

Episode #16 – Jesus, Prince of Peace - SageTalk

Paul Lawler: Al. I'm so thankful to be able to have the conversation today that we're going to have and to talk about the peace of God, the peace of Jesus Christ. I remember when I came to Christ, one of the things that I was just amazed and just in awe of was the peace, the absolute peace that filled my heart. And you grow jealous for other people to be able to know this peace, and so it's this topic today of peace in the heart, the mind, the soul that God offers to people that we have the privilege of engaging in conversation around, and hopeful it'll be helpful to those listening today as well.

Al Henson: Me too, Paul. I'm just glad to be with you, with Jesus, and with that brother, that sister, young or old that God has directed to listen to the podcast today. And our hearts for Sage Talk is and continues to be that God may use something that we say to help bring someone closer to Christ, to spiritual growth, to development, to spiritual fatherhood, to transformation. And last week we were taking a few weeks here and bringing some of the names that God has given himself and taking those names, and what do they say to us about God, and about us and our need. And then how do we experience that aspect of God. Last week was Emmanuel, God with us, and this week Christ that is with us is also the Prince of Peace. And so we're going to be speaking about peace today and sharing just out of our lives and our knowledge of God and the scriptures, some thoughts that we hope and believe that will be helpful to those brothers and sisters that that are listening in.

As you're listening, one of our prayers is that as you're listening and you hear something that that may be you have a friend or a brother or sister that you think this would benefit. This is God's work. This is God's podcast through us, and we're just simple servants of the Lord. And so we'd encourage you. You know, our prayer is God use this to speak to someone who might share it with someone else that God might speak to, who might share it with someone else that God might speak to. And so, you know, this is the way of the kingdom. It's organic. It's person to person as God is working and moving in and changing lives.

Paul: Al, as a pastor, I've noticed through the years that a hunger for peace is not something restricted to one particular age group. I notice this hunger among senior citizens, people at midlife. I notice this hunger among young people. But it's certainly relevant for a time like this in the hearts of so many people.

Al Henson: In our last podcast, we talked about the work of sin and how that sin, mars and damages the soul, and where God created man and woman to be people of peace, and to have peace with God and with each other, Adam and Eve and God in the garden. Peace. But sin entered into that and when sin entered and peace was gone. You find them afraid and even ashamed. And when the Bible mentions that they realized they were naked, that means they began to have feelings of condemnation and shame and fear. They were trying to hide themselves from God.

And in our culture today where the family unit is lessening and more families are broken and are not functioning, dysfunctional families. And there's so much anger and bitterness. Then sin is running more rampant in its work of fear and shame. And so we have a lot of anxiousness. But this is not new even to the followers of Jesus. I think

about in Matthew in chapter six, the disciples, they were worried and full of anxiousness. They were worried. They were following Jesus, and where were they going to get food to eat, and where were they going to get close to wear?

And Jesus spoke to them and said, don't you know that I, the Prince of Peace, God, I take care of the lilies of the field and look how I array them. And I take care of the ravens and I feed them. And how much more do I love you, and how much more do I care for you? And he said, don't worry. Why are you thinking about these things and so worried about these things? Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all of these things will be added unto you.

So today we're going to talk some about the Prince of Peace and what that actually means, and how then to find peace and bring peace into our own lives that will also strengthen, and our own transformation and growth and development.

Paul: That's so good. And you know, we cited this a moment ago, but really peace is a person and his name is Jesus. And you know if you've ever read Romans five you recognize that in order to know the peace of God, we first must be at peace with God. And so to be at peace with God certainly begins with the gift of the gospel.

Al Henson: I want to make sure that brothers, sisters, you're listening, that you heard what Paul said. We have the potential and the possibilities of experiencing the conditions of peace, because there is first the person of peace. And what I have found in listening to many messages and teaching is that people are trying to find the condition of peace, and they can't find the condition of peace without first finding the person of peace. And as you've quoted Romans in chapter five, if you're going to find the person of peace, I'd like to put that in two different categories. One is finding the person of peace in salvation, that sin has separated us from God and through the power of the gospel, the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, then one can be reconciled back to God. In Romans five, one, we can have peace that comes by faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. So that's peace. That's that eternal peace with God about our eternity and the forgiveness of sin.

But the second is this daily peace. Philippians, in chapter four will speak about that. Be anxious for nothing. And I'm saying, Lord, that's really hard in our culture. Be anxious for nothing. I find many, many things that I am tempted to be anxious about. But he says, be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication, let your request be made known to God and then the peace of God. There it goes. It's not your peace, but how do I experience Christ, the Prince of Peace? The peace of God is God himself. Peace with God.

And I'd like for us, Paul, if we could just to talk a little bit about... It's my understanding when I think of what we're sharing in the scriptures and my experiences with God, that peace has so much to do with relationships, and that through the gospel we not only can be at peace with God relationally, but through the gospel we have the ability to be at peace one with another. So I think it's really important today that brother and sister be not thinking as much about the emotions of peace, or the attitudes of peace, or the

characteristics of peace, but how do I experience the Prince of Peace that I might then through him be reconciled to God and then be reconciled one to another.

Paul: That's so good. You know, when you share that, Al, one of the things that comes to mind is I've watched people who are brand new believers when they've experienced the mercy of God, the grace of God, and they thereby experience his peace through the power of the Holy spirit. I've watched new believers many times immediately reach out to people they've wounded and make peace with them. I was wrong. I am sorry, will you forgive me? And just as they've received mercy, began to extend mercy to others and to labor for Christ centered reconciliation. And the point is, is that the peace that they began to labor for is enduring because it's both vertical and horizontal, and it's 360 degrees in nature. And it's a true peace. It's not a peace that glosses things over, but it's a peace that endures because has roots in Christ and it has roots in valuing people and relationships.

Al Henson: And I think, Paul, that to make this very practical, we have to think in terms of what stood between us and God? And what also stands between us and our fellow human being, or our mate, or our children? And the gospel is the power to bring down what stands between us, you know between us and God was our sin and the things that we had done. And so it took a tremendous measure of repentance, or humility and faith combined together to trust in God and to come to God and say, God, I agree with you. There's this wall between us, and God, you didn't build the wall. I built the wall. And I think the same thing until peace came. When we come to God and the gospel takes that wall down and cleanses us and forgives us and God can embrace us and we can embrace him. We're reconciled and have peace.

The same thing with human beings. The same principle. I was with a brother in the last few months, came to know him. He's come to know Christ in the latter part of his life. I think maybe he's in his seventies, early seventies, around 70. And he came to me and he said, help me. You could just sense a peace that he has in his life, with him and God. But he said, my children, I kept them out of church and I've made many mistakes, and now I'm trying to tell them a little bit about Jesus, and they don't want to hear anything I got to say about Christ. And so I just listened for a while and you could tell the sincerity of this brother's heart. And he asked me, he said, can you pray with me for my children? I said, yes, I can pray, but after we pray there's some things you can do.

And so we prayed and he said, okay, what can I do? I said, talk to me about what you did in relationship to God. And he said, well, I humbled myself for the first time. I swallowed my pride. And I said, I needed you, God and I trusted you. And I said, okay, that's what you've got to do with your children. Don't tell them the gospel. Don't preach the gospel to them. Go be the gospel to them.

Paul: That's good.

Al Henson: And he said, well, what does that mean? And I said, well, that means you just told me that you've made mistakes. Go. And he talked about his children living in three different locations in America now. I said, just go to each one in God's timing and God's way, and

it's going to be difficult because you've got to have to step across fears and pride and anxiousness. And I could tell he was feeling a lot of anxiousness when it came to his family and burden for their eternities and all of that. And I said, just go to them, and don't feel like you have to tell them about the death, burial, resurrection of Jesus, that you have to preach the gospel to them. Just go to them and look at your son and say, son, I love you and I'm sorry. I've made mistakes. And list a few of those mistakes, just list them and say, son, I've come to you and God has forgiven me and I'd love to have your forgiveness. And I'd love to have you forgiveness because I also would love to continue to build a relationship with you.

Well, he believed. He had a lot of fear and had a lot of anxiousness, but he accepted that. Next thing I know he's asking me to pray because he's got him three different airplane flights over the next few weeks. And so he would go to one and come home and I'd meet with him. Go to the second. And he said, God has heard my prayers. He said, all of my children, I have a peace with them. I'm not sure yet if they're at peace with him, but he's at least at peace with them. And you could tell the difference even though he's still has burden for them, there was a joy in knowing he's done the right thing. And he was able to share, all of my kids are now listening to me at a different level.

And see, sometimes we talk about relationships and reconciliation. But it really comes in living out the gospel and the gospel is a life of humility and the willingness to be honest and open in love and genuineness before people.

Paul: You know, as you share that, that's a moving story. And as you share that, Al, there's another rubric that comes to mind around the Prince of Peace and healing relationships. And it's relationships between husbands and wives. And a real quick story. In a church not too far from here, not long ago, a pastor gave an invitation to know Christ. And there were people who came to the altar. And among the people that came to the altar to surrender to Christ was a husband who was headed toward divorce court. But only probably 40 feet away, he didn't know his wife was there. And she didn't know he was there, and she was at the altar as well surrendering to Christ. And when the time of prayer ended, when they both stood, immediately their eyes met and without a word being spoken, they said they both knew that their marriage was healed.

And what it illustrates for us is that is this. A man will not properly relate to his wife until he first properly relates to God. And a woman will not properly relate to her husband unless she first properly relates to God. And in that proper relation, let's be mindful that this is the Prince of Peace reigning in the heart, who gives life and who leads us to live out this gospel that reconciles, and heals, and brings a true peace.

Al Henson: And that's this Romans five says, therefore being justified by faith. And I'm thinking this brother and sister that's listening in, they're saying, well, you don't know my mate. Or you don't know my situation and it might've worked for them, but it won't work for me. And I'd like to say to that person, I don't know at what level it'll work, but that's God's responsibility. Your responsibility is out of faith and love, to out of love and brokenness and humility, just go do the right thing. I tell people it's only God that can change people

and it's only the power of his gospel that can change people. The only question you need to ask is not, will this make a difference? Is I want to obey God in a right way, in humility and love. And so I would say to that listener, you know, don't say much until you try it.

And then just, by faith, step through your fears and your anxiousness and try it. And even though that listener that may be listening that's experiencing a lot of inward anxiety and maybe depression and things, I would encourage them get quiet and just go before the Lord and say to him, I know I've just been listening and I know based on Isaiah, I think it's nine, six that you were quoting the Prince of Peace. Isaiah nine chapter six. One of those things you are, Jesus is the Prince of Peace. And I don't have peace. And so I've coming to the person of peace and say to Jesus, Jesus, is there anything between you and I that's preventing me from experiencing your peace? And don't go on what I would call a witch hunt. There's nowhere in the scripture that the Bible necessarily says, search your own heart. The Bible actually says, Lord, you search my heart.

Paul: That's right.

Al Henson: And so just go to the Lord, in an unveiled face as we've been learning about, in humility and just say, God, what's preventing me from experiencing your peace? And ask him to show you that. And then humbly say, okay God, I agree. That's what confession means. I agree God with you. And you don't even have to be able to do anything about it. Just agree with him. And what I've learned about confession, there's not only the, what I call the negative side of confession, which is yes, I'm wrong. But there's the positive side of confession. God, you are right. God, you are right when you say you'll forgive me. God, you are right when you say that you will heal me. So there's the faith that not only agrees with God about what needs to be put off or broken down or what we need to be released from, but more of what we need to be released into. And into the presence of God, into the presence of the Prince of Peace, comes peace.

Paul: Al, you said something a moment ago that I think I just want to take a moment and reinforce to somebody who's listening. You referenced that there's somebody who, a person sometimes goes, you know, I've tried that. I've tried that, I've tried that. And I'm thinking of the woman who had the issue of blood for 12 years, the woman who was bent over with the ailment for 18 years, and their experience. What that illustrates for us in scripture is that their experience potentially could condition them to believe that there was no hope.

But then there was Jesus. And I want to remind someone who may be listening today. You may have been conditioned by what you have experienced from years, and you are believing the lie that there's no hope. And if we might say or speak into your heart, there is hope and it is a person, and his name is Jesus. And as you've illustrated, come before him. Come before him, get still, get quiet. Let him search your heart. And come in a spirit of confession, and let him get things right in your own heart. Let the Prince of Peace draw near and bring life.

Al Henson: As I listened to that, the spirit has just given me a thought that might help someone to believe. You know, the great teaching of this age of grace is that Colossians one, 27: Christ in you the hope of glory. And it literally means it's Christ in you that is the hope of you being glorious. And one of the aspects of being glorious is being a person of peace. That you might be at peace so that you can become a peacemaker. And so as you're listening, I want you just, if you could, I want you to see yourself. I want you to see yourself first, Christ in you, and then you and Christ.

And based on what you're hearing, he is the Prince of Peace. So you have in you the Prince of Peace and you are in the Prince of Peace. So positionally you are in peace. And if you're in it, then you have the great potential and the desire of God that you can experience it. You can experience him and his peace, and the only issue needs to be what is keeping me from experiencing that peace? What lie, what unbelief? Or that I'm not willing to say those words that are so hard to say, I'm wrong.

Paul: That's good.

Al Henson: I'm just wrong, Lord. And I don't want to... I would rather say I'm wrong so that I can be right. I really just want to be right. I want to be right with God. I want to be right with man. And it starts here and often, I can say being right with God starts with a simple humble, I am wrong. The story I told about the 70 year old. He had no problem. I knew it was going to be easy to help him because he came to me and said, I've wronged my children.

And I said, yeah, he's going to be easy to help. Now if he can just find the grace to go tell him, and God will work in that. And God is not a respecter of persons, my brother, if you're listening, my sister, if you're listening. God doesn't love anyone else any more than he loves you. And God doesn't have a better plan for someone else's life than he has for you. And all of Jesus that was available to Apostle Paul is available to you. So believe that, humble yourself, and come to the Prince of Peace that you might have peace.

Paul: Yes, yes. Al, as we wrap up today, why don't we take just a moment to pray for persons who are just longing for the peace of God.

Al Henson: Yeah. Let's do that. You do that Paul.

Paul: Father, first we thank you that you're good. You're great, but you're good in your way you express yourself into our circumstances. And so God, we pray for the heart that's longing for peace. First, Lord, through the gift of the grace of your gospel, our sins being forgiven in Christ, our being reconciled to you. But God, we also pray for the person that is full of anxiousness. And so we pray the words of first Peter, cast all your anxiety upon the Lord for he cares for you. Lord, we acknowledge that sheep are not load bearing animals. And so as the sheep of your pasture, we pray, Oh Lord, lift burdens, lift worry. Lord, liberate in a way that men and women, young people, know life in you perhaps like never before, as we cast anxiety upon you and know joy in your peace, Lord, in this day and in the days to come. And we pray it in the name and power of Jesus. Amen.

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Al Henson: Amen. Amen.