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SERIES: PEACE IS ATTAINABLE

TITLE: Peace with others

SONGS: TRUST HIS HEART

CHANGE MY HEART

INTRO: Welcome to Grace Notes. We've been studying about Peace – peace with God and peace within ourselves. Today, our host Barbara Sandbek will center on keeping peace with each other. Stay tuned, this may be just what you need to hear.

In Ephesians chapter 6 there is a list of the spiritual armor Believers are to wear to protect themselves from satan's schemes. One of these elements is described as 'feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace'. This piece of armor is different than the belt of truth, helmet of salvation or the sword of the Spirit, in that while these guard us from being corrupted by the world, peace is what we have to offer it.

According to 2 Corinthians 5:19, God has committed to us the message of reconciliation, which is really 'peace with God through Christ'.

Matthew 5:9 says...

Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called the Sons of God.

When we lead people to Jesus, we are peacemakers, because we have shown them how to receive God's peace. And in return, we receive the blessing of knowing that we are truly acting as a child of God.

Being a peacemaker not only involves verbally spreading the Gospel but also demonstrating the Gospel in us as well. This is best displayed in our interface with others – especially Believers. In John 17, Jesus prayed diligently that His followers would be at peace with one another. He said...

"...May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as you have loved Me. "

Rom. 14:19 says...

...make every effort to DO what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

How do we do that?

1 Peter 3:8-9 shows us. It says...

Live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

When someone has wronged you, it's almost impossible to keep quiet and not retaliate – we want them to feel what we are feeling. Recently we went through this and it seemed like every devotional we read during that time was about loving your enemies. Matthew 5:44-45 said..

”Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.

Luke 6:27-28 went even further....

Do good to those who hate you, BLESS those who curse you.

After all, God says, if you love and do good only to those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them, but if you do these things for your enemies, your reward will be GREAT, and you will be sons of the Most High, because He is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.

We emulate God's character when we love our enemies and do good to them. But...this is hard to do. How can we pray a blessing on those who sin against us? The greatest blessing we could ask for is that they will know TRUTH - and Jesus is the truth which sets men free from sin. We can pray that Jesus will reveal truth to our enemies – truth about Himself, about themselves, and about their sin.

Romans 12: 18-20 says...

If it is possible, as far as it depends on YOU, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written “It is mine to avenge. I will repay”, says the Lord. On the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him, if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good.

To 'heap burning coals on his head' means to cause their faces to burn with shame and motivate them to change their ways. We break the chain of bitterness when we refuse to enter the ring of retaliation. 1 Pet. 3:11 says...SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT.

We're to search for peace as if it were lost and then once we've found it, we need to pursue it, like a hunter would his game, because it's fleeting.

Peace comes at a price sometimes. It can involve a sacrifice - maybe of our pride. But Christ gave his life, he suffered the shame we deserved as He hung on the cross so that we might have peace. What will you do for the sake of keeping peace with others?

In his second letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul said he was planning a return visit but was afraid to. Verse 20 of chapter 12 reads...

I fear that there may be quarrelling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder.

He is saying this of a body of Believers. Does this kind of thing happen today in our assemblies? You bet. That's why his writings are so inspired. Here's his advice - and we need to heed it.

Chapter 13 verse 5...

Examine yourself to see whether you are in the faith: test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you - unless of course you fail the test?

The key element in dealing with any conflict is to first ask God to help YOU understand. Why did the situation even present itself in the first place? Do you make too much of it by choosing to allow yourself to be offended? Why does the other person act the way they do? Is it their age, their background, their circumstances? We may not have walked in their shoes. Or, maybe you should ask God to show you the real reason you're upset. That's what Paul was saying - start with ourselves - be introspective about the problem.

Remember, YOU are the only person you can change, and if you are truly a Believer, God can help you become a better person through the conflict - whether it was your fault or not. If you are in the faith, you must hold on to Romans 8:28...

And we know that IN all things God works for THE good of those who love Him; who have been called according to His purpose.

It doesn't say all things are good, but it does say that God can use all situations and still work good in our behalf – we can trust Him in this.

***** TRUST HIS HEART *****

VERSE 1

*All things work for our good
Though sometimes we can't see how they could
Struggles that break our heart into
Sometimes blind us to the truth*

VERSE 2

*Our Father knows what's best for us
His ways are not our own
SO when your pathway grows dim
And you just can't see Him
Remember - you're never alone*

CHORUS 1

*God is too wise to be mistaken
God is too good to be unkind
So when you don't understand
When you don't see His hand
When you can't trace His plan - trust His heart.*

VERSE 3

*He sees the master plan
And He holds your future in His hand
So don't live as those who have no hope
All our hope is found in Him*

VERSE 4

*We see the present clearly
But He sees the first and the last
And like a tapestry, He's weaving you and me
To someday be just like Him.*

(repeat Chorus 1)

CHORUS 2

For He alone is faithful and true

And He alone knows what is best for you

So when you don't understand

When you don't see His hand

When you can't trace His plan - trust His heart.

Romans 8:29 goes on to say that God predestined us to be conformed to the likeness of Christ so that we could become His brothers and sisters. God called us to this. He justified us for this. And He is in the process of glorifying us as He glorified Christ through His suffering. We bring glory to God when we handle our sufferings like Christ did.

Spiritual maturity is the process of being conformed to the image of Christ...FOR THE SAKE OF OTHERS. It's not so we can be put on the shelf and admired. The transformation process comes through rough waters. Think of trying to fit a shapeless object into a preformed container. It has to be confined or packed in. If it had feelings, it might even feel like breaking out – just like we do when God allows us to be placed in situations that confine us.

Proverbs 16:7 reads...

When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him.

Peace rules the day when Christ rules the heart.

***** CHANGE MY HEART *****

**Change my heart oh God
Make it ever true
Change my heart oh God
May I be like You**

**Change my heart oh God
Make it ever true
Change my heart oh God
May I be like You**

**You are the potter
I am the clay
Mold me and make me
This is what I pray**

**Change my heart oh God
Make it ever true
Change my heart oh God
May I be like You**

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