

The Peace of Christ

“And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.” Colossians 3:15.

Peace is a difficult word to define. The Bible teaches many different concepts in its definition about peace. Peace is being in a right relationship with God. Peace is being without anxiety or hostility. Peace is about balance and harmony, for example neither being overworked nor lazy. Peace is a fickle and fluid thing and yet it is something without which no one can truly live.

Here we are given a different idea of peace in Paul's epistle to the Colossians. Paul doesn't discuss just any kind of peace but specifically the peace of Christ. The phrase *peace of Christ* is an odd phrase. It's odd because it's something Christ had on earth, which means Christ had it while he endured hostility. For us, it is close to impossible to be considered as *having peace* while others are seeking to kill us. But that's exactly what Christ had.

And the phrase becomes even stranger. Not only is this a peace that is able to be obtained while enduring hostility, but this is a peace that rules or has authority. We don't often connect *peace* with *ruling* or *authority* or *control*. In fact, culturally there are some ways in which we connect peace as being without ruling or control. We pray for rulers to rule peacefully, which often means we pray they leave us alone. But Paul makes it clear that the hearts of Christians are to be under the rule of the peace of Christ. The kind of peace Christ had that he gave to us – the kind of peace that can endure physical hostility peacefully because of the relationship with God – is the kind of peace that ought to rule over our hearts.

Peace is not an easy thing to have. But maybe that's the problem: We define it as something we have rather than something that has us. The peace of Christ is something Christ gave to us (Jn. 14:27), it's not something we attain. Christ's peace first comes with a right relationship with God. That's how he endured hostility and was still at peace. That's what Christ gave to us and that's what rules over our hearts. [DJR]