



Week Two Prayer Focus: Come to Jesus – His Peace

Just Pray: Ask the Holy Spirit to help us receive Jesus' peace for ourselves, for our families and for the Belmont Church as a family. Ask Him to help Belmont come into unity with the Holy Spirit and preserve that unity through the binding power of peace. Ask for the reign of the Prince of Peace to bring every situation into line with His will and purposes.

Receiving Jesus' Peace in Chair No. 1

In John 20 we see Jesus breaking into the middle of His followers' fear and confusion with His presence, and the first thing He says to them is, "Peace be with you." I can imagine the creative power released as the Living Word of God spoke this blessing to His friends! What tangible reality of Jesus' peace and well-being must have flooded into the disciples' hearts in that locked room. "Peace" in this verse means "a state of rest, quietness; an absence of strife; perfect well-being." It includes peace in our relationships with God and with one another, as well as peace among nations and families.

Often it can be easier to avoid dealing with the source of conflict and strife in our lives. We settle for a pretense of peace, and leave the underlying problems within ourselves and in our relationships unresolved, sometimes for generations. This is not the peace Jesus is offering. This peace is beyond all understanding and will keep our hearts and minds safe in union with the Messiah Jesus (Philippians 4:7). The peace that comes from the Messiah will be our decision-maker, if we let it (Colossians 3:15). We have this peace with God forever through our Lord Jesus Messiah, because God considers us righteous because of our trust in Him (Romans 5:1). The binding power of this peace with help us come into and preserve the unity the Holy Spirit gives to God's people (Ephesians 4:3).

Conversation Starters with Jesus

What situation do you need the Lord Jesus Messiah to come into and speak, "Peace to you"?

Are there unresolved problems that you tolerate because it is easier to pretend everything is okay than to work through the source of the conflict until peace comes?

How would your life and relationships be different if you were willing to stop pretending everything is okay and do whatever it took to have Jesus reign and peace overtake unresolved conflicts?

What would Belmont look like if everyone was willing to give up everything to come into unity with the Holy Spirit and peace with each other?

Do you carry around heavy burdens that weigh you down and keep you from being at rest in Jesus' presence?

What would be the most tangible change in your daily life if you stayed connected continually with Jesus, His perfect acceptance with the Father, and His ways and rhythms of living?

Jesus boldly declares that apart from Him we can do nothing, yet if we ask anything in His Name He will do it! Is there anything you need to stop trying to control or do by yourself, and instead invite Jesus to intervene to help you?

“Pray Always” means “Come to Rest”

Jesus invites us to come to Him to find rest in His presence – continually. “Come to Me, all of you who are struggling and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls and lowly in heart, and you will assuredly find rest for your souls.” (Matthew 11:28-29.)

In making this promise, Jesus doesn't tell us, I *can* give you rest; rather He says I *will* give you rest. Perhaps part of the challenge that keeps us from coming to rest is our refusal to really believe that Jesus is willing to bring us into His Father's presence at complete, forever-settled rest. So, we loiter outside peaking in, or we dash in and out carrying our imperfect sacrifices trying to earn a moment of respite from our endless striving, striving to feel we have finally done enough to please the LORD. Does this stand in the way of coming to the Father in prayer?

Yet, Jesus invites us to labor to come into His rest of acceptance with the Father. In fact, the Father's proclamation over His Son is that I am well-pleased with Him. Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection to new life in God, freeing us from sin and death, means we can come into that same pleasure and acceptance with the Father. We can stop trying to impress the Father enough to perhaps obtain a quick audience with the King, now and then, about our wants or needs. We can lay down the weights and worries we drag around to exhaustion, and instead connect continually to Jesus' strength and resource for every situation. Connected to Him, we will find rest for our crowded, loud, distracted, weary souls.