

Tuesday, August 18, 2020
Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Jim Murr...

**"Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way.
The Lord be with you all."**

2 Thessalonians 3: 16

These were the words with which Paul concluded his second letter to the Thessalonians. This letter contained some teachings that could have been upsetting to those believers. He had talked about Judgment Day and the suffering that unbelievers would begin to experience for all eternity beginning with Jesus' return. He had also talked about a great "Rebellion" that would take place near the end of time. Paul said:

"Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God." (*2 Thessalonians 2: 3-4*)

You can see why Paul might have chosen to end this Epistle with a mention of God's peace. He actually refers to God as "the Lord of peace." I take that to mean that any peace that exists in the world or in my life or in my heart originates with God. Without God, there is no peace. You may have seen the bumper sticker: "No God. No Peace. Know God. Know Peace."

Paul wanted the Thessalonians to have peace at "all times and in every way." In other words, that God would GIVE THEM peace no matter what else was going on. Peace at ALL TIMES and IN EVERY WAY! You and I can have peace at ALL TIMES because the thing that really matters will never change no matter what else changes. The thing that really matters is our relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. Everything else that may seem to be falling apart will absolutely fall apart in the end when Jesus comes in all of His glory. If it feels like things in this world are falling apart, it's not your imagination. In fact, YOU AIN'T SEEN NOTHIN' YET! But God is the God of peace.

It's like if you were to build a house of cards on your Dining Room table in your REAL house, and then one day you bump into the table and the house of cards falls apart. No worries! You're real house is still standing strong. The stuff of this life is a "house of cards." Our real house is our relationship with God and our heavenly home. It will never fall apart.

God also wants us to have peace "in every way." How many ways can we have peace? I'm thinking we can have peace physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Since God is the God of peace, He can give us peace in every way possible. We come to know this peace by, first of all, believing in the power of Jesus' death and resurrection for us. The Bible says, "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." It all starts with knowing that we are at peace with God. Our sins have been forgiven. We now bear the righteousness of God by grace through faith. This peace is the basis for every other kind of peace that we can know.

God is "the God of peace." We know true peace by staying close to Him!

God's Peace to You!
Pastor Jim