



Sermon Growth Guide

November 21, 2021

Good Medicine – Morapax

Galatians 5:13-26

Key Verse: Galatians 5:24 “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”

Big Idea: God offers you His very peace, not a second best.

Foundations

Love, joy and peace. This week, peace. The Holy Spirit delights in growing God’s very peace in your very core.

Jesus makes this promise in John 16:33: “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” How is it that both are true—trouble in this world and the peace of God within us? We see the full measure of the reality of this statement on the cross. On the cross, Jesus demonstrates the truth of Isaiah 26:3: “You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.”

The core of Pastor Tim’s sermon this week centers on the believer receiving the very peace of God in a world full of trouble. Tim concludes his sermon this week highlighting that to walk in the peace of God in this present darkness is to raise a flag of utter defiance to the prince of this age. As the Holy Spirit grows His peace in your life, you walk as an ambassador of another Kingdom, you wave another flag. Where others turn to hatred, discord, fits of rage, dissensions and factions, you turn in God’s peace to His Kingdom and His righteousness.

Open your time this week sharing your lives together. Where do you need the peace of God to invade your world? Pray together.

Understanding God’s Word

Together, read Galatians 5:13–26.

Our text opens with the topic of freedom. Host a conversation on how Scripture instructs us to use our freedom.

In verse 16, what is the solution to not giving in to “the desires of the flesh?”

Take time to encourage one another. Using the Fruit of the Spirit in verses 22 and 23, point out in one another where the Spirit’s fruit is clearly growing in those around you.

Applying God’s Word

Verse 24 states that “those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” What does the crucifixion of your flesh look like in your own life? What practical step ought you take to continue living by the Spirit and not the flesh?

Witnessing God’s Word

Now that you are living in the Spirit and not in the flesh, God offers you His very peace, not a second best, but His very peace. How can you live as one to whom the very peace of God has been given to this week? Do those around you know that you have the peace of God?

Morapax. You've got this one. More-a-Peace! In our short little **Good Medicine** series as we round the corner to Thanksgiving, we are giving thanks for the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. Love, Joy, and Peace. We need more peace. Usually we train preachers, "At the beginning of the message, you need to convince your listeners why the message you are about to preach is worth listening to—why do they need this thing you're talking about." Do I need to spend a lot of time doing that today? Do we need a lot of evidence? We need more peace. We need a place to stand and find peace. Peace flying in from overhead and landing on our homes. Peace underneath us like a solid rock and firm foundation. Peace welling up within us. The contention of our passage this morning is that peace, one of the nine fruit of the Spirit, is something that God is building into your life as you abide in Jesus Christ, like branches to the vine. The Spirit of God is flowing into your life, through your veins, like sap to the ends of the branches carrying vitality, nutrients, and building blocks, all the way out to the very ends where eventually, in time, in season—maybe not right now, maybe not this instant or this afternoon, but soon—in season, the fruit of peace will appear. More peace.

Now, what are the promises of Jesus? Does Jesus promise a perfectly peace-filled life? No. In this world you will have trouble, he said. Tribulation. Pain. But also peace. "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). We were nearby this verse last week. Jesus lived the perfect life. Jesus did not have a trouble-free life. But Jesus had perfect peace. One day the disciples were in a boat out on the Sea of Galilee in a storm. The boat was pitching and rocking over the waves, water coming in over the bow, over the gunwales, and Jesus was asleep in the back! Perfect peace.

J. B. Phillips wrote, "It is refreshing, and salutary, to study the poise and quietness of Christ. His task and responsibility might well have driven a man out of his mind. But He was never in a hurry, never impressed by numbers, never a slave of the clock." Read the stories of Jesus in the Gospels. Is he ever running late? Is he ever rushing, hurrying, distracted? When we find Jesus troubled in spirit, he is troubled in spirit at seeing how troubled we are in spirit! Jesus truly embodies that verse in Isaiah, "You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you" (Isaiah 26:3 ESV). Jesus never promised that in your life all around you would be peaceful; he promised that whatever you are facing in life you would be full of peace. His peace. In that same talk, in John, he said "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27). My peace I give to you. See that?

In his book, *Anxious for Nothing*, Max Lucado writes, "He bestows upon us the peace of God. Note, this is not a peace *from* God. Our Father gives us the very peace *of* God. He downloads the tranquility of the throne room into our world, resulting in an inexplicable calm. We should be worried, but we aren't. We should be upset, but we are comforted. The peace of God transcends all logic, scheming, and efforts to explain it. This kind of peace is not a human achievement. It is a gift from above." I want to tap into that kind of peace. I want to, no matter what's happening in my life, be present to the peace of God and have the peace of God present in me. It is the third fruit of the Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law" (Galatians 5:22–23). And that's our passage this morning.

Interestingly, it begins with freedom.



Galatians is sometimes called the Freedom Letter. “You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other” (Galatians 5:13–15). God, in Christ, purchases your freedom. You are free. God walks up to the cage, the cell you find yourself locked inside, breaks the locks, tears the bars out of the wall and says, “You are free!” Hooray! What should I do now? What should I use my freedom for? Right here you are choosing between peace and turmoil, between calm and chaos, between serenity and anxiety. Either you choose to serve yourself in your freedom, to indulge your flesh it says, or you choose to love God and love neighbor. If you use your freedom to indulge your flesh, to seek your own pleasure and convenience and desires, you will pitch yourself into chaos. If you live in God’s ways, God has so ordered the world that to live his ways in wisdom keeps you from many disastrous effects. Not all! But many. So, pick. Which way? “So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16). The two are in conflict with one another. We don’t want conflict. We want peace. Conflict we have. Conflict we have in spades. It’s not hard to rustle up some conflict. Peace is the value.

Then we get the list. This is the bad list. This is the list we don’t like so much. “The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery” (Galatians 5:19). That’s just the start. When our own desires, the gratification of our own flesh, is the top value, these are the things that kick in. They promise fun. They promise satisfaction. They shine real bright, but they make you blind in the end, sick and regretful. They hurt you; they hurt others. The list goes on, idolatry—putting up something

that’s not God in the place of God. Itchcraft, trying to manipulate spiritual powers. Hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage. Are these the plants you want in your garden? Is this what we want in our lives? Then why are you watering those seeds? Selfish ambition; me above everybody. If it works for me, it works. If it doesn’t work for me, forget my past commitments, forget my promises and my relationships—the minute it doesn’t work for me...Bye! I’m out. Dissensions, factions and envy. It is amazing what we are fighting about these days. Let me find my faction. Let me jump into my bunker with my buddies. Let me tell you stories and rumors about those people over there, those people we are against now! Drunkenness, orgies, and the like. This isn’t the Kingdom of God. We all try this stuff. Can I be honest? We all try some of this stuff. I think during COVID we have become experts at it! Dissensions. Factions. Hatred. Fits of rage. Did it give you peace? To quote America’s favorite mustachioed counselor, “How’s that going for you?” That’s the soil in the flowerpot, that’s the ... well, the rich, organic-based, natural fertilizer (can I put it that way?). That’s the mess that there is plenty of out there in the world, out of which God grows a rose. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law” (Galatians 5:22–23). Which one do you want to pick? Which way do you want to go? “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Galatians 5:24). That’s decisive. I crucify the flesh. I kill that track. I crucify that direction in my life. No more of that! Dead to me! “Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit” (Galatians 5:25). More peace. The peace of Christ.

Today is a special day for us. Today is the last Sunday Jim DeJarnette will lead us in worship alone in the Sanctuary. Next week Jamal Sarikoki will start up with



us! Jim will be here and lead a bit and pass the baton over to Jamal. We are excited for that future! And we are so grateful for 39 years of faithful service. So, you would think I'm saying all this as a nicety, an homage to my friend Jim, but I genuinely mean this—Jim is an illustration of calm in the middle of the storm. I knew it from the moment I arrived. All can be chaos. A madhouse! Then Jim walks out, lifts his arms, and... viola! Order. Harmony. Seriously, Jim and I in five, almost six, years have navigated many challenges together. We have navigated big changes at work. We have seen some challenging family events, fearful accidents, persistent illnesses, all of that stuff. COVID being the most challenging. Our choir stopped functioning entirely for 14 months! How does a man of God find peace in the middle of the mess? How does a follower of Jesus show steady, calm resolve in the face of absolute madness? Jim is a picture of it. With a heart open to Jesus, you can have a measure of the peace of Christ, a supernatural, alien peace, downloaded from heaven.

Max Lucado again wrote, "Jesus promises you his vintage of peace! The peace that calmed his heart when he was falsely accused. The peace that steadied his voice when he spoke to Pilate. The peace that kept his thoughts clear and heart pure as he hung on the cross. This was his peace. This can be your peace." Your life won't be peaceful, but in your life, you will be full of peace when you rest your life in Jesus. Jesus has won your peace.

Love. Joy. Peace. Jesus took on the hatred so you could know love. Jesus took on the sadness so you could know joy. Jesus became the victim of all the world's chaotic, spinning vitriol and hatred—all that stuff we read about, dissension, envy, jealousy, discord, fits of rage, it all came down on Jesus, it all came down on his shoulders on his way to the cross. We are good people; we

are reasonable people. Why don't we just resolve to make peace? Why don't we just insist on it and do it? We can't. But Jesus can. Isaiah spoke of a coming Messiah, a suffering servant, one from God who would absorb the hostility of the world to bring peace. Looking ahead hundreds of years before Jesus was even born, Isaiah wrote: "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). The punishment that brought us peace. How can we find peace in turmoil? A place to stand firm in the middle of the storm? A full night's sleep in a world so spun up and twisted? In Jesus. Jesus won it for you.

Love, Joy, Peace. Are these small things? Little candy gumdrops to distract us from the bitterness of the real world? Or is this the force for good we need? Strength straight from Jesus. What if every follower of Christ, starting today, what if every man, woman and child who calls on the name of Jesus was full of love, joy, and peace? The people who know them at work, the friends a school, they could not help but see on their faces a generous spirit of love, even for enemies, a wellspring of joy and exuberance for life even when things are tough, an extra-worldly serenity and calm while standing on the deck of a ship that is itching and rolling and sliding through wind and waves of an intolerably hostile and chaotic world. Love, Joy, Peace. This is warrior talk, my friends. This is Kingdom language. This is protest and infiltration and subversion in the name of our invading King Jesus. Take up the fruit of the Spirit of God.

