

I. Opening Testimonies and Introduction

All right. Well, I'm Mike, and this is Kathleen. I was sick for New Year's Eve, and we missed it, but it was a great time. God blessed it. Our boys came over, and we got to be with them as a family, and so that was truly a blessing for us. God had a reason.

Anyway, our testimony is that I was raised as a Roman Catholic. I got saved through Bob's ministry at Kansas City Baptist Temple. I was just going to interject because I go off on rabbit trails. I thought I was saved my whole life, and so then in Bob's ministry, I was like, "You know what? I just got to make sure." And so then I got saved, and then a little bit after that, we got baptized at the same time, just to make sure I was obeying.

So anyway, we spent about ten years at Kansas City Baptist Temple under Bob's ministry. The preaching and the teaching were just phenomenal, his leadership. I'd never heard anything like that ever. I went to Catholic Church, and I remember sitting on his hat as a little kid. As a kid, I always wanted more. They get into the Word, the stories, a little bit, and before you know it, they're up and down again.

Years later, we get married, and we're having some problems in our relationship. So I'm like, "Man, I got to have something else." So I'm going to go back to church because we had been out of church. That's why I just love you guys because you're so awesome. You didn't look at us like, "Oh, you've been out of church." You were just like, "Really? Ain't got that far? Yeah, well, I'm there." Okay, patience.

Anyway, we had some problems. I went to Catholic Church looking for the answer, and it was not there. She had an aunt that was going to Kansas City Baptist Temple. So I thought, "You know, I'm going to try that church. I need something else." So I go, and that's the first time someone said, "You know, if you were to die tonight, would you go to heaven?" I knew, "Man, that's not me." So through that, through the process of time, I get saved, and things are going well for us.

Well, some events happened at Kansas City Baptist Temple. We leave that church, and we started other churches with Grace out in the Lee's Summit area. We're out there for a while, and some things happen that, you know, it's like, "This is not the place to be." So we move on. In the process of time, we take about three or four years looking for another church that we could call home. There were a lot of things going on, and we think we're doing the right thing. We camped out in a few churches to call home, and it's just like, "This is not it, man." It's something interesting. We should be able to, because the people that had in the year probably should have put a check in.

So we decide, "You know what? We're just going to do church at home." So we try that. Not a good idea. Not a good idea. My testimony, our testimony, is a testimony of second chances. That's where we're here. We're here because God gave us a second chance. When I decided,

when we decided, to do church at home, that was part of my failed leadership as a leader. At the time, when my children were at their crucial training, their lives, that's when I fell apart. God did not leave us; I left Him.

For seven years, we were just at home, making wrong decisions. It led them to the place where one night, a Saturday night, Kathleen, she's, I'm outside, and she makes this, if you've ever had to call 911, you remember those times. She makes this 911 call. "Call Bob! Just call Bob!" You know, it's like, "No, go ahead, just call Bob. He's safe. Just call Bob." She makes this 911 call to Bob, and patience, because when I get hysterical, you can't understand me. So I get it. "You got to slow down. I can't understand you. Slow down." He was so nice, and it was like, I've been on the other end of that. I can't understand a word, not a single word. You can't hear either, but anyway.

So that was a Saturday night, and then I come inside. She says, "We're going to church tomorrow." And I'll tell you, men, you got to listen to your women sometimes because the women are soft and emotional, but sometimes they put it together. I'm glad that I've got a woman that loves God.

So anyway, we come Sunday morning, and we're nervous. That night, man, it's like Christmas. You can't sleep, and you're nervous, and like, "What's going to happen?" And this and that, and you're excited, but you're, you know, all that's going on. So we come Sunday morning, we come down the steps, and the first thing we see is Bob and Barb, and it's just like, "What a blessing!" You know, we had missed so much. I come down, and we see these very familiar faces and the people. I saw Judy Smith. It was such a blessing to come down here and see all these young faces and people that loved and cared for us, didn't even know.

Anyway, I got a verse that I use for myself now, and it's Psalms chapter 19.

Psalms 19:14

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

And so that's the testimony that I want. Then there's another verse I was reading last night that I got to read because it's a simple verse, and it's about you guys. I know the application is not church and people, but when I'm reading it, that's what God showed me. In Proverbs chapter 11, it says:

Proverbs 11:14

Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

When we came down here, and the multitude of all you people, it felt so good, and it's something that we have missed. We're back now. After having felt so unsafe and scared for so long, I can't explain it. I just love every one of you. Bob is our true watchman, and people that did, they just tell it to you blunt, and then they just pick up your heart, and it's so good. So it's to be safe spiritually. Thank you all.

II. Bob Alexander's Introduction of Jim Lake

Jim Lake has been my friend for over 40 years. I would be honest to say that if it was not for him, and I know he would disagree with this, probably being the kind of guy he is, but I probably would not be here where I'm at with you today and being what I am for the Lord, whatever that may be, without his investment in my life. When I first got right with God, he was well on his way, and we became fast friends. He helped me through a lot of things. He showed me a lot of things, and we became lifelong friends. If there ever was a fitting example for the term "band of brothers," it would be him and me. I love him very much, love his wife, and I will be eternally thankful for the men that God has put in my life very early on, much like God is putting men in your life right now. It's an ongoing process.

I look back, and I never, never want to forget, nor will I ever forget, the men that God put in my life to help me when I needed it. Don't you ever forget the men of this church that God will put in your life that will help you, and the women that God will put in your life to help you. So I want to introduce you to, even though you've already met him and we've had lots of fun time together, probably my best friend in the ministry. I love him very much. Jim Lake, come and preach to my church for me. God bless you, buddy. Thank you.

III. The World's Mess and Personal Anecdotes

Well, thank you for those kind words, Bob, especially the part about the big surprise at the end. I'm not sure that that was part of the deal. I can't think of anything I ever taught Bob, except maybe one thing. When he said that, I'm thinking, "What in the world is this guy talking about?" When I came back from Florida, Bob had showed up. He wasn't there when I left. When I came back, he was there, and I wasn't too sure how to take that. But he was going to preach, and Mel said to me, "You're going to like this guy. You're going to like Bob." And I said, "Okay, all right, we'll see."

And so he gets up to preach, and he says, "Actually, Bob hasn't changed a whole lot. He's mellowed a little bit, but not very much." I've mellowed a lot. I hate it when people tell me that. I had a guy, when I started the church, we had our 35th anniversary. He's retired and moved away. He came back, and he says, "Man, you have mellowed." I said, "Shut up." I don't really hear that. But I'd suggest old, I think. I really think when I had my open heart surgery, they did something. I don't know. For a while, I thought that, I told you the story I think the last time, because I got a little misty-eyed and stuff, that they put a woman's vein in there.

But at any rate, Bob was getting ready to preach, and he said, "All right, open your Bibles." And I said, "Okay, let's open our Bibles. I'm going to preach to you tonight about the Pharisees and the Sadducees." And I said, "We've got to talk to this guy." I love Bob. I appreciate him. He and Barb helped us when we started our church in Vermont, and we have come to love you folks. Thank you for letting us come. We've enjoyed every minute of it, especially the world's largest World War I museum. It's just been great for us to be here, Kathy and I.

I'm not going to belabor this. We've had some challenges, not in our church or anything, but we've had some challenges in our life. Maybe Bob shared with you; maybe he can share it later. But God has been good to us. When that challenge came up, one of the first people we called was Bob and Barb and let them know. God is so good. One of the things I really, every time I come here to preach, I tell you this: Bob is honestly, and I'm not blowing smoke, because I wouldn't do that for Bob. He doesn't need any smoke; he's already got his head up. But he is, if not the finest, one of the finest Bible preachers in the world. He really is, and teachers. You guys are so fortunate. I remind you, the Bible says, "To whomsoever much is given, much is required." He's dropped you in a place where you're getting a bunch. He's going to hold you responsible for that. He is.

But I'm not going to try to teach you this morning. I am going to try to minister to you. I want to give you something that has become important in my life. It's always been important, but it's become more real. We're living in a messy time. I said Thursday night, 2016. I can't believe it's 2016. It was just 1958. I was eight years old. Now it's 2016, and I'm older. Things are crazy. The future is bleak. ISIS? Russia? Trump? It's a scary time, honestly. I don't think it could be scarier. Hillary Clinton. I told Bob when I picked him up, I said, "Listen, here's what we're going to do. If it's Trump and Clinton, when I go to vote, I'm going to write in Bob Alexander for president and Jim Lake for vice president. And when he goes to vote, he's supposed to put me down for president and himself down for vice president."

But I'm reminded of Zechariah 8:10. It says, "For before these days there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast; neither was there any peace to him that went out or came in because of the affliction: for I set all men every one against his neighbour." Man, isn't that the way it is? You don't want to toot your horn to anybody. They'll shoot you. Run you off the road. You don't want to. Kids are shooting each other. I read our home paper. I read the Cleveland Plain Dealer pretty much every day. It goes beyond just looking at what the Cavs are doing and stuff. Cleveland does have a basketball team. Just thought I'd say that. We don't have a football team. We have a midget team for football, but we've got a basketball team.

Anyhow, every day, every day, some kid's been shot. Every single day. We moved to Vermont in 1980. If there was any shooting of any kind, I mean, it was front-page news. It was big time. It didn't make any difference where in the state it happened; that was a big deal. But this summer has changed. It's changed a lot. This summer, in our town of Barre, where we live, a lady had taken her kids from her, rightly so. She's sitting in the parking lot, and the social worker comes out, and she shoots her with a hunting rifle. Kills her. And then when they start to examine what's going on, they go to a house where she had killed her aunt and her cousin before she went down there. Now, that may be normal for Kansas City, but for Vermont, that's not normal. Things are just out of control.

My sister, who is 68 years old, she's three years older than me, she's had two strokes. You know what she talks like this? No? She doesn't know that. She's had two strokes, and they live in Arizona. Here's her ministry, her and her husband. Her husband is a retired Navy guy, and he's a really big guy. Jim, by the way, my sister's name is Kathy, and her husband's name is Jim. My name is Jim. My wife's name is Kathy. I like to confuse things. So anyhow, their ministry in their

little Baptist church in Arizona, she and Jim sit in the back of the church with their pistols. Their job is if anybody comes in and causes trouble, to plug them. Now, I got to tell you, the last thing I would want in my church is my 60-year-old sister who's had two strokes sitting in there with a gun. It's a crazy world that we live in. It just is crazy.

Concealed weapons. I told her, I was talking about our church. We got a bunch of hunters in our church. I was telling you guys last night, these hunters are something else, man. They dress up like the trees, and then they climb up in the trees and hide. Poor Bambi comes. They sit up there and say, "I'm going to get you, sucka. Look up here. Give me an eyeball. Kaboom! I got him." And then they throw that thing on the hood of their truck in Vermont. Do they do that here? They throw that deer on the hood of the truck like they have just conquered the world. They've been hiding against that deer. I told the guys in my church, it would be far more fair if the deers could shoot back. I would get into this sport if they could shoot back. You guys are a bunch of sissies. At least in football, you can knock the guy down next to you. You don't have to hide.

So I was telling them about my experience with guns. I really only got one experience. I had two experiences because we used to have skeet shooting out at camp. I think Bob started that thing. He dragged me out there one day to shoot skeet. I said, "Can we eat them?" He said, "No, you can't eat skeet." And they put this gun in it, and somebody says, "Pull!" And I go, and then this thing comes flying, and I'm going, "Boom!" Almost shot the guy back there. My shoulder's out of socket. I was telling the guys in my church about my experience. I said, "The only real gun I ever shot was at camp, and at camp, I shot a 21." And they all started laughing. I said, "What's so funny about that?" Do you remember the 21s? They're not a very powerful rifle. And the guy in the front says, "Pastor, it's a 22." So where's my buddy? There he is. I said to him, I told him this story, and what did you tell me to tell him? "Glock 21." "Glock 21." I'm going to go back and say, "You guys don't know what you're talking about. That was a Glock 21 that I shot." Oh, a Glock 21. Write that down. Write that down.

IV. The Peace of Christ: John 14:25-27

Take your Bibles and turn to John chapter 14. What I want to talk to you about is how are we going to live in this mess? How are we going to exist in this mess? People are always wringing their hands. I think Brother Joe mentioned the year 2000 and all the hoopla that went on in the year 2000. Or maybe I mentioned it. Somebody mentioned it. It was late at night, and somebody asked me what I was doing to prepare for the millennial change. I said, "I'm keeping track of where all you guys are. Who's got the food? That's what I'm doing." Everybody's afraid of everything. We're living in a state of fear.

In John chapter 14, I want us to start with verse 25. This is a familiar passage. You've read it. You've heard it preached on a gazillion times. You could probably tell me the story yourself. Let me read it.

John 14:25-27

These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

You've heard how I said unto you, "I go away, and come again unto you." If you loved me, you would rejoice, because I said, "I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I." And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

Father, God, we are grateful to be among your people today. In this place, in this church, among brothers and sisters, men and women, boys and girls, who have put their faith in Jesus Christ. Father, we're thankful for this book you gave us, that we can open it, believe it, trust it, read it, understand it. God, that you speak to us. This morning, as we think about where we live, and we think about the circumstances that we live in, may we not fear, but enjoy your peace. In that time, may we lift up the Lord Jesus, who is worthy of all praise. In His name I pray, Amen.

V. The Disciples' Turmoil and Jesus' Concern

Jesus in this passage has just observed the Passover, and a lot of things have happened. I don't have time to go through all of them. He comes to the supper, and He washes their feet. You know Peter, Peter is always jumping ahead, and he says, "You're not going to wash my feet. I'm going to wash your feet." And the Lord said, "Peter, let me wash your feet, or you can't have anything to do with me." And he says, "Okay, give me a bath." And the Lord says, "Peter, just give me your feet."

So that takes place, and He discloses to them at the supper that somebody is going to betray Him, and He's going to be taken, and He's going to be killed. He tells them, "By the way, you can't go with me. Where I'm going, you can't go." They went with Him everywhere. Now He says, "You can't go with me. This is the end of the trip. You're not going any farther with me." And then Peter says, "Lord, let me tell you something, there ain't nobody going to come get you. I'm going to pull out my Glock 21, and anybody who tries to come near you, I'm going to blow his ear off." And the Lord says, "Peter, not only are you not going to defend me, but you're going to deny me three times." How'd you like to be Peter and get that message? Talk about an encouraging word from the Lord. Everybody says today, "Give me a word. Somebody send me a, Brother Lake, can you give me a word?" I said, "Sure, it." That's a word, you know. How'd you like to get that word? "You're not going to make it. You can't go with me, and you're going to deny me."

So all this has taken place. I got to tell you, I don't think it was a revival meeting. I think they sat at that supper and said, "What now? What now? What are we going to do?" They're all wondering if it's them. "I mean, is it me, Lord? Is it me? Is it me?" All except John, of course. John said, "Who was it?" All of this going on, and it's getting late at night, and they're tired. You just wonder, what were they thinking?

And then Jesus says in verse 27, He says:

John 14:27

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

You know, peace is elusive. We went to the history thing yesterday, to the museum. You walk across that board and watch the events go on. By the way, did you notice, those of you who went, did you notice how many Muslims were involved in that thing? Serbia and all that business. It's just kind of an interesting thing. The war to end all wars. What came out of that war was a little German corporal, who ended up nearly taking over the world. I mean, war after war after war. When I was a kid, it was Vietnam, and my generation protested. They said, "We want peace!" As they went everywhere, they destroyed things. "We want peace! Everybody, give us peace! I want peace!"

You know, 39 years after that, there's no peace. 60 years, it's been 60 years since the United Nations. No peace. There's no peace in this world. Every place, every day, somebody is fighting. There's no peace. There's no peace in this world. You know what? If you're a Republican, it's the Democrats' fault. If you're a Democrat, it's the Republican's fault. If you're independent, it's the two-party system. It doesn't make any difference. There's no peace. No peace.

It's not just world peace that's elusive; it's personal peace. Nothing is worse than not having personal peace in your life. The testimonies were incredible that I've heard the other night and this morning. There was a common theme among all of them, no matter where they were in the spectrum. Whether it was, "I was in jail and hooked on drugs," "I had a marriage problem," or "I wasn't the right kind of leader in the home," there was one thing that was true throughout all of them: internal peace was absent in their lives. They had no peace. No matter what, they just couldn't get that peace. There was a part that was missing from them.

Our state has passed what they call the dignity bill. That's assisted suicide. You know what that's about? It's about trying to bring peace to a person who's suffering. But that won't work because peace doesn't always come even at death. Jesus knew and understood not only the turmoil that His disciples were in, and by the way, aren't you glad God knows? Brother, you know what, I didn't know it was you that prayed the prayer in there. While the Bible says, "Watch and pray," I usually do the praying. I've been in a few circumstances where I prayed with my eyes open because of the person I was with. You know, you close your eyes, you might be dead, but anyhow.

The reality is God does know. There's no surprises with God. You're here this morning. You may have a smile on your face. You may have been hugging everybody. I'm sure you have been. I'm sure you may have been saying "Amen" and singing your heart out, but deep inside, there's something going on. Nobody knows about it except God. He knows. Believers are masters at covering up our heartaches. We've learned to do that really good. But God knows each and every heart. He knew what the disciples were feeling. He understood the turmoil. He knew the

hopelessness that they were facing, and He knew what they were going to experience when He died.

Imagine this, just hours before He was arrested, just a short period of time before He would be nailed to Calvary's cross, He was worried about them. What they were going to feel when He was dead. You know, the disciples all fled because it was over. They had lost. They thought He was the Messiah. He wasn't the Messiah. He was dead. They were burying Him. They were hiding. "We're next." And Jesus understood all of those things that they were going to experience. What He says is this, "Peace I leave with you." He's worried about them. He was worried about them, and He says the peace that I'm going to give you is not like the world gives you.

I believe this morning He's going to speak to our hearts directly, if you will let Him. I'm not a great preacher, folks. You know, I love Brother Bob, but he's, you know what? He doesn't lie, but he exaggerates a lot. I am a country preacher. I used to say, "I'm a little country preacher." My wife said, "Quit saying you're a little country preacher. You're a country preacher in a little church." I'm not a great preacher, but I preach about a great God, and God is the one who's going to do any work, if there's any work done here. I don't care how good of an orator. Bob made me watch Joel's. You didn't use the joke this morning. You may, you can't hear me, Bob. Bob, okay. You didn't use the joke. I used it before in here. The same joke? Oh, okay. That was a rework this morning. Oh, okay. All right. They made me listen. We were watching Joel's thing to get our kickoff jokes this morning. Yeah. What a way to start your devotion before you come to church, watching Joel's.

God offers us the opportunity to enjoy His peace. He gives us that chance. If you're here this morning and you don't know Christ, you don't know peace. You don't know any kind of peace. If you're a Christian here this morning, you have an opportunity to enjoy the peace of God.

So I'm going to look at three things really quick:

1. What is peace?
2. How is it manifested?
3. How can I get it?

Those three things. It's a simple sermon. Nothing deep. I let Bob do the deep stuff. I'm just going to give you something this morning. I hope it will help you.

VI. What Peace Is Not: The World's Offerings

The peace. What is the peace? Well, first of all, what it's not. It's not something the world can give you. You know what the world says? Remember that, most of you won't remember this commercial, but Barb will remember it, and my wife will remember it, and Bob or myself, some of you remember. There used to be a commercial, and it was for, now I got to think of what it was for. Calgon. What's this, the peanut gallery over here? Let me get to the place. The woman, you know, she's stressed out with kids and the husband and everything. The next scene, she's sitting in a bathtub filled with bubbles, and she says, "Calgon, take me away!"

I'm telling you, this world is looking for the, you know what the world says? "You got distress in your life? Take a trip." I'm going to guarantee you, if you're going on a trip and you don't want any stress, drive. Don't fly. Or they say, "Buy something. Go out and buy something. It'll make you feel good. Go buy a car. It'll make you feel good. Buy something." Or "Ingest something. Drink something. Take a pill." That's what the world says. None of it works. You go to the Bahamas, and you get sunburned. By the way, how many times have you said when you were coming back from a trip, "I wish I wasn't going back to work tomorrow"? The trip didn't help. As soon as you showed up, the distress was still there. You go buy a car, and I think Joe did say about that, it's great until you get the payment book. You know?

And ingest something, how many testimonies do we need to hear before we understand that drugs and alcohol don't do anything but destroy your life? I have some Christians trying to convince me it's okay to drink. I said, "You want to be stupid? Go ahead and be stupid. I'm not stupid." I had a grandfather that was an alcoholic. I know what it did. I remember him sitting in our kitchen. He was probably about 80 years old. I remember him sitting in our kitchen, and my mom, we had moved into a new house, our first house. We moved out of the projects. We moved into a house and had an old gas stove. It didn't work. I remember my grandfather saying, I was about five or six years old, I remember my grandfather saying, "May," I told my mom, my mom's name was Mary. He said, "May, if I hadn't been such a drunk and been right, I could have had the money to buy you a new stove." Man, tell me that alcohol's okay. You want to be a social drinker? You're stupid if you do that. If you're a wine drinker, sorry. I think you're stupid. You take a chance, man. You take a chance. The world in which we live in says, "Listen, all of these things will help you." And in the end, they don't do anything.

VII. What Peace Is: Christ's Unique Gift

Jesus says, "I'm going to give you a peace that's different than that. I'm going to give you something that actually works." The world's peace is external and it's temporary. The peace that we crave, the peace that Jesus offers, is more than that. It's something only He can give. Look at that verse again. Look at verse 27. Jesus says, "It's His peace."

John 14:27

Peace I leave with you, my peace.

It's His. It's His. Did you ever have somebody give you something that was theirs, not a gift? I don't mean they went to Walmart and bought you something. I mean that they gave you something that was their possession. You liked it, and they gave it to you. We had an old missionary, his name was Carlos Demers. He was a missionary to Mexico. He was the boldest witness I've ever been around in my life, honestly. The guy would pass a tract to everybody. I took him to Montreal one time. We're in the Catholic church putting tracts in the confessionals on the priest side. The guy never was afraid to witness to anybody. One time he called Sears on my phone to fix something. He ended up leading the lady to the Lord. I don't think he ever got what he was called for to begin with.

I'm trying to think of his pastor at Milford. What was that guy's name at Milford? Bob, who was at Milford there? The preacher there, I can't think of his name. At Milford. Keen, yeah, Charles Keen. Charles Keen said one time when he got in an elevator with Carlos, he just took a tract with everybody else. My daughter, my youngest daughter Elizabeth, loved this guy. She just loved him. She said to him one time, he had some little trinket bracelets, and he said something about how she wanted one, and he gave it to her. When he died, she slept with it under her pillow. I said one time, just to pass it, he had this old pocket watch. I said, "Man, Carlos, that's a neat pocket watch." So he got it out of his pocket, and he gave it to me. Just gave it to me.

It's one thing for somebody to go and buy something and give it to you. It's something else when somebody gives something that is their possession. And Jesus says, "I'm going to give you My peace. It belongs to Me. It doesn't belong to anybody else. Nobody else has got one, and I'm going to give it to you. I'm going to give it to you." He alone has the authority to do that because it's His. You know, this world has come to the point that God doesn't own anything. Folks, I want you to know something, God owns everything. There isn't anything that you own. God owns it all.

I was a salesman for a number of years, and where I worked, I sold business machines, and my boss was a Roman Catholic, and I witnessed to him a lot. He had a Cadillac. I used to tell him every time, his name was Ernie Fuchs, and I would say, "Ernie, take care of that Cadillac because during the millennium, it's going to be mine." I always wanted a Cadillac. "Unless you get saved, you're not going to be there. So take care of it because I'm taking it. I'm getting it."

This peace is unique to Jesus. Now you add something, this peace adds something to life rather than subtract something. You see, when you go on a vacation to get away from it all, you have to pay for it. You have to pay for it. When you buy a car or some possession, you have to pay for it. When you ingest something to forget the world, you have to pay for it. Christ's peace, you don't pay for it. It adds something to life. In fact, the word peace has this Jewish, you've heard the word shalom. Shalom includes not only the absence of distress but includes the presence of blessing. You see, the peace Jesus offers is going to give you a blessing.

VIII. How Peace Is Manifested: Peace with God

How is this peace manifested? Well, first of all, we have peace with God. Romans 5:1, you could quote it.

Romans 5:1

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;

We have peace with God. You know what? It's always good to make up. I mean, when you're married, that's the best part of fighting is making up. There is this idea of making peace with somebody that you've been at odds with is a really good feeling. Paul tells us that when we get saved, we have peace with God. Ephesians, he tells us in Ephesians that before we were saved, we were the enemies of God.

I want to say this kindly this morning. If you're here and you're not saved, you're not a child of God, you're an enemy of God. I'd say you had to be a Baptist, although why wouldn't you be? Somebody asked Perdue one time, "What would you do if you weren't a Baptist?" He said, "What would you be if you weren't a Baptist?" He said, "I'd be ashamed." But being a Baptist or going to a Baptist church won't save you. So if you're here this morning without Christ, you're without hope, you're without God. I don't care what the religions of the world tell you. They may all tell you, "Listen, it's all the same. Every religion has good things about it." I'm sorry, that's not true because religion will send you to hell. There's nothing good about it, nothing good about it. You can go to a church and be there every Sunday or Saturday or Wednesday or whenever they meet, you can go there all the time. You can be committed to that religion, and in the end, you will die and go to hell without Jesus Christ.

When we were justified, we were pronounced not guilty. I like that. Fortunately, I've never had to stand before a judge where I was worried about being pronounced guilty or not guilty. That's only because I've never been caught. But the reality is there is a Supreme Judge. When I stand before Him, He says, "Not guilty," because justification means we are declared to be unstained by sin. How is that possible? How is it possible? Well, it's possible because Jesus Christ paid for our sins and credited His righteousness to my account. You see, He became sin for me.

I want to stress this morning. Second Corinthians 5:21, I can't get over this. It says:

2 Corinthians 5:21

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Jesus didn't just die for my sins. Jesus didn't just die in my place. Jesus became guilty before God, His Father, for my sin. He was guilty so I wouldn't have to be. I can't get over that, folks. When Jesus hung on the cross and He cried, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It was because of my sin. He was guilty on that cross. God looked at Him and said, "You are guilty of sin. I can't have nothing to do with you." And He turned His back on His only begotten Son because of my sin. Anybody else ever do anything like that for you? Anybody do that for you? Anybody ever, even when you got a speeding ticket, anybody ever stand up and say, "Listen, you ever hear a judge say, 'All right, just forget it'?" You may have had a policeman say, "Okay, I won't give you a ticket." You've never had a policeman say, "I'll pay for the fine." Amen, amen. I said, Jesus did. I said, "Don't talk to me about religion." Religion won't do that. You know, religion says, "You got to do this. You got to do this." Listen, "You want to go to heaven? You got to do, and you got to do this." By the time you get done doing all the things you're supposed to do, you're so sick of it, you go get drunk. Religion doesn't help you.

Jesus, the peace that He gives to us, comes from the fact that His grace has been imposed on us, and we do not deserve it. We don't deserve it. We become justified by faith. You know, I get tired of people coming to church thinking they did God a favor. "I got up this morning, had a late night last night. Saturday night, man, I watched the football games. I ate pizza. I watched Kansas City play twice. I was tortured." And not Kansas City, Kansas, whatever they are. The Jaybirds,

whatever. "I got to bed late last night. I ate those wings that Jamie made. They were good until about one o'clock in the morning, and then they started saying, 'You shouldn't have eaten me so late.' And then the alarm went off, and I got out of bed and said, 'Oh, do I really have to go preach today? I think I'll just stay home.'" "I had to cough. Bob, I can't preach this morning."

We come to church and we say, "You do not know what it took for me to get to Vermonters. Oh, man, it snowed." You know what, they will go snow. If we get a foot of snow and they have a chance to go skiing or snowmobiling, those four-wheel drives work good. Sunday morning, those four-wheel drives don't work very good. For some reason, on Saturday night, when it snows, they just all get tied up, and they can't, "Too much snow, pastor. Too much snow." And then by noon, when church is over, all of a sudden, shoo. Or they're riding that, down the road on the, yeah, brother.

I had one of my guys, he was a deacon, and he's up in years. He's my son-in-law's dad, and so he's the other grandpa. He's riding, about 10 o'clock at night, they're out riding a snowmobile. He's at least 55 or so, isn't so, but. A half an hour or years old? Years old. Wake up, Kathy. Anyhow, they're out at night, you know, riding a snowmobile, and he hits a moose. I mean, right in the, the guy, he couldn't even duck, he just, boom, you know. I get a phone call. "Got to go to the hospital, 10 o'clock at night. What's going on? Sue will hit a moose." I said, "With his car?" "No, on a snowmobile." I said, "Call me and let me know how it works out." I went to see him, and I told, the first thing I said to him, in case he was okay, I knew he was all right, his face was kind of messed up, but he'll get over it. I said to him, "I got a verse for you. Paul said, 'When I became a man, I put away childish things.' Get off, get off the snowmobile," you know. Man, they can do that stuff in the snow. And then we come to church, "Oh, pastor, I came. Look how much snow's out there, I came. And I'm here. God is so lucky to have me."

Listen, folks, we want God to show up. I want Him to show up. I want Him to meet with me. We are justified by faith. I said this the other night, faith is not a noun. It's a verb. It's an active belief. It's not a possession. You know, the woman at the well, the Canaan woman, and I'm getting them mixed up here. Remember when Jesus was sitting at a table eating, and a woman came up to Him, and she said to Him, "Lord, would you heal my daughter sick? Would you heal her?" And sweet, lovely Jesus said, "It's not good to take the meat from the children. Give it to the dogs." Sweet, kind Jesus. And she said, "Truth, Lord. But even a dog eats the crumbs that fall on the floor." And He said to her, "You know what, lady? Your faith is great," because it was an active faith. Faith isn't something that it's not what you are, it's what you do. When Jesus said to that woman, He was speaking of her actions. It's a trust, and it reveals itself in action.

True faith believes in Christ's promise of eternal life. Listen, folks, I have no doubt when I die, I'm going to heaven. When they wheeled me into that operating room and they told my wife and my daughters that there was a 50-50 chance, they took me in. I don't know if I told you this story or not, but did I tell you this story? Because I don't want to repeat it. You don't remember, it was two years ago anyhow. I'm preaching the same message I preached that year.

We were, it was on a Sunday morning, we were getting ready to do our Vacation Bible School. So we were leaving, going to the grocery store on Sunday afternoon. I said to my wife, "Now

Kathy's a registered nurse, at that point she was the clinical nurse supervisor of the intensive care unit, big time stuff." That was all about the bleep bleep bleep stuff, you know, and everything. So we're driving, and I said, "Man, my back hurts." And she said, "Well, just stretch a little bit, you know." And I said, "Yeah," and she said, "Well, get out. Here, have a Tums." I said, "I don't think it's indigestion, Kath." So we stopped, and we stopped at the parking lot. She said, "Get out and stretch." So I got out. When I got out, I just went white, and the sweat just went, phew. She jumps out of the car, she can move fast when she wants to. "You got to get the car, get the car, get the car, get the car." And so then she ran us up, and she called, fortunately we live close to the hospital. She used the OnStar thing. She said, "I'm bringing Jim in, I'm bringing." They're waiting for a wheelchair and everything when I get there. So they wheeled me in, and man, they gave me some good stuff. And the pain went, "Ah, take me away."

So they did all these tests. They said, "Nothing wrong with you." They checked everything. Now we have a little, our hospital's not a trauma center or anything, they don't do open heart surgery. But we have a cardiologist, and they put me up in intensive care. By the way, when I went to the intensive care, it was like the king coming in because they all worked for her. I got service, man, I got the service. So I'm laying in there, and I'm eating, and feeling pretty good, and they'd given me morphine. I was all right. The doctor came in. He said, "You know, Jim," he said, "I just," he said, "all these symptoms, something isn't right here. We're just going to send you down to Dartmouth. Would you be down to Dartmouth and let us do a heart cath on you?" I said, "Whatever, sure, let's do it." Said, "Can I drive?" He said, "No, you're not driving." And he took me down in an ambulance.

The next morning, I'm laying in Dartmouth, and the thing was scheduled for the next morning. So I'm laying in a bed, and this kid, it looks like he's about 12 years old, comes in. He says, "I'm Dr. So-and-so." And I said, "Can I see your ID?" I really did. I said, "Can I see your ID?" I thought maybe he was an orderly, like I used to be, not an intern. So he smiled and gave me his name. He was a doctor. He said, "You know, we've done all the blood work tests again down here. There is nothing. We don't think there's a need to do the cath." And I said, "Okay, no problem." So he said, "I'll talk to Dr. McDonald, and then we'll get you out of here." And I said, "Okay, good."

About an hour later, Dr. McDonald comes in, and I said, "So am I going home?" He said, "No, you're going to have a heart cath." And I said, "Well, the other guy said." He said, "I'm doing the heart cath, and we have to do it. At the end of the day, you're going to have it done." So I said, "Okay, fine." So they wheeled me in. It's about three o'clock or four o'clock in the afternoon. They wheeled me in, and I waved to Kathy and the kids, you know, and they wheeled me down. When I get in there, one of the guys, one of the doctors, had graduated from Wisconsin, and he had a big W on his cap, you know, and I'm from Ohio State, so I was going to give him grief. So I'm giving him a hard time, and they start to shove that thing up your leg, you know, they cut a hole in your, I don't know how to do it, anyhow, I was not paying attention. They start shoving this thing up, working its way up to my heart, and all of a sudden, that pain came back. And they all started talking real fast. And they all started, nobody was joking with me anymore. And Dr. McDonald said, "Jim, can, is that feel about like it did yesterday?" I said, "Oh, yeah, where's the

morphine? Give me the stuff," you know. He said, "Lean up here, I want you to see something." Now I didn't want to lean anywhere. And I said, "You see that?" I said, "I didn't see anything." "Oh, yeah, sure," he said, "Well, that left main is 99% blocked. That's the widow maker. And we can't stent that. We got to go in there, and we're going to do surgery on you." So then they started giving me medicine, and I said, "Hey, cool, whatever. Let's do it," you know.

But I'm going to tell you something. They told, the doctor came out, Dr. DeSipio, you know, if you're a heart doctor, and you see a guy like me coming in, you're saying, "This guy doesn't have a chance," you know. And so they said, the 50-50 chance that I live, I didn't know that, but I want to tell you something. I never had a fear at all, and it wasn't the medicine. It really wasn't the medicine. I got in on that table, and I'm just, "Lord, let's do it. One way or the other, it's going to be okay." I told the kids, "Here's where all the insurance papers are, here's, here's everything." She got mad because I didn't tell her, I told the girls. I said, "Here's where all this stuff is," you know. Folks, let me tell you something. There's a peace that you get from the Lord. That's incredible when you need it. It's just incredible.

By the way, they told me, I was, after they, they kept me, they kept me out for two days, and then moved me to a room, and they said, the little girl came in, she said, "You're going to have to go to rehab," which is a nice way of staying in a nursing home. And I said, "It ain't going to happen." And see, I said, the doctor came in, I said, "How do I beat this thing?" And he says, "You got to talk to the physical therapist." And so the physical therapist came in, and I said, "How much money is it going to take for me not to go to rehab?" She said, "You don't have enough." I said, "What do I got to do?" She said, "You got to walk a mile in the hall, you got to go up these steps without any help, and you got to do this." Nine days later, I went home. And the doctor said, "I never would have believed it." And I tell you what, it was the Lord. I walked in that stupid place so much that they finally got mad at me. He said, "Would you go outside and walk? Get out of this building." That's off the subject. I just want you to feel sorry for me, because you know, I had an open heart surgery, got a big scar, it's cool, you want to see it? No, I'm just kidding. No.

Faith and peace. We've all been through tough times. We might all go through the same thing. We may not all face the same challenges, but the faith that we have produces a peace that only Jesus can do with us. I'll tell you what, there is some practicality of this thing. Our past is dealt with. The sins of the past are forgiven. Don't live in the past. You know, sometimes I'll be praying, and the Lord will pop something in my head, something really stupid that I did in the ministry. I just, you can't go back. I don't care what you've done in your life, you can't go back. You might as well forget it. It's under the blood, it's gone. He's forgotten it. Why don't you forget it? We're going to go forward trusting God with the peace that He gives us. Our sins are forgiven. I'm free from the stupidity and the rebellion that I used to have. I'm free from that. Our failures are overcome. We're set free from the failures. Yeah, there's some scars. There's some scars.

Then listen to this, our certain future.

John 3:15-16

That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

I don't have to worry about eternal life. You know what? I got some figuring to do about what's going to happen in the future. I wonder, you know, I get old. I've already told my girls, "Put me in a nursing home. I'm going to be like my dad. He was nasty. Throw me in a nursing home. Don't even come see me. I'll be out of my mind anyhow. Just go on with life, you know?" But I don't have to worry about eternity. Paul reminds us that God's not going to fail to carry us through.

Philippians 1:6

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

Not, "we hope he'll perform it," but "will perform it" until the day of Jesus Christ. I'm not worried about my eternal life. I have a cousin that's a Pentecostal preacher. He said, "You know, Jim, if I believe that you believe, I can just sin and go out and do all the, just live like the world." I said, "You know what your problem is, Clayton, that's what you want to do. When I got saved, I didn't want to do that anymore. I spend my life trying not to do that, and I can. You spend your life wishing you could, but you're afraid because you can't." Who's got the better deal?

We have peace in difficult circumstances. Jesus said in John chapter 16, verse 33:

John 16:33

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

You don't have to overcome anything. He's overcome the world. He tells us even though life has its irritations, and boy doesn't it, doesn't it? He is superior and victorious to our conflicts. The world doesn't overcome Him, He overcomes the world. We got these guys that are once in a while, they write in the newspaper letters, you know. They're all hung up on climate change. Somebody asked me, "What do you think about climate change?" I said, "I'm 65 years old, I'm for it. I'm hoping Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, all fall into the ocean. I've got oceanfront property. It wouldn't bother me if all the ski resorts went out, and I'm sitting on a beach in Vermont in December, and it's 80 degrees. Put it on the ballot, I vote for it. I'm in favor of it." All these silly people with their silly superstitions, and all their fairy tales about God in heaven. Well, if it's nothing, what are you talking about? What are you worried about? The reality is they know there's something missing in their life.

The Lord's not, by the way, not caught by surprise in your conflicts. You wake up with a problem this morning? Yeah, you should go to Him for help, but you don't have to tell Him it's there. He knows it's there. He has authority and power over our circumstances.

Romans 5:1-4

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

People say all the time, "Don't pray for patience. Don't pray for patience. Don't pray, don't pray for patience." Tribulations are coming. Folks, let me tell you something. Tribulations are coming. Trouble's coming in your life. Trouble's coming. Aren't you glad you came to church this morning? Trouble is around the bend. It's around the bend. We live in a wicked, horrible world. There is disease and sickness and accidents, and things happen. They happen to us, they happen to our children, they happen to our grandchildren, and you can't do anything about it. You can't do anything about it but trust God. If you get through life without any tribulation, just wait, your life obviously is not over.

Here's what the Bible says. The Bible says we not only stand in our faith, here's where the Baptists are. Here's where most fundamental Baptists are. "I believe the Bible. I believe Jesus is coming again. I believe, I believe, I believe." And the pastor says, "Listen, here's what I want. I want us all to get together, and we got to paint the church." "I have a pastor tell me what to do. I'm going to go find another church." What about glorying in tribulations? Or we get, something happens. Your wife gets sick. Your kids get sick. "I go to church every Sunday, why is God doing this to me? I give over my tithe. God, why are you doing this to me?" Instead of recognizing that God's saying, "Listen, get excited about this. I'm going to do something in your life. I'm going to do something in your life." Yeah, it's scary. It is scary. It is scary.

Peter says:

1 Peter 1:6-7

Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

Now some of you look at me this morning, you can say, "Yeah, you never remember where I am." And you're probably right. I've probably never been there. You've probably never been where I was. I've never been where you are. You know, I've lived, well, I consider, I owe a great deal. I owe a great deal. My mom was raised, and my grandmother got saved. You heard me tell about that on Thursday night under Billy Sunday. My mother didn't get saved till later on with my dad. My dad grew up in Fort Worth, Texas, and went off to World War II, was a bitter man when he came back. Bitter man, burned his uniform. He was bitter. He met my mom. My mom was stationed at Fort Dix. Yeah, both my parents were sergeants. Tell me about your troubles.

My mom, they moved to Canton, Ohio, just by chance. There was work there. Ran into an old friend that my dad had met years before, just by chance. He led my parents to Christ. My dad

quit school in the fourth grade, had to go pick cotton. My grandparents never owned a home. Neither one of my grandparents ever owned a home. Neither one of them ever owned a car. My dad picked cotton at Ford, never went to high school, got his GED. Got saved, and his life got changed. My mom's life got changed. My dad worked hard all his life. We lived in the same house my entire life. My dad led me to Christ. I mean, he opened the Bible and showed me how to get saved. There wasn't a Sunday school teacher; it was my dad. I got a picture of me and my sister sitting on my mom's lap before Christmas Eve, and the Bible was opened. We lived in a neighborhood where the kids rode their bicycles up and down the street, and all the neighbors sat out in the front yard. My three best friends that I grew up with from first grade through high school, we all lived in the same neighborhood, went to the same church. I had this storybook life. Went to this great church at the time. God was so good to me, has been so good to me. What do I have to complain about? No, I haven't been where some of you have been. I haven't. Listen, I have enough sense to thank God for that. But I'm going to tell you something. I don't have to be where you are to know what God's Word says and to experience His power in your life and in mine.

Peace with God. In both those passages of Romans 5, and I'm just about done, Romans 5 and First Peter, both of these passages, one thing that's clear, for the child of God, there are no accidents. No accidents.

Romans 8:28

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Get in line with His purpose.

IX. How Peace Is Manifested: Peace with Each Other

You know what another benefit is? We have peace with each other. Peace with each other. I try to encourage this in my church. We've got a really friendly church, we really do. There are huggers too. And it's, you know, I can't help it. My wife's the worst of the bunch. I'm telling you what, she kisses everybody in the church. When we're shaking hands, I said, "It's shake hands, it's not smooch. Just shake their hand." She kisses everybody. I tell my church this, everybody wants all the churches to get together and get along. Before we try to get along with the other churches, let's try to get along with ourselves first. We get that mastered. We won't have to worry about the other thing. This is a family. This is a family.

Now it's true, you and I are brothers and sisters in Christ. Our churches are polar different. We live in two different places. They're polar different. Every time I leave here, I say to Kathy, "Maybe I ought to wear a T-shirt." And she says, "No, no T-shirts for you." The only place I've ever preached in nearly 40 years of preaching without a tie has been here. This year, I don't even have a sports coat on, and I wore khaki pants. I don't even own blue jeans. I am grateful that I can come here where you guys do things different than I do, but our common theme is Jesus Christ, and we love each other. There's a miracle in that. That's God's peace. We are at peace with each other. Peace with each other.

There's a broad, broad spectrum of people here from different walks of life. I mean, just different, different experiences. And God brings you, He saves you and brings you into one place and makes you one in Him. Folks, you see that's, all the Pentecostals want a miracle. Listen, it doesn't get any bigger than that one. It doesn't get any bigger than that one. We have peace with each other. We understand we're all in the same boat. Can't save ourselves. Can't overcome our circumstances by strength alone. We're all in need of God's grace and mercy. We belong to the same family.

I've been doing the ancestry thing, you know. It's been kind of fun looking back at your ancestors and trying to, and some pious Christians said, "Oh, that's a Mormon thing." And I said, "Well, maybe it is, I don't know, but I'm pretty sure that my 24th generation grandfather wasn't a Mormon. So I just kind of like to find out where he is, you know, and what he was like." I was sad to find out that he slept with King Henry's stepdaughter, and he hung him, but that's life. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. We're a family. Family is so important. Family is so important. You know, there are people that walk into this church and have walked into this church that don't have a family. We're supposed to be their family. We're not competing with each other. We're working together.

You know, this is really cool. Bob and I, Bob said, "We've known each other a long time." There couldn't be two opposite guys, honestly. Bob and I, we had nothing in common. We really don't. He's a gun guy. He took me one time down to Bolivar, I don't know if you remember this, down to Bolivar, Ohio, where he was shooting goldfish. These poor little goldfish, one come by, boom, he was this big gun, you know, right out of water. I'm down there saying, "What am I doing here?" And then I make him sit down and watch an Ohio State football game, and he's sitting over there trying to stay awake, be polite. He's saying, "This is." We took him to a high school football game one time. He didn't even know what to do because he'd always been in the band. When you're in the band, you don't care about the football game. You only care about the cheerleaders. Poor football guys are bringing their brains out, and the guy plays the trumpet, is messing around with the, not messing around, you know what I mean. Dating, dating the cheerleader. We're opposite, we're opposite, let me keep moving. We're just opposite. And yet we have more in common than most people in this United States have in Jesus Christ. Our churches are different, our people are different, we dress different. By the way, he's kind of dressed up, I was surprised that his shirt this morning. We're as opposite as you can be, and yet we click, some weird way, we click. It's the peace of God, folks. It's God's peace.

X. Conclusion: Trusting Jesus for Peace

He said, "I'm going to leave My Comforter. I'm going to leave Him." God the Holy Spirit, the moment you got saved, God the Holy Spirit came in. My cousin says, "Jim, you'd be a great preacher if you'd just get it. Get it." I said, "Clayton Deed, you'd be a great preacher if you really got it. If you really got it." Eight years old, 1958, you know, in an old-fashioned altar with my dad and open Bible. Palm Sunday, April 1958, 15th Street, Canton, Ohio, with the sun coming through the windows. I remember it like it was yesterday. I remember it like it was yesterday. That little boy asked Jesus to come into his heart, and God the Holy Spirit came right inside.

That moment, before I got up, He was in me. For all these years, He has never, ever left me. Never. And I messed up. I've taken Him some places He should have never gone. But He never left me. Never left me.

The peace of God. The Bible says it passes all understanding. If you're here this morning without Christ, the only way you can get that peace is through faith in Jesus Christ. What we need is not something. What we need is someone. His name is Jesus. He's the one that can put your soul to rest. Are you willing to entrust yourself to Him? You want to say, "Here it is?" Here it is. "I'm going to entrust You with the most precious and precious gift. I'm going to trust You with the most precious gift. I'm going to trust You with the most precious possession that I have, and that's my soul. I'm going to give it to You, God. I'm going to trust You. I'm going to believe what You said. You said, if I put my faith and trust in Your Son, Jesus Christ, You would give me eternal life and fill me with Your Spirit and give me peace. I'm going to take it. Put Him to work. Try Him out. Test Him." That's the only way you'll get the peace. That's the only way you'll get it.

Christian. Got problems? Get in line. Get in line. God is with you. Emmanuel. God is with us. He is with you. I wouldn't minimize anybody's problem here. I tell people in my church all the time, "You got a problem, it's a problem. It may not seem like a big problem to me, but if it's a problem to you, then it's a problem." And God can give you victory over that problem. But you got to trust Him. You got to trust Him. You got to give it to Him. Peace with God. 2016, crazy world, crazy world. I sleep good at night. I ain't worried about who's going to be president. I'm not worried about ISIS. I'm not worried about any of it. My wife and I probably faced the most difficult thing we ever faced in our life. And my wife's, the words that came out of her mouth were, "God's got this. He's got it." And He's got it. We're going to ride that pony right to the end because He's got it. Bow your heads and close your eyes. Preacher, you come.