

February 1, 2026

**The Gospel of John**  
**XLVII. In Me You May Have Peace**  
**John 16:25-33**

Dr. William P. Seel  
Easley Presbyterian Church  
Easley, South Carolina

In the last passage we read from John's Gospel, Jesus promised us joy – that inward assurance that our lives rest firmly in His hands and that all that we experience in this life will be brought round to good in the end.<sup>1</sup> This week, with the very last verse of His farewell address to His disciples at the Last Supper, Jesus promises us peace: “*I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace.*” But what is peace – the peace that we may have in Jesus?

We tend to define peace in two ways. We think of peace, first, as an inward bliss – the absence of stress, the attainment of tranquility, a quiet contentment of the soul. As the Psalmist says:

*But I have calmed and quieted my soul,  
like a weaned child with its mother;  
like a weaned child is my soul within me.*<sup>2</sup>

Or, second, looking to the world around us, we define peace as the ending of conflict, as the absence of war. God, speaking through His prophet Isaiah:

*He shall judge between the nations,  
and shall decide disputes for many peoples;  
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,  
and their spears into pruning hooks;  
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
neither shall they learn war anymore.*<sup>3</sup>

So, our definitions of peace as inner tranquility or as the absence of conflict are not wrong. But, nonetheless, the peace Jesus speaks to us this morning is something more than both of these – something much more. In fact, it is the sole basis by which we can ever possess inner tranquility or see swords at last being beaten into plowshares. The peace Jesus promises us this morning is, first and foremost, peace with God. Peace, at last, between our sinful selves and our holy God.

Remember that as Jesus speaks these final words to His disciples, He is on His way to the cross – there to die for our sin, there to die in our place that we might be reconciled to God through His sacrifice. And that is, first and foremost, what Jesus means by promising us peace – He is promising us that through His death we shall be reconciled to God. Things made right and good

between God and we human beings once again as it was in the Garden, and forevermore as it shall be in the coming Kingdom of God. Paul writes to the Romans: *“We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*<sup>4</sup> And to the Colossians: *“For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things . . . making peace by the blood of his cross.”*<sup>5</sup> In Jesus Christ, we are reconciled to God. In Jesus Christ, we are brought back into living and loving relationship with our Creator. In Jesus Christ, we now have peace with God and need no longer fear His wrath upon our sin – peace with God by which we are also now able to possess peace within our souls, as well as to obtain peace with one another, even as we anticipate that coming day when there really will come peace on earth and good will toward all.

In fact, note the very last thing Jesus says after promising us peace: *“I have overcome the world.”* Jesus has not only overcome our separation from God—the result of our sin – but in His cross He also overcomes all in this world which stands in the way of the coming of the peaceable Kingdom of God on earth. He has overcome all that would prevent God’s reign on earth from returning, as it was in the beginning of Creation. Writing to the Ephesians, Paul speak of the principalities and powers of this present age, of the “cosmic powers over this present darkness, the spiritual forces of evil” which oppose Christ and His Kingdom.<sup>6</sup> But in the cross of Jesus, these powers of disorder among human beings and hostility towards God are defeated once and for all – meaning that Christ is now Lord over all, King of kings and Lord of lords.<sup>7</sup> In the psalm we read this morning, the psalmist speaks of God holding these principalities and powers of darkness and evil in derision, terrifying them with His power and fury. And Paul tells of how, in Christ, God has now disarmed these evil principalities and powers, revealing the shame of their weakness and triumphing over them in His might.<sup>8</sup>

So Jesus, by His cross, obtains for us peace with God – which in turn enables us to find peace within ourselves and peace with one another; and obtains also, and for all Creation, liberation from all that would hurt, all that would oppress, all that would destroy, all that would resist the goodness and grace of our God. And so, one day, the Kingdom of God shall come in fullness upon this earth:

*And his name shall be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
Of the increase of his government and of peace  
there will be no end.*<sup>9</sup>

*The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,  
and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,  
and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together . . .  
They shall not hurt or destroy  
in all my holy mountain;  
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord  
as the waters cover the sea.*<sup>10</sup>

*“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace.”*

But where then, given this promise, can we look to find this peace on earth in our own day – this peaceable Kingdom Jesus has won for us through His cross? Or, to ask it another way, why does the world still seem so unpeaceful, still so filled with conflict and suffering? Why are our own hearts still so unpeaceful? Well, the short answer is that while on the cross the war is won, the ultimate victory secured and the outcome no longer in doubt, the battles on earth will continue until at last He comes again in glory. Only then shall all evil be vanquished, only then shall all conflict between nations, conflict between peoples, conflict within our own hearts cease and be brought into never-ending peace. But because Jesus has in His cross “*overcome the world,*” we can rest in absolute assurance that the day of full and unending peace is coming.

More than that, because Jesus has overcome the world through His cross, we can, in our own day, look around at the world and at our relationship and even within our own hearts – and there find evidence already that the peace Christ has promised us, His triumph over conflict and evil, is in fact already present in part and actively at work in this world. If we know what to look for, we can see His peace happening all around us every day – Christ working His peace, giving His peace, establishing His peace in our midst. Now, admittedly, it can be hard to discern peace beneath all the noise of conflict. Evil, by its very nature, loves the headlines, wants to dominate the news cycle – in order to convince us that chaos and cruelty and conflict are the truth about the world, and not Jesus and His peace. Whereas goodness is quiet, peace-making is humble, the presence of Christ at work in His world most often subtle, gentle, behind the scenes. But once we know what to look for, we shall see evidence everywhere that, as we sang a couple of Sundays ago, “*though the wrong is oft so strong, God is the ruler yet.*”<sup>11</sup>

For example, the church. Now the church is still far from perfect; and still, as evidenced by its many conflicts through the ages, awaiting and in great need of that coming day of final deliverance – but the church is nonetheless one place where we can often discern the peace of Christ at work. Here’s one such story I got from another pastor: Alice was put in charge of the church’s annual mission campaign and she decided some new leadership would be nice, so she left Agnes’ name off the list of committee members. When it was brought to her attention that Agnes had served on the committee for the past twenty years, and would likely be deeply hurt by being left out, Alice admitted that her omission of Agnes was intentional: “*Everyone is sick and tired of being bossed around by Agnes. So I took it upon myself to let her sit this one out.*” Sure enough, Agnes was deeply hurt by being left off the committee.

At first, Agnes responded to her hurt the way wounded people in the church often do – she quietly withdrew from church activities for the next few months. But then, as wounded church people also often will do, she began talking to others about how Alice’s campaign was going to fail and how Alice was just “ruining the church.” By the following spring, the church had been split into the pro-Alice faction and the pro-Agnes faction – and tensions were running high on Sunday mornings.

Until the Sunday when the Scripture reading was some verses from Matthew 18 – verses about how, if a brother or sister in the church sins against you, you are to swallow your hurt and anger and go speak to that brother or sister in order to seek reconciliation. And Agnes bolted upright in her pew when she heard those words of Jesus being read. She looked around nervously at the rest of the congregation – wondering if they also were aware that the Bible was speaking

directly right at her that morning. She had clearly been wronged by Alice. But what had Agnes done in response? She had silently seethed, she had gathered supporters to her side; but what she had not even once considered doing was what Jesus was here telling her to do – she had never once gone to Alice and talked to her about it, confronted Alice with her hurt.

So, feeling the conviction of God’s Word, she summoned her courage, and wrote a letter to Alice – a thoughtful, careful letter – in which she expressed to Alice how hurt she had been by being left off the committee. She concluded by asking, for the good of the church and for their own sake, if Alice would meet with her to talk this through. Alice was willing. The two met for lunch. There were tears. Alice apologized for the way she had handled things; Agnes took responsibility for what she had done – and they were reconciled. Peace was made. And the church was healed.<sup>12</sup> *“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace.”*

And that brings us to another aspect of Christ’s peace made visible in this world already, this peace Jesus has won for us on His cross. While we wait for the day of His final victory and the full coming of His Kingdom of peace, the peace of Christ at work within us also enables us, and also compels us, to work with Christ for peace in the world. To be the ones through whom His gift of peace becomes visible in the world and to the world. In the Beatitudes, remember, Jesus said, *“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God”*<sup>13</sup> – “sons” of God, meaning both sons and daughters, but meaning most especially those who are doing the work of the One who is the Son of God. Those who are living in the way and the truth and the life of the One who is our reconciler, who is our peacemaker. And Paul is just as emphatic about this work of peace-making in response to the peace Christ has won for us with the Father. He writes to the Corinthians:

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation . . .*<sup>14</sup>

So while we await that day of the coming of Christ’s peaceable Kingdom in its completeness, we – having received the peace of Christ – now work for peace with and for Christ and His coming Kingdom. Work for peace with others, work for peace between others; work for peace within the nation, as well as work for peace between the nations. We have been made to become, to finish that Corinthian quote from Paul, *“ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.”*<sup>15</sup>

Like this rather incredible story I encountered in David Zahl’s wonderful book on grace, [The Big Relief](#). In the book, he tells of listening to a podcast in which a man named Michael Rabdou told the story of a summer night in a back yard in Washington, D.C., where he and a group of his friends were enjoying a dinner together. This is Zahl writing about Rabdou’s story:

*Around 10:00 p.m., they were interrupted by an intruder. This man pointed a gun at Rabdou’s friends and demanded money. No one had any cash on them, so they fervently began trying to dissuade the guy, appealing to his conscience. He responded to their*

*pleas with hostility. It looked like things were about to escalate in a terrible direction.*

*Just then, a woman named Christina piped up. She told the interloper that they were in the midst of a celebration and asked if he would like a glass of wine. Rabdou reports that the man's countenance immediately shifted. Indeed, the whole tenor of the encounter softened. The group watched as the man tasted the wine and slowly put the gun away. Then he said something shocking: "I think I've come to the wrong place . . . Can I get a hug?"*

*Before they had time to think about it, the dinner guests formed a circle and hugged the person who had been threatening them mere seconds ago. He muttered an apology and left the way he came. Rabdou says, "It was like a miracle." No "like" about it – grace is miraculous.<sup>16</sup>*

Now a story like that truly is incredible. But here's the difference between Christians who possess the peace of Christ and the world which does not yet possess that peace. The world finds that story not just incredible, but impossible, ridiculous, foolish, and even wrong. Christians – those who know the peace of Christ and the promise of His peaceable Kingdom drawing nearer – Christians find that story not just incredible, but also the sort of thing that can happen, the sort of thing which truly does happen, when the peace of Christ has so entered the hearts of His disciples that they have become for Him peacemakers, ambassadors of reconciliation in Christ and for Christ, those called the sons and daughters of God.

What Jesus has done for us is a miracle of grace – making peace through His cross that we might be reconciled to God forevermore. And what Jesus promises that He will yet do for us is a miracle of grace also – for, having overcome the world, He will one day bring about His peace forevermore, and we there to live in it and to enjoy it forevermore. So, "Take heart," He says to His disciples that night. "Take heart," He says to us this morning. "Take heart; for I have overcome the world." "In me," He says to us, "In me you may have peace.

---

<sup>1</sup> John 16:16-24.

<sup>2</sup> Psalm 131:2.

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah 2:4.

<sup>4</sup> Romans 5:1.

<sup>5</sup> Colossians 1:19-20.

<sup>6</sup> Ephesians 6:12.

<sup>7</sup> Revelation 19:16.

<sup>8</sup> Colossians 2:15.

<sup>9</sup> Isaiah 9:6.

<sup>10</sup> Isaiah 11:6-9.

<sup>11</sup> From Maltbie D. Babcock, "This Is My Father's World."

<sup>12</sup> William H. Willimon, "Working with God," *Pulpit Resource*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (July, August, September, 1999), pp. 40-41.

<sup>13</sup> Matthew 5:9.

<sup>14</sup> II Corinthians 5:17-19.

<sup>15</sup> II Corinthians 5:20.

<sup>16</sup> David Zahl, *The Big Relief: The Urgency of Grace for a Worn-out World* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2025), pp. 18-19