

Message Ten

**Christ as the Peace between God and God's People
for Their Co-enjoyment in Fellowship to Have the Vital-group Church Life
and to Consummate in the New Jerusalem as the Ultimate Peace Offering**

Scripture Reading: Lev. 3:1-2; 6:12; 7:37; Phil. 4:5-7, 11-13; John 12:1-3

**I. The issue of enjoying Christ as our burnt offering, our meal offering, our sin offering, and our trespass offering is the enjoyment of Christ as the peace offering—
Lev. 3:1-2; 6:12; 7:37:**

- A. We should not try to have peace by our own effort; the more we try in ourselves to have peace, the less peace we will have; the only way to have peace is to enjoy Christ every day—Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 12:3b; Eph. 3:16-17.
- B. Having peace is a measurement to show us to what degree we enjoy Christ—1:2; cf. Matt. 11:28-30.
- C. We should enjoy Christ today and forget about yesterday and about tomorrow—6:25, 34; Phil. 3:13-14; Heb. 3:7-8, 13.

II. Christ is the peace between God and God's people for their co-enjoyment in fellowship—cf. 1 Cor. 1:9:

- A. The one who offered the peace offering was to lay his hand on the head of the offering, signifying the union and identification of the offerer with the offering; our fellowship with Christ is a matter of identification, a matter of us becoming Him and of Him becoming us—Lev. 3:2, 8, 13.
- B. The peace offering is illustrated in Luke 15:23-24 by the fattened calf as a peaceful enjoyment between the receiving father, God, and the returning prodigal son, a sinner.
- C. We need to learn the secret of enjoying Christ as our peace offering—the peace of God, which surpasses every man's understanding—Phil. 4:12, 7; John 16:33:
 - 1. We must learn the secret of how to take Christ as life, how to live Christ, how to magnify Christ, and how to gain Christ in any environment and in any matter—Phil. 4:11-13:
 - a. We need to let our requests be made known *to God*, talking with Him and conferring with Him in everything—vv. 5-6; cf. Josh. 9:14; Prov. 3:5-6.
 - b. "Those who do not know this secret consider to live Christ a difficult thing. Actually, you just need to practice speaking with the Lord constantly; then spontaneously, you will live Christ" (*The Organic Aspect of God's Salvation*, p. 55)—Phil. 1:19-21a.
 - c. The result of practicing fellowship with God in prayer is that the peace of God, God as peace, is infused into us for our enjoyment as the counterpoise to troubles and the antidote to anxiety so that Christ as our forbearance can be known to all men—4:5-7, 9; 1:20; Rom. 8:6; John 16:33:
 - (1) Through our fellowship with God in prayer, we enjoy the Lord as a river of peace and as a comforting mother—Isa. 66:12-13; cf. Gal. 4:26.
 - (2) Through our fellowship with God in prayer, we enjoy the Lord as a refuge from the wind, a covering from the tempest, streams of water in a dry place, and the shadow of a massive rock in a wasted land—Isa. 32:2.
 - 2. The virtues of Christ for our experience in Philippians 4:5-9 are the expression of a life that lives Christ as peace—1:19-21a; 2:5-13; 3:8-10:

- a. Paul considers forbearance and the lack of anxiety as the first two aspects of the expression of a life that lives Christ.
 - b. Anxiety, coming from Satan, is the sum total of human life and disturbs the believers' life of living Christ; forbearance, coming from God, is the sum total of a life that lives Christ; the two are opposites.
3. "Let your forbearance be known to all men. The Lord is near"—4:5:
- a. Forbearance is reasonableness, considerateness, and consideration in dealing with others, without being strict in claiming one's legal rights; forbearance means that we are easily satisfied, even with less than our due.
 - b. According to Christian experience, forbearance is all-inclusive, for it includes all Christian virtues:
 - (1) Forbearance includes love, patience, kindness, humility, compassion, considerateness, and submissiveness, a willingness to yield; if we have such an all-inclusive virtue, we shall also have righteousness and holiness.
 - (2) Forbearance also includes self-control, moderation, gentleness, understanding, sympathy, wisdom, mercy, peacefulness, looking to the Lord, and even the virtue of admitting that the Lord is sovereign in all things.
 - c. A forbearing person is one who always fits in, whose behavior is always suitable—cf. 2 Cor. 6:1a; 10:1; Phil. 1:19; Isa. 11:2.
 - d. If we are forbearing, we shall have the wisdom and the ability to supply others with what they need; we shall also have the full knowledge of what to say to them and when to say it—50:4-5; Col. 1:28.
 - e. To be forbearing is to consider how others will be affected by what we do or say—2 Chron. 1:10.
 - f. As an all-inclusive virtue, forbearance is Christ Himself; since Christ is forbearance, for Paul to live was forbearance—Phil. 1:21a:
 - (1) To let our forbearance be known to all men is to let the Christ whom we live and magnify, whom we take as our pattern and pursue as our goal, be known to all men.
 - (2) Only the Lord Jesus lived a life full of forbearance, and only Christ can be our perfect forbearance today.
 - (3) To make known our forbearance is to live a life that expresses Christ as the totality of all human virtues.
 - g. Immediately after speaking about forbearance, Paul says that the Lord is near:
 - (1) With respect to space, the Lord is near us, ready to help; with regard to time, the Lord is at hand, coming soon—cf. Rom. 10:8-13.
 - (2) The Lord's being near refers primarily to His presence with us—Matt. 1:23.
4. "In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses every man's understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus"—Phil. 4:6-7:
- a. The words *in everything* refer to the many different things that happen to us day by day.
 - b. Prayer is general, having worship and fellowship as its essence; petition is special, being for particular needs; both our prayer and our petition should be accompanied by our giving thanks to the Lord.
 - c. *To God* denotes motion toward, in the sense of a living union and communion, implying fellowship; hence, the sense of *to God* here is "in the fellowship with God."

- d. The God of peace patrols before our hearts and thoughts in Christ, keeping us calm and tranquil; a proper Christian life is a life of calm, tranquility, peace, and quiet (1 Tim. 2:1-2; Isa. 30:15a); the first aspect of a life that lives Christ is tranquility—without rivalry, vainglory, murmurings, or reasonings and without debate, arguing, or fighting with others.
- e. *Let your forbearance be known* is parallel to *let your requests be made known*—Phil. 4:5-6:
 - (1) Our anxiety can be turned into forbearance by bringing every need, every request, to God, and by conversing with Him; we should just tell Him what we need; that is, if we have any worry or anxiety, we should just tell Him.
 - (2) Our letting Him know is our motion toward Him; then His response is His dispensing, His mingling Himself with us, even before He answers our request; the practical mingling of divinity with humanity is carried out by the traffic described in verse 6.
- f. If we would have a life free of anxiety, we need to realize that all our circumstances, good or bad, have been assigned to us by God in order to serve us in fulfilling our destiny to gain Christ, live Christ, and magnify Christ—Rom. 8:28-29; Matt. 10:29-30; 2 Cor. 4:16-18.

III. We need to learn the secret of how to have the vital-group church life as a house of feasting—a feast of Christ as the peace offering—where He and His lovers can have rest and satisfaction—John 12:1-3:

- A. This church life is produced by the resurrection life—11:43-44.
- B. This church life is composed of cleansed sinners—Mark 14:3.
- C. This church life is outwardly poor and afflicted—John 12:1; 16:33.
- D. This church life is a life of feasting in and with the presence of the Lord—12:2; Acts 3:20a.
- E. This church life has more sisters than brothers—John 12:2-3.
- F. In this church life there are the functions of Martha (diligently serving the Lord), Lazarus (testifying of the resurrection life), and Mary (pouring out her absolute love on the Lord)—vv. 2-3, 9-11.

IV. Our enjoyment of Christ as our peace offering in our daily life and in the church life consummates in the New Jerusalem as the ultimate peace offering—Rev. 21:2:

- A. *Jerusalem* means “the foundation of peace.”
- B. The New Jerusalem is the Triune God to be our peace, to be our safety.
- C. The whole New Jerusalem will be an entity of peace.