

“The Power of Peace”

Malachi 3:1-4; Romans 15:8-13

December 5, 2021

Introduction

- The Men of Cook’s Memorial Presbyterian Church
 - o These guys know how to fix things
 - It’s funny, they’ll be rattling off things and I just sit there and smile, gratefully.
 - I have no idea really what in the heck they’re talking about but it’s just cool to listen to experts, even if you’re clueless
 - o I’m a problem solver at heart. A fixer
 - Ask my wife, there’s always a thing or three hundred I’m trying to repair.
- But there is a way to fix problems. There really is. A series of steps taken to reach a repair.
 - o Wanna know what the first step in fixing a problem it?
 - IDENTIFYING IT and understanding it more fulsomely.
- That is exactly what we’ll do today, linking it all to Jesus Christ, as the Bible and our Lord would obviously have it.
- Well, as we come into this second Sunday in Advent, as omicron variant leaps from our screens into our communities, icily reminding us that we’re not quite done with this pandemic yet, possibly.
 - o Although we’re outside of the political season, we remain a deeply divided country with little hope presently of reuniting.
 - o The Cook’s community has changed, once a family-farming area, we’re now fully enmeshed in city life with our fair share of country-minded people.
 - They’ve seen Charlotte encroach like a weed, disrupting their community and their peace.
- So, how’s your PEACE level?
 - o Not so good, eh?
- Well, we may have just identified one really, really big problem.

No Jesus, No Peace

- Episcopal church written on the walls. Funny, they don’t really believe that but, okay.
 - o I do.
- True, but not in some fundamentalist manner.
 - o When there isn’t the awareness of Jesus, we’re going to struggle with our tranquility levels.
 - Why?
 - Because apart from relationship with him, we are bound to be tossed to and from by the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune
- Jesus is the means by which we find peace.
 - o We find peace in Him by accepting some difficult but obvious truths about ourselves, this world and its 7 + billion other inhabitants.

Step One – Accept You’re Not Perfect

- Perfectionism material
- We are a nation striving for a perfection that will simply never come
 - o We might see kids not punctuating properly or doing things perfectly like we did back in the day but those aren’t the real problems with perfection anyway.
 - o As a nation we strive to be
 - Perfect in our appearance
 - Perfect in our beliefs
 - Perfect in what we consume
- Marketers know of our love for being perfect, they count on it every single time they make an advertisement.
 - o Best Buy even said it best one Christmas – You, BETTER.
- Nothing more life draining than this tendency.

- What's worse, a lot of people have it that don't think they do.
 - I'm not a perfectionist, look at my house
 - Okay, that's not an area you struggle with perfectionism in but that doesn't mean that you don't have it.
 - Do you every feel guilty when you relax, knowing you've got a lot to do?
 - Do you ever feel dissatisfied or discontent with yourself or your situation?
 - Do you have the tendency to see something wrong with things rather than what's right?
 - Do you ever find yourself using these phrases regularly – "I have to...I must...I ought to...I should be able to..."
- Well, let me introduce you to some good news that might not sound it, right off the bat.
 - **Romans 3:21-26** – *"But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."*
 - Fundamentally, you're never going to be perfect, ever
 - And if this isn't the case, then you can be freed with good cheer from the shackles of perfectionism.
- We celebrate Jesus at Christmas because
 - The cost of not being perfect is removed
 - Now, I would be remiss not to mention that while perfection is impossible, it should remain our goal in our Christian walk.
 - But we don't beat ourselves up when we don't make it. Instead, we seek out God to repent and make amends.

Step Two - Accept that this World isn't Perfect

- Story – Toy that broke on Christmas Day Hand-held football game. Got it, didn't work, the Lionel Toy Warehouse didn't have any left.
- We get disappointed
- **1 Peter 5:10** – *"And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast."*
- Suffering is part of the package deal
- Jesus suffered for us, we do the same, sacrificing our self-interests for other people.
- Wanna be completely free? Stop caring about yourself first. The secular world tells us that unless we put ourselves first, we're going to suffer. That's not entirely true.

Hardest One

- Accept that other people aren't perfect
- Romans 3 again.
- Grace
- The most peaceful people of all – low expectations and forgive, easily. I know a number of people like that in life, almost every one of them is a really amazing Christian.
- **Ephesians 4:32** – *"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."*
- **Matthew 6:14** – *"For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."*

- **Colossians 3:13** - *“Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”*
- Can't forgive The Georgia Bulldogs for losing AGAIN to Alabama.
- Understanding ourselves as not perfect, realizing that this world isn't perfect, it's broken by sin, and thus dealing with others in a low-expectation, forgiving manner. Man, that's peace.

Let's fix the problem

- Let's hope I didn't just sound like Dale, FD and Mike when they talk to me about repair stuff
- This is doable.
- Peace is in Jesus Christ.
 - o All hail the Prince of Peace!