be defeated and enslaved by evil.

If neither side stands firm in the truth and love of God, the battle will continue.

If both sides reconcile and stand firm in the truth and love of God,
they will both overcome the world and be brought to unity with
God and each other.

Truth tests a person's words and actions,
and reveals the falseness in them.

Those who do not want to change or be exposed will resist and reject
those who seek truth.

This means that even a close family member can turn viciously against
you in spite of all his previous professions of great love for you.

When you believe and obey truth,
you will begin to see life and reality as they really are rather than
the way others have presented them to you.

This can be very shocking and sad at times, but it is better to know the
truth than to continue on in lies, deceptions and delusions.

Families and churches can put on a united front that looks harmonious
and peaceful, but which is really a facade and hypocrisy.

Our church has been doing this for so long I suppose it could be called
a tradition by now. This church is not united in Christ, in truth and
love. In the coming days, this will be exposed.

I have been preaching peace when there is no peace; I have white-
washed the flimsy spiritual walls of this church by proclaiming
unity when there is really division. Please forgive me.

Today, I ask Christ and His sword to come into our congregation and
individual hearts, and to do the work which needs to be done to
deliver us from evil and purify our hearts.

If you are a truth seeker, go forward!

And be prepared for Christ's sword to set you against yourself and
others, dividing, separating, purifying, putting to death.

These things will surely come.

As you stand firm and persevere through these,
you will also find true peace and joy.

God is good! God is great!

All beauty springs forth from Him.

All love flows out of His love.

He is wonderful, marvelous, majestic!

He knows all and gives all.

He is pure, righteous, loving and kind.

God is ALL; and that is the truth.

He is working in all and through all for good.

He is all you need.

Seek Him, listen to Him, trust Him, follow Him.

His paths of righteousness lead straight to Him, and He is good.

Actually—the best!

Yes, God is jealous! He wants us to have the best—HIM!

“O My people, listen to Me: I AM Truth and Love.

Do not say ‘peace’ when there is no peace.

And do not hold on to that which is evil.

Let Me remove all lies and deceptions, all lust and delusions,
all selfish ambition and vain conceit.

Turn to Me in truth and love.

Listen to me and follow Me, even when others are driven away.

Do not flee from Me with them; stand your ground in Me.

Whoever loves the world will oppose, reject and flee from those who
love Me.

So stand your ground in Me, even though others will turn away.

Let them go, and do not look back.

Let Me divide and conquer your foes, so you can go forward in Me.

Then you will know true peace and joy.

Love others and do not reject them; do good to those who hate you.

But do not hold on to them or chase them down;

let them go and let them be.

You will be rejected by some, so be prepared.

But don’t despair; this is from My hand, and I intend it for good.

Trust Me, and let Me separate from you what doesn’t belong.

Accept My judgment.

I want you to have the best.

I AM your Heavenly Father, Creator and Friend.

I love to do good to you.

I jealously guard My place in your life;
this is for your good.

Yet you can reject the good I AM doing;
I do not force it upon you.

But when you give your life to Me and ask Me to sit on the throne of
your heart, I quickly begin to establish My kingdom.

I strike down competing kings and rulers in your life;
I will not share you with them,

for they don't know you and love you like I do.

I smash your idols that divert your attention from Me.

I tear out and uproot false ideas and philosophies
that turn your mind against Me.

I want your full attention.

I burn out your evil desire, so you can be faithful to Me.

I wash you and clean you with My word of truth,
so you can be One with Me.

These things may hurt, and you may suffer.

But I will be with you and help you through.

Your reward is great in Me: I confer on you My kingdom.

It is always worth it.

Yes, I AM jealous, and for very good reason.

I want you to have the best.

Me.”