

**Held Together:
The Peace that Holds It All Together
Colossians 3:15**

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Text Introduction: We are working our way through the book of Colossians. A key phrase of Colossians comes in Colossians 1:17, “And by Him all things hold together.” I love this phrase. This phrase speaks to the preeminence of Jesus. He is all things. If He is all things, He must be first place in my life.

We have now moved on to the application section of this letter. I want to draw our attention to just one verse of Scripture. We looked at this verse in its larger context last week. It is certainly a message we need to hear and to heed. Quite simply, we said that there are some things that should not be part of a Christian’s life and some other things that must be part of a Christian’s life.

I want us to drill down on just one of these verses today. When I sat down to plan my preaching for the fall, I knew that in the midst of what was turning out to be a very contentious and uncertain political season that we would need weekly a reminder that “He holds us all together.” I did not know that we would have the added burden of historical flooding. That added to the ongoing economic downturn in our region all has made this book a very timely study for us.

As I worked on my preaching plan, I believed that God would have a word for us in this one verse on the Sunday before our nation goes to the voting booth once again. In this world of great angst and sometimes doomsday panic, this verse provides a needed balance from the ONE who is sovereign in all things.

Text: ¹⁵ And let the peace of the Messiah, to which you were also called in one body, control your hearts. Be thankful.

Introduction: H. G. Wells, author of *The War of the Worlds*, as well as many other works, is reported to have said, “Here I am at sixty-five, still seeking for peace.” Though maybe not voiced exactly that way, I wonder how many other people have felt the exact same thing. Our world is made up of billions seeking peace. The good news is that we have the promise of peace in Jesus.

- He was prophesied by Isaiah as the “Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6)
- The angels declared the night of His birth, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people He favors.” (Luke 2:14)
- Jesus, Himself, said, “Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Your heart must not be troubled or fearful. (John 14:27)
- And Paul declared right here in this letter, “and through Him to reconcile everything to Himself by making peace through the blood of His cross—whether things on earth or things in heaven. (Colossians 1:20)

As believers in Christ, we can and should have peace.

Think about four truths we discover in this one verse and then we will look at a word of application.

- **Real peace comes through the message about Christ.**

This thought about peace begins with the words, “And let the peace of the Messiah.” The route to peace is very specific. Jesus spoke about this peace just before His death. He told His disciples. “I have told you these things that in Me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world.” These things refer to the place called Heaven that He has prepared, the power of prayer that He invites us to, the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit that He promised, and the specific plan that He gave us to go to Him. He said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one goes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6)

Then, Jesus modelled that peace on the cross. He said, “Father, not my will, but yours be done.” At his last, He prayed, “Into your hands I commit my spirit.”

You can search for peace through any avenue, but real peace comes through the message about the Messiah, Christ Jesus the Lord.

- **Real peace is the calling of the members of the body of Christ.**

I find this very interesting in this passage. This verse calls us to an individual peace, but this verse also calls us to a corporate—collective—peace. This is our calling. We are to experience peace, and we can through the message about the Messiah. But, understand that we are called to peace. The church is called to exhibit peace. The church ought to be leading the way in peace. I’m afraid that too often we lead the way in a collective panic. Think about this. If we—people who have faith, people who pray, people who believe that God hears, people who believe that God is the One ultimately in control—if we do not exhibit peace, who can?

People ought to routinely ask us, “Why are you so calm? How do you hold it all together? Why are you not falling apart?”

- **Real peace controls the mind of the Christian.**

The word translated, “control” in the translation I read from is a great word. It literally is pulled from the sporting world in that ancient Greek culture. It has the connotation of “umpire” so that we could literally read “Let the peace of Christ be the umpire in your hearts.” Umpires are decisive. You don’t see umpires hesitate. Umpires are confident. Umpires are most necessary when they have to make hard and close calls.

The peace of God should control our minds in that same way.

- **Real peace causes thanksgiving that is a mystery to others.**

After the imperative of “letting peace control our hearts” we get the imperative to “Be thankful.” The route to thanksgiving is peace. Our thanksgiving should be the result of the kind of peace that Paul wrote about in Philippians 4:7. “And the peace of God, which surpasses every thought (understanding), will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

So What?

The only way to have the *peace of God* is to have *peace with God*.

The bottom line is this. You can look for peace everywhere. You can look for peace in the pleasures of this world, in other people, in possessions, in power, even in religion, but you will only find peace in Jesus. Until you turn away from your sin by turning to Jesus for peace in this life and for the certainty of eternal life, you will never know peace. Peace is knowing Jesus for abundant life on the earth and eternal life in Heaven.

- **Peace with past because of forgiveness through Christ**
- **Peace in present because of the power of Christ**
- **Peace about future because of victory of Christ**

Everybody knows what Tuesday is. Do you know what tomorrow is? Tomorrow (November 7) Billy Graham will be 98 years old. In 1953 he wrote a book he titled, *Peace with God*. In that book Graham wrote, "Until you actually possess true peace with God, no one can describe its wonder to you."

That book has been scaled down to a gospel tract. The Gospel tract called Steps to Peace with God.

- God's Plan--God loves you and wants you to experience peace and life—eternal and abundant.
- Our Problem—Separation—Being at peace with God is not automatic, because by nature you are separated from God.
- God's Remedy—The Cross— God's love bridges the gap of separation between God and you. When Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose from the grave, He paid the penalty for your sins.
- Our Response—Receive Christ—You cross the bridge into God's family when you receive Christ by personal invitation. To receive Christ you need to do four things: 1. ADMIT your spiritual need. "I am a sinner." 2. REPENT and be willing to turn from your sin. 3. BELIEVE that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross. 4. RECEIVE, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and life.

I don't know who wins Tuesday, and I don't know the ultimate consequences of what happens because who wins, but I do know who wins in the end and what those ultimate consequences are.

Do you remember the name Karla Faye Tucker? A few years ago, she was at the center of a major controversy. An inmate on Texas' Death Row for a brutal murder with an ax, Karla Faye Tucker became a Christian while in prison. She spoke quite eloquently of her conversion. She described the dramatic change in her life when she became a Christian, believing that the death that He died for sin covered even the sin of her heinous crime. The way she lived in prison gave credibility to her conversion. In fact, you could argue that she had more peace than the thousands who argued over whether she should die by lethal injection. Even in her final words, she said, "I am so sorry. I hope God will give you peace with this. I am going to be face to face with Jesus now. I love you all very much. I will see you all when you get there." A reporter described her demeanor as calm and composed. Even in the worst of circumstances, Karla Faye Tucker died with what most people long to have—peace. Peace for the sins of the past. Peace for the present crisis. Peace for a future that is surely going to lead to death. That peace is only found in Jesus.