

FINDING PEACE WITH GOD.



God has already made his peace with you. Does that surprise you? He made his peace with you 20 centuries ago when Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins and rose from the dead.

The Bible says, “God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, NOT counting men’s sins against them” (2 Corinthians 5:19).

You though, must make YOUR peace with God. This painting, **THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON**, is by Rembrandt, and illustrates making peace with God.

“But I didn’t think I was at odds with God,” many say. Perhaps not at a conscious level, though I have met people who do hate God, blaming him for their troubles.

But perhaps you are one of those folks who are “just fine” with the idea of God being there. In fact, from time to time you might even pray or go to church.

You hope to put off death as long as possible, but you figure you are as good as the next person (no one is perfect, after all) so why

shouldn’t you find yourself in heaven one day? At least, this is how many think about the matter.

It is painfully ironic that the greatest thing EVER done by God for humanity is so often greeted with a “ho - hum.” So I need to spell it out. This is the part I don’t like when sharing the Gospel. You must first know your PERIL before you can appreciate your RESCUE.

At some point in your life, you knew God existed. Nature itself reveals there is a Creator.

Yet, even though deep down you knew God existed, you deliberately pushed that awareness aside so you could do what you knew to be wrong. You did this deliberately.

That is what the Bible calls “sin.” You are not alone. We all have done this.

Furthermore, rather than seek what might have pleased God, you determined instead to please yourself.

Rather than give honor and thanks to God, you gave yourself the credit and glory. When you did wrong and suffered for it, you blamed God or others.

It is not a pretty picture. It gets worse.

Jesus said, “It is from WITHIN, out of the heart of man, that comes evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, filthiness, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from WITHIN and defile a man” (Mark 7:20-21).

Your problem is not just the bad things you have done, for which God holds you accountable. It is what is INSIDE you.

Your heart is unconverted. You do not have the love of God in your heart.

If you are still reading, unfortunately there is worse yet. Again, I hate this part of the message, but it is essential that you grasp it. The message itself is really very, very good news. I take no pleasure in stating hard truths, but love demands it.

Unless your heart is changed by God, you would not survive being in heaven. You would hate it. Heaven is filled with holy angels, holy people, and a holy God. The only place suitable for people with unholy hearts is hell.

Furthermore, the devil despises you. He has succeeded (so far) in keeping you from God. The more humans wind up in hell, the happier he will be.

The devil has worked in your life to cloud your thinking and keep you from God.

Do you remember the times you thought about praying, or reading the Bible, or going to church, but at the last minute, it felt like a burden, and you chose to do something instead? That was not a coincidence. It was part of a plan.

Until you make YOUR peace with God, you are an orphan who does not know his real Father. You are held captive to sin, you are being manipulated by the devil, and you are destined for the punishment due the wicked.

YOU NEED NOT REMAIN IN DARKNESS THOUGH.

The Bible says, "God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whosoever believes in him shall NOT perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but to SAVE the world through him" (John 3:16-17).

Notice the promise above is NOT "whosoever deserves God," nor "whosoever tries really hard to be good," nor "whosoever does things for God."

No, the promise of God is that whosoever TRUSTS JESUS CHRIST, will come OUT of eternal darkness into eternal life. Right now.

You will be forgiven all your sins. God will view you as righteous, for Jesus' sake. You will experience Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, coming to live inside your body with you.

You will escape the domination of the devil. You will experience the companionship of God, who will NEVER leave you. Ever.

When the time comes for you to die, you will step into Paradise, escorted by angels. You will see Jesus face-to-face and reign with him forever.

WHAT IS IT THEN, TO TRUST JESUS CHRIST?

There are different aspects to trusting Jesus, but I want to assure you they all happen pretty much simultaneously.

To trust Jesus, you first acknowledge that he exists, that he died on the cross for your sins, that he rose from the dead, and that he is LORD, right now, of EVERYTHING in heaven and earth.

To trust Jesus, you COUNT on his death on the cross being sufficient to make you right with God.

You do not try to punish yourself with guilt (though remorse is appropriate), nor try to "make up" for your sins by NOW doing things for God.

You trust JESUS and not your good intentions or good deeds. You seek to obey Jesus because you recognize Jesus as God and love him.

To trust Jesus is to surrender to his complete authority and care. You give Jesus permission to run your life.

You confess your sins and ask to be free of them. You invite Jesus into your life to transform you into what he wants you to become.

To trust Jesus means you surrender not only to his control, but also to his teaching. You give up living by your own inspiration, and instead yield to his direction.

You begin to TRUST Jesus with everything -- going to heaven, as well as your car payment.

These many thoughts are all wrapped up in one big idea, namely, to make your peace with God...

YOU ENTRUST YOURSELF TO JESUS CHRIST WITH THE INTENTION OF FOLLOWING HIM.

The video below will lead you in a prayer to entrust yourself to Jesus Christ. Thank you for hearing me out. Feel free to message me with any questions you may have.

<https://www.facebook.com/BanksPresbyterian/videos/1539516759424669/>