



Peace Makers

By Shari Miller

Share with a partner or the small group a time when you were at odds with someone, but the situation was resolved successfully. Describe how that happened.

St. Paul's Letter to the Romans is one of the most beautiful in laying out the foundation of the Christian faith. It clearly explains Law and Gospel, salvation and peace with God in Jesus, and our response by the power of the Spirit in faithful words and actions. We will look at two passages from Romans as we look at how God gives us His peace and how we can practically and actively share that peace with those around us.

Opening Prayer

Dear Almighty God of Peace, You are holy and Lord of all. Our sin separates us from You and makes us Your enemies. We rejoice that our Savior Jesus fulfilled Your plan of salvation for us, giving us peace with You. Through His perfect life, suffering, death, and resurrection, we are forgiven, reconciled with You, and have the hope of eternal life. You sent us Your Holy Spirit who gives us faith in Jesus as our Savior, keeps us in faith, and enables us to live in love and peaceably with all. As we study Your Word, send Your Spirit to give us wisdom and discernment. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

God Gives Peace: Spiritual Peace

Read **Romans 5:1-8**.

What a power-packed section of Scripture! Paul spends the previous chapters explaining the justification by faith that Christians have because of the perfect life, suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus gives His own robes of righteousness to each baptized child of God. He then continues with the lesson in chapter 5, thus the word *therefore* is used: The Holy Spirit engenders faith in the saving work of the Savior through Word and Sacraments; we

are declared righteous in God's sight; and, we have peace with God. Why must justification by faith precede *peace with God*? See verses 1 and 10. _____

What is the hope referred to in verse 5? (See Paul's definition of this hope in **Romans 8:23-24**.) _____

Faith Talk: How can your friends and neighbors know about the hope that is in you and what that means in your life? _____

Faith Talk: Read verses 6-11. What did Jesus do to secure your peace with God? Be specific with a partner or in your small group. _____

Faith Talk: Since you have been reconciled with God and are at peace with Him, why do some of your days seem to be less than peaceful? What are we reminded of in **Proverbs 30:5**? _____

How does the Holy Spirit engender faith in us? Read Paul's answers in the following Bible passages, and identify how the Spirit uses these means of grace in our lives.

Galatians 3:25-27 _____

1 Corinthians 1:18 _____

1 Corinthians 11:23–25

If time permits: Before partaking of The Lord’s Supper, members of a congregation share God’s peace with one another and with their pastor (Pax Domini or peace of the Lord). Why does this reminder of God’s peace come at this time in our worship services?

What other times in worship is the expression “peace of God” used? Why?

Faith Talk: With a partner or the small group, share your description or picture of God’s peace.

God Gives Peace: Practical Peace

Is peace passive or active?

Read **Romans 14:19**. Is this a passive or active sentence?

What does the word “pursue” imply?

Read Romans 12:9–21. In verses 9–17, make a list of characteristics that practically show the practice of Spirit-given Christian love in and among believers. Be specific.

In verses 18–21, Paul exhorts that we are to extend this love into the world — *live peaceably with all*. (See also **Hebrews 12:14**.) How does active Christian love that uses the characteristics listed above translate into peaceful living in the world?

Faith Talk: “Tough love” is a term sometimes used when someone disciplines another with the intent of lovingly helping them in the long run. Can there be such a thing as “tough peace”? Explain. Share with a partner or in your small group.

In verse 11, the word “fervent” comes from the Latin *fervere* which means “to boil.” The word fervent in this context literally means to “boil over with the Spirit.” The Spirit fills our lives and flows out to others. Paired with the words “zeal” and “fervent” in this passage, what intensity might be applied to the word “serve” in the same passage?

Why does our service to the Lord become fervent?

The phrase from a childhood song comes to mind: “Jesus’ love is bubbling over.” How does our service in Christian love bubble over to someone else?

If time permits: What are specific ways that you and your group can fervently serve the Lord? Make a list together as a group.

Read together the words of **Romans 15:13**: *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.* In this passage, Paul adds the word “joy” in connection with “peace” — it is a side effect of the peace of God. How does the peace of God affect our witness to what the Lord has done for us in Christ Jesus? (See also **1 Peter 3:15**.)

Faith Walk

1. Thank the Lord for His gift of salvation in Jesus and, by the power of the Spirit, share the Good News with a special person in your life.
2. Praise God for giving you His peace in Christ Jesus.
3. Practice the characteristics of Christian love listed in Romans 12.
4. Look for new ways to live peaceably with those around you.

Closing Prayer

Sing or speak together: “When Peace, like a River” (LSB #763) [lyrics available at <https://hymnary.org/hymn/LSB2006/763>] or “Savior, Again To Thy Dear Name We Raise” (LSB #917; LW #221; TLH #47).

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