

Jesus Gives His Peace To The Church

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[0 : 0 0] Well, let's turn now to our reading for this evening, and Edward is continuing his series through John's Gospel, and we're in John chapter 14, so do grab a Bible, we have some at the side of the back if you don't have a Bible with you, and you'll find it on page 901, if you're using one of the visitor Bibles, John 14, and we're picking up the reading from verse 15 to the end of the chapter.

John 14, reading from verse 15. This is the Lord Jesus speaking to his disciples.

If you love me, you will keep my commandments, and I will ask the Father, and he will give you another helper to be with you forever.

Even the Spirit of truth in the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me.

[1 : 1 9] Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me.

And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him. Judas, not Iscariot, said to him, Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us and not to the world?

Jesus answered him, if anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words.

And the word that you hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me. These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

Peace, I leave with you. My peace, I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled.

[2 : 3 8] Neither let them be afraid. You heard me say to you, I am going away and will come to you. If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father.

For the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place, you may believe. I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming.

He has no claim on me, but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father.

Rise. Let us go from here. Well, amen. And may God bless his word to us tonight.

Well, good evening, friends. Very good to see you all. Let's turn to John's Gospel, chapter 14. And our passage for this evening is not everything that was read to us earlier, just the short section that begins at verse 25 and runs through to verse 31.

[3 : 50] Short, perhaps, but sweet, because this passage concerns the legacy that Jesus left to his apostles after his death and ascension.

And by extension, this legacy has been left to everybody who follows Jesus in every generation. It is our Lord's legacy to the whole church.

So, what is it? What is this legacy? Well, it's spelled out beautifully by Jesus in verse 27. He says, Now, his legacy is not merely peace.

It's something better than mere peace. It is my peace. And as the verse puts it, he is giving it to us. It's his gift. It's his legacy.

It's ours to enjoy as we learn to put our trust in him. Well, now, let's first consider the context in which these words were spoken. Jesus has just celebrated Passover meal with his apostles.

[5 : 04] That's the last supper, which is described in the previous chapter, chapter 13. And the supper begins with Jesus and 12 men around the table, and it ends with Jesus and 11 men.

Look with me back to chapter 13, verse 27, 13, 27, which tells us that Satan entered into Judas, Judas Iscariot. And then Jesus says to Judas, what you are going to do, do quickly.

And in verse 30, Judas goes out into the night, into the gloom of darkness and dark deeds. But his exit is preceded with some very unsettling words from Jesus.

Look back to verse 21. Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me. Now, the apostles must have found that statement very unsettling.

They would have looked around the table. A betrayer in our midst. Who could that be? But that's not all. A few minutes later, at the end of chapter 13, Simon Peter and Jesus have a brief discussion.

[6 : 13] There are questions from Peter and answers from Jesus. And the chapter ends with Jesus saying to Peter, truly, truly, I say to you, the cock will not crow till you have denied me three times.

Twice, Jesus uses his formula of ultimate emphasis. Truly, truly. Truly, truly, one of you will betray me. And you, Peter, truly, truly will deny me three times.

Now, if I'd been one of the apostles sitting at the table, I would have felt very uncomfortable. I would have felt the tectonic plates of my very life slipping and sliding beneath me.

And during the course of chapters 14, 15, and 16, there are several moments when you sense real unease and disquiet at the table.

Look at chapter 14, verse 5, where Thomas says, Lord, we do not know where you're going. How can we know the way? Then in chapter 14, verse 8, the apostle Philip says to Jesus, Lord, show us the Father.

[7 : 16] And that's enough for us. It's lack of understanding that takes away their peace of mind. So Jesus teaches them. I am the way to the Father. Chapter 14, verse 6.

And in verse 9, he says to Philip, whoever has seen me has seen the Father. And verse 10, I am in the Father, and the Father is in me. Then a bit later, in verse 22, the other Judas says, Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us and not to the world?

So again, there's confusion and lack of understanding. Or look on to chapter 16, verse 18. The apostles are having a little bit of a discussion at the table amongst themselves.

What does he mean, they say, by a little while? We don't know what he's talking about. Well, that's an open confession of ignorance and confusion. We don't know what he's talking about.

We're sitting here, we're listening to this amazing teaching, but we're clueless about the meaning of it. And there are other things in these chapters that would have been disquieting to the apostles.

[8 : 25] Look at chapter 15, verse 18. If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. Two verses later, verse 20.

A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. Or chapter 16, verse 2. They will put you out of the synagogues.

Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. You're going to be hated, persecuted, killed. That's the future that Jesus promises to his apostles.

It is very unsettling information. But in the middle of all this difficulty and challenge, Jesus says to them, Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you.

So clearly this peace is not going to be enjoyed in the absence of pressure. The hatred, the persecution, the martyrdom, they're all going to happen. They did happen.

[9 : 27] And yet these men persevered in the faith. They spent their lives preaching and teaching and building up the churches. Now, friends, these words in verse 27, which is the main thing I'm wanting to look at tonight, they're spoken for our benefit and not just for the benefit of the apostles.

In fact, when John actually wrote this gospel, he was a very old man. He could well have been the last surviving man of that original 11. So he wasn't writing for the benefit of his fellow apostles.

They were gone. They were deceased. They were demised, as the Scots would say, deed. But these words have the power to undergird our hearts today, to help us to persevere joyfully in the Christian life, even if we have to face persecution and hatred and martyrdom.

And it's the words that Jesus speaks both before verse 27 and after, which help us to understand why this gift of peace is so real and so substantial.

You see, verse 27 takes its force from the whole passage in which it's set. And that's what we'll look at now. And in verses 25 to 31, there are three main factors which open our eyes and help us to see why the peace given by Jesus is so welcome and so real.

[10 : 47] The first factor is the coming of the Holy Spirit. The second is the going away and returning of Jesus. And the third is the defeat of Satan by Jesus.

It's these three things that enable him to say, my peace I give to you. First then, he teaches the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Now look at verse 25. These things I've spoken to you while I'm still with you. While I'm still with you. That really means I'm telling you some very important things.

But this teaching session is pretty limited. I'm still with you just now, but I can't be with you for much longer. I can only say a few things at this stage. And in any case, you're not in the best frame of mind to retain a lot of instruction.

Just turn over to chapter 16, verse 12. 16, 12, where he says, I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

[11 : 48] Why not? Well, because they were so distressed and troubled. They were in no fit state to take in a lot of new information. You wouldn't teach higher level mathematics to a class of P6 children, would you?

They couldn't take it in. Here were the 11 apostles. They are a P6 class at this stage, sitting around the table with sad, weary faces, unable to take much in.

So back to verse 25 in chapter 14. These things, these few things, I've spoken to you while I'm still with you. But the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

And this fact of the Spirit's coming will enable you, verse 27, to enjoy my peace. Now, I want to leave the flow of the passage for a moment to look at the whole discourse for a few minutes and to try to bring together the strands of Jesus's teaching about the work of the Holy Spirit.

We saw last week, excuse me, we saw last week from the central section in chapter 14, two main things about the Holy Spirit. First, he is the helper.

[13 : 09] Verse 16, the Father will give you another helper to be with you forever. And that word helper could equally well be translated comforter.

As long as we understand what kind of comfort is involved. It's not the kind of comfort that you get from a hot water bottle or from a glass of Glenn drink it up whiskey.

A kind of cozy snuggling up comfort that makes you say to yourself, there, there, dear little soul, you're really a cuddly teddy bear. No, he is the comforter in the sense of strengthener, the one who fortifies our willpower and enables us to be unashamed of Jesus, who enables us to endure pressure and opposition.

He is the helper who strengthens us and gives us spine. And second, we saw last week that he is sent from heaven to live in us. Just look at the end of verse 17 we looked at last week, but let's remind ourselves of it.

You know him, says Jesus, for he dwells with you and will be in you. And because he is the spirit of God, the Father and of the Lord Jesus, and because the Holy Trinity is indivisible, Jesus says in verse 23, we will come to him, him being the one who loves me and keeps my word, and we will make our home with him.

[14 : 30] So the Holy Spirit dwells in the very heart and life of the believing Christian who loves Jesus and keeps his word. And in a way that is ultimately wonderful and beyond our understanding, he brings the very presence of God the Father and of the Lord Jesus into our lives.

So the God from whom we were once separated, the God to whom we were once aliens and strangers, is now not only reconciled to us, but actually takes up residence within our hearts.

For how long? Does he move in just for a fortnight, or a month, or a year? Look at the end of verse 16. The helper is to be with you forever.

And for God to be residing in your heart and my heart can only be a transformative experience. Just think of yourself for a moment.

What are you? What am I? What do we consist of? You step on the bathroom scales, for example. You look at that little window that reveals the figures.

[15 : 38] You feel a sense of surprise as you look at the figures. You say, Really? Or you say, Really? Well, you're a human being, aren't you?

Your physical frame contains water, blood, potassium, calcium, sodium, magnesium, iron, sulfur, haddock and chips, if you've just had a good dinner.

But if you're a Christian, the Holy Spirit, the very life breath of God, lives permanently within you, transforming your will and your thinking, redirecting your energies, teaching you to turn away from sin and to love and pursue what is good and true.

And in order to achieve and sustain this transformation, the Holy Spirit uses the words of the Bible. We read the words of the Bible. We study them.

We think about them. And we discover that they have a solidness, a power, a kind of loving ferocity that drills them into our hearts and consciences. The Apostle Peter, in his second letter, chapter 1, verse 21, describes the origin of the Bible.

[16 : 47] He says, No prophecy was ever produced by the will of man. By prophecy, he means words of God written down. No prophecy was ever produced by the will of man.

But men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. So he dwells within us. And as we keep taking in the words of the Bible, his dwelling within us becomes more and more a source of joy and strength to us.

He fortifies us. Now, Jesus has introduced the subject of the Holy Spirit in chapter 14, verse 16. But he's going to tell us a lot more about the Spirit before we reach the end of this discourse at the end of chapter 16.

In fact, there are several sections about the Holy Spirit in these chapters. And I hope we can look carefully at all of them over the coming weeks. But I want now to give a brief overview of these sections so as to whet our appetites for what is coming in due course.

The first section is here in chapter 14, verse 26. And in this verse, Jesus describes the Spirit's ministry. Now, the word ministry here means his work or the way he helps us.

[18 : 00] And in verse 26, his ministry is a reminding ministry. Jesus says he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I've said to you.

So it's a reminding ministry. The second section comes at chapter 15, verses 26 and 27. Just look with me there, 15, 26.

But when the helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.

And you also will bear witness because you've been with me from the beginning. Now, in this section, the Spirit's ministry is a witnessing ministry. And just notice the content of his witness.

He will bear witness about me, says Jesus. It's as though the Holy Spirit has gone to a law court as an expert witness. Somebody calls upon him to speak.

[18 : 59] And speak he does about Jesus. He bears witness about Jesus. He is, of course, a truthful witness. Because as chapter 14, verse 17 tells us, he is the Spirit of truth.

So he testifies the things that are true of the Lord Jesus. The glory of Jesus. The deity of Jesus. The saving power of Jesus. The immortality of Jesus demonstrated by his resurrection.

He bears witness to the coming return of Jesus. The Spirit knows that the whole saving purpose of the Gospel is accomplished by Jesus. So the Spirit's ministry is to say to us, look at Jesus and understand him.

So it is a witnessing ministry. Then the third section about the Spirit comes at chapter 16, verses 7 and 8. Look with me at 16, 7.

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away. For if I do not go away, the helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

[20 : 04] And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. So the ministry or work of the Spirit here is a convicting or convincing ministry.

The world, he's going to convict the world, that phrase world means human life organized without reference to God, human life that ignores God and is hostile to God.

But the Spirit doesn't leave the world to the consequences of its own folly. He has a message for the world. He teaches the world with convicting power. So he forces the worldly mind to understand sin and the righteousness of God and the judgment of God.

If you've become a Christian, you have been drawn out of the world and out of the world's ignorance of God and you have come to understand the sharp, clear truth about sin and righteousness and judgment.

It was the Holy Spirit who convicted you and convinced you. That's what he does. His ministry is to convict the world. And then fourth, he has a teaching ministry which Jesus explains to us at chapter 16 verses 12 to 15.

[21 : 19] I'll just read verses 12 and 13. I still have many things to say to you but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth for he will not speak on his own authority but whatever he hears he will speak and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

He will guide you into all the truth. This means that every time that you or I grasp something new about God or about the gospel or the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit is guiding us into all the truth.

Now this can happen to us, should happen to us regularly. You're reading your Bible or perhaps you're reading a good book which opens up the Bible's teaching or you're listening to a sermon or you're taking part in a Bible study group.

You might be singing a good hymn but something bursts into flower in your mind. Suddenly you understand something about God. You say, yes, yes, I see it now.

The human mind, it's my way of looking at it anyway. The human mind is full of files, a bit like a computer. Computers, I think, have files, don't they? Anyway, the human mind is like that. If you're like mine, most of the files are full of sawdust but every so often a new file is opened up and a new truth is grasped.

[22 : 44] Well, that's the Holy Spirit who is guiding us into all the truth. So we have here, and we'll see more of this over the weeks, we have a four-fold ministry of the Holy Spirit, a reminding ministry, a witnessing ministry, a convicting ministry, and a teaching ministry.

Why then does Jesus have so much to say about the Holy Spirit to his apostles at this particular point in his life? Well, think of what is actually happening on this Thursday evening of the Last Supper.

Jesus is about to leave his apostles through death, then resurrection, and then 40 days later through his ascension. And they realize, they really do grasp this at least, they realize that he is saying to them, I'm going to leave you.

And they don't like it. Well, of course they wanted him to stay. They still didn't fully understand who he was, but they realized that he had become the central figure of their lives.

And now he was going. So he is saying to them, it's all right that I'm leaving you. You're not going to be left bereft and helpless. You're not going to be helpless because I'm sending you the helper.

[23 : 58] I'm only with you now for a very short time. But when he comes at Pentecost, he will be in you and with you and with you forever. So this teaching about the Holy Spirit is immensely reassuring for the apostles, as it is for us too.

Because we too are not bereft or helpless if we're Christians. The Holy Spirit is with us and in us. We become what Paul describes as the temple of the Holy Spirit, which means the house in which he dwells.

And we need this teaching of Jesus about the Spirit if we are to have a steady and clear view of who the Holy Spirit is and what he does. Sometimes Christians speak of him rather wildly, as if his presence in us will produce a constant excess of emotion.

As though our characters will suddenly become supercalifragilisticexpialidocious. We start living life at a frenetic pace, constantly doing cartwheels up and down the church aisle.

Do I need that at my time of life? I do not. And I don't think that Jesus' teaching about the Spirit leads me to expect that kind of drama. What I need, what all of us need, is his reminding ministry, his witnessing ministry, his convicting ministry, and his teaching ministry.

[25 : 21] And above all, we need him to be our helper. And that's what he is as he gives us the strength and the confidence to endure, to keep going as joyful Christians.

Now, just to remind us of where we're up to this evening, we've strayed a little bit, we're focusing on verse 27 of chapter 14 on this peace that Jesus leaves as his legacy.

So now, under three headings, I want us to look at the verses that surround verse 27 so that we can get a better view of what this peace is and how it will sustain us.

First then, from verse 26, Jesus speaks of this reminding ministry of the Spirit. Now, I've just been talking about this, but I want us to think further about it as Jesus teaches the apostles in verse 26.

Verse 26 certainly has implications for Christians today, but first and foremost, it was intended to help the apostles in their day.

[26 : 21] As we look back down the long road of 2,000 years of history, we naturally ask how the Christian faith has been communicated to us. We ask, what is the gospel and how do we know it?

What authoritative sources are there which shape our understanding? Well, this verse 26 supplies the answer. When Jesus spoke these words on the night before his crucifixion, the Holy Spirit had not yet been poured out on the church.

All these references to the Holy Spirit are expressed in the future tense. So in this verse, Jesus says, he will teach you all things. He hasn't arrived yet, but from Pentecost onwards, he will teach you.

He will teach you all things, which doesn't mean every particle of knowledge in the history of the world, but all the things that you will need to know as my apostles. What then was to be their role?

Their role was to be the foundational teachers of the Church of Christ. They had a unique, unrepeatable, irreplaceable role, which ended with their death.

[27 : 33] There were no subsequent generations of apostles, no second or third generation. But how were these men to know what to teach? How were they to know what to write down?

They were weary and dispirited on that Thursday night. And Jesus was going to say to them at chapter 16, verse 12, I have many other things to say to you, but you can't bear them now.

They were scullered. They didn't know whether they were on their heads or on their heels. So back to chapter 14, verse 26, the Holy Spirit will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you, all that I have said to you over three years of teaching.

So imagine Simon Peter having a cup of tea with his wife a few months later. I don't suppose they drank tea then, but there would have been an equivalent. It was probably water, wasn't it? Anyway, he's drinking something with his wife.

Suddenly he puts his cup of whatever it is down and he says to her, sweetheart, I've just remembered something that Jesus said up on the lake shore at Galilee. I must go into my writing room and write it down right now.

[28 : 38] Or imagine Philip, the apostle, waking up suddenly at three o'clock in the morning, as one does. He jumps out of bed. What are you doing? says his alarmed wife. It's okay, dearest.

I'm just going to the writing room to write down something Jesus said. I wonder how that came to my mind. Well, the answer is that the Holy Spirit was exercising his reminding ministry to the apostles.

They couldn't remember much at all on that dismal Thursday evening, but it came back to them during the months and years that followed. And as they discussed these things with each other and with a wider circle of friends, including people like Mark and Luke, who were not apostles, and then subsequently Paul and James and Jude and others, the shape and the content of the gospel began to emerge in their thinking.

And over the following decades, they wrote it down. And then over many centuries, it was copied and copied again and checked by scribes and scholars. And eventually, in about 1500 AD, it began to be printed on the printing presses of Europe.

And people began to translate it from its original languages into rough, vulgar languages like English. And here we have it today. It even creeps into people's mobile phones, I am told.

[29 : 57] But it's the work of the Holy Spirit who reminded the apostles of everything that Jesus had said to them. So verse 26 describes the way in which the New Testament came into existence.

And this is one of the foundations of the peace that Jesus has bequeathed to us. If we didn't have the New Testament, we would be at sea.

We'd be tossed around by all manner of uncertainties and insecurities. We wouldn't know what Jesus had said. We wouldn't know what he had done. We wouldn't know the meaning of what he had done.

Because the New Testament teaches us not only the facts about Jesus, but how to interpret them, what these facts mean. But we are not at sea. We have the teaching of Jesus and his apostles like a rock beneath our feet.

And our hearts are at peace because we know what to believe. We're not like the man of the world who is desperately thrashing around, searching for something to hang his heartstrings on.

[31 : 00] What can the man of the world turn to to give him peace? Money? Sexual adventures? Narcotic adventures? Gourmet dining? Heavy metal music?

Golf? Stamp collecting? The Holy Spirit has brought us the scriptures and for that reason our hearts can be at peace. Now the second reason for our enjoyment of Jesus' peace is the going away and returning of Jesus.

What you might call his personal itinerary. So let's follow through his line of thinking. He makes his gift of peace to the apostles in verse 27. Then he adds not as the world gives do I give it to you.

The world's peace can only be superficial and temporary. For example a holiday a break from work there you are sitting on the beach lying on the beach at Tenerife looking like a boiled lobster drinking Coca-Cola and reading the collected works of Walter Scott.

That's the world's peace. That's fine but it's shallow it's short lived. Now back to verse 27 Jesus' peace which is not like that takes the trouble and the fear out of our hearts because he ends the verse by saying let not your hearts be troubled neither let them be afraid.

[32 : 28] And then he tells us why we can cast aside trouble and fear. Verse 28 You heard me say to you I'm going away and I will come to you.

You heard me say that well when did he say that to them? Look back to verse 3 in this chapter where he says if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and take you to myself.

So he has already outlined his personal itinerary. I'm going away and I'm coming back and when I come back it's to fetch you so it's good news for you. Now back to verse 28 If you loved me there's a gentle criticism there If you loved me which you don't fully at this stage but if you did love me you would have rejoiced because I'm going to the Father.

You'd have said Hallelujah He's returning to His glory to His glorious home to be with His Father that's where He belongs and that's where we'll be joining Him in due course. Then Jesus adds for the Father is greater than I not that the Father is more divine than the Son no the Father and the Son are one in nature fully divine but the Father in His undiminished glory is unquestionably greater than the Son in His incarnate state with all the humiliation that He was experiencing.

Jesus laid aside His glory so as to be humiliated and crucified and He's gently criticizing the Apostles for being self-centered being concerned with their own grief and loss rather than rejoicing that Jesus could now go to be with His Father.

[34 : 10] But the criticism of verse 28 gives way to something much better in verse 29 and now I've told you before it takes place so that when it does take place you may believe.

In other words when all this happens when you see me on Easter Sunday and you realize that I was telling you the truth about going away and then coming back to you you really will believe in me then and they did.

They could hardly believe it at first it was just so unexpected but when He'd eaten some fish in front of them and they'd had a chance to look at Him and prod Him and talk to Him they were utterly convinced.

He promised to go and to return and He also promises finally to return at the end of the age. Well these are the great events of world history.

Jesus' death His resurrection His ascension and His final return to take His people to His Father's house and if these great events the greatest events of history if they can become firmly fixed in our minds we will enjoy the peace that Jesus has given to us.

[35 : 23] Nothing else in world history is important compared to this great itinerary of Jesus. Forget 1066 forget Bannock Byrne forget Shakespeare and Walter Scott and the Beatles these are just human beings they're just human events.

Believing Christians derive our experience of peace from the death of Jesus which has brought us the forgiveness of sins the resurrection of Jesus which signals the breaking of the power of death the ascension of Jesus which demonstrates His universal and cosmic kingship and His return which will bring about the establishment of the new world.

Verses 28 and 29 in our passage are showing us the foundation of Jesus' gift of peace. peace. It is because He has gone and come back and will finally come back that we can lay our heads on our pillows tonight and know that if this night should be our last on earth all is well.

now thirdly the peace of Jesus is also secured by His defeat of the devil verses 30 and 31 now we've already seen that the peace which is Jesus' legacy is secured by the Holy Spirit's reminding ministry which has produced the authoritative account of Jesus the New Testament and by the great events of Jesus' past accomplishments and future coming but who is really in charge of the world?

Who calls the tune? Who if you like who writes the music to which the world dances? At verse 30 we suddenly feel a sense of Jesus' urgency because He says to the apostles I will no longer talk much with you why not?

[37 : 20] Well He tells them for the ruler of this world is coming now that phrase the ruler of this world is Jesus' description of Satan Jesus has an appointment to keep He's like an athlete buckling on his gear He's like the footballer sitting in the dressing room at 2.30 waiting for the kickoff at 3 o'clock and this may be the meaning of that strange final phrase in verse 31 rise let us go from here it's probably a military term we must go over the top and engage the enemy in Luke's gospel chapter 4 the devil tempts Jesus and as you know fails to gain any kind of foothold over him and Luke rather ominously ends his account of the temptation by saying when the devil had ended every temptation he departed from Jesus until an opportune time he was waiting his moment waiting to administer a death wound and the events of the Thursday evening and Good Friday proved to be the moment of crisis the great battle between the prince of heaven and the prince of this world in Luke's gospel chapter 22 just before Jesus is seized and arrested he says to the soldiers who've come to get him this is your hour and the power of darkness what a thing for Jesus to say it's enough to make your flesh creep isn't it the powers of darkness are abroad

Jesus is saying and I have to engage them so back to chapter 14 verse 30 who is really in charge Jesus describes the devil in this verse as the ruler of this world how can Jesus call him that Jesus says at the end of Matthew's gospel about himself all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me if Jesus has all authority on earth how can the devil be the ruler of this world the way to understand this is that Satan has been granted a limited and temporary authority over the life of the world all power over everything ultimately of course rests with God the Father and with the Lord Jesus but ever since the devil entered the world entered the garden of Eden temptation and sin and the disfigurement of the human race and death have taken hold and God has permitted this

John in his first letter chapter 5 verse 19 says the whole world lies in the power of the evil one his malicious influence is seen all around us all the time in the life of the world around us but also in the fiery darts of temptation that he throws at us read C.S. Lewis his screw tape letters and that amazing Irishman will help you to understand the malice and craftiness of the evil one but his rule over the world is limited John tells us in the book of Revelation chapter 20 that the devil finally is to be thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur from which he will never reemerge so back to chapter 14 verse 30 I'll just try and paraphrase and unpack verses 30 and 31 Jesus is saying I will no longer talk much with you because I have a pressing date in my diary the ruler of this world is coming and I have to meet him and do battle with him he has no claim on me well how could he possibly have claim on Jesus he is the ruler of this world but Jesus is no part of this world

Jesus is from heaven belongs to heaven Jesus is not within the sphere of the devil's jurisdiction but Jesus is saying his purpose is to kill me and he will imagine when I die on the cross that he has won his battle with me and will be able to usurp my authority but verse 31 in going to the cross and laying down my life voluntarily I am doing as the father has commanded me not dying because the devil has defeated me it's my father's will not the devil's will that will bring about my death and end of verse 31 the purpose of all this is to teach a wonderful lesson to the watching world the world will naturally think as the devil does that Jesus is defeated in his death but the world must learn that Jesus is vindicated in his death and that the cross the resurrection and the ascension of Jesus have all happened because the son is committed to loving and obeying his father at all costs

Jesus' willingness to go to the cross demonstrates not the power of the devil but the love that Jesus has for his father rise then let's go let's be at it let the whistle be blown let the contest begin now strangely Jesus doesn't actually leave the upper room immediately we have another three chapters to go before he leaves it's perhaps a little bit like when you're out to dinner with friends and it gets late and you look at your watch and you say oh we must go now it's late but you don't go do you you stay for another half hour well Jesus has a bit more to say now we're nearly done friends but I want us to think for a moment more about the devil's relationship with the world if you and I have become Christians we have been decisively removed from our membership of the world in Jesus' great prayer John 17 verse 16 he says of his disciples they are not of the world just as I am not of the world so the moment we become believers we are transferred from the realm of the world to the realm of eternal life we have an altogether new identity but the person who has not become a Christian still belongs to the realm of the world where the evil one is in charge think again of that verse from 1 John chapter 5 that I quoted a moment ago the whole world is in the power of the evil one so if you are not a Christian just think of what this means you might be walking down

[44 : 04] Socky Hall Street one day whistling nonchalantly thinking about lunch when you feel a tap on your shoulder you look around and the person who has tapped you on the shoulder says you are mine and you say what do you mean I am yours I am not yours I am not anybody's I am a modern autonomous self-determining human being no you are not comes the reply you are mine so you start to get cross and you say well who are you then claiming to possess me my name is Satan Satan you say pull the other one it has got bells on nobody has believed in Satan since the middle ages at which remark Satan chuckles yes he says it's been one of my most successful ploys getting people to believe in my non-existence but I'm real all right you are in my absolute power you really are mine so you say well come on then explain yourself and Satan says you are going to die you are going to die because you have sinned against God and God has truly said the wages of sin is death and even if you go to the gym five times a week for the next 50 years and become a complete abstainer from nicotine alcohol and narcotics you will end up on a slab in the mortuary

Now let's leave that conversation and we'll consider the implications we die because we have sinned as Paul puts it in Romans chapter 5 sin came into the world through one man Adam and death through sin and so death spread to all men because all sinned the ultimate cause of death is sin and all of us by nature are sinners but Jesus came as the only one who could overcome our terrible predicament the wages of sin truly is death but Jesus in going to the cross received those wages on our behalf and in our place representing us he died the death that we deserved so he became our substitute bearing the death penalty that we deserved dying in our place the author of Hebrews in his second chapter puts it like this that Jesus took on flesh and blood became a real human being so that through death through his death he might destroy the one who has the power of death that is the devil and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery that's why the person who is not a Christian walks in fear of death and is truly under the power of the devil but those who have come to

Christ are removed from the sphere of the devil's authority and we belong to Jesus who says about the ruler of this world he has no claim on me and by extension no claim on those who belong to me the devil has been defeated by Jesus we who trust him share in our Lord's victory over the evil one and that is the third reason why we can enjoy and experience the peace which is Jesus' parting gift to all his people so friends let's allow this verse 27 so beautiful so strong to sink into our hearts tonight the Holy Spirit has brought the authoritative life-giving New Testament into existence to shape and establish our faith Jesus though in heaven now will return and take us to be with him forever and he has defeated the devil who has no claim upon our savior or upon any who belong to Jesus peace so let's allow Jesus to speak to us again in these words peace

I leave with you my peace I give to you not as the world gives do I give to you let not your hearts be troubled neither let them be afraid well let's bow our heads and we'll pray together our dear heavenly father we thank you that you have not left us to be in the grip of anxieties and fears about our lives but by sending Jesus to the world you have overcome the world and the ruler of the world help us all so to trust you that we come to experience more and more the peace that our Lord Jesus has given to us as his legacy and we ask it in his name amen amen