Keeping the Peace **5.17.09**

15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Colossians 3:15 ESV

What is God telling us to do?

1. *"And let the peace of Christ rule…"*
    a. Eternal Peace with God through Jesus. Rom. 5:1
    b. Ongoing peace with God. Phil. 4:7
2. *"…in your hearts…"*
    a. The heart is the source of all behavior—actions, speech etc. Matt. 15.
    b. Peace in our lives begins with peace in our hearts.
3. *"…to which indeed you were called in one body…"*
    a. There are both communal and individual implications.
4. *"…And be thankful."*
    a. Unclear if it is a stand-alone command or connected.
    b. It seems that he is telling them to *"live out the peace of Christ"* with a sense of thankfulness.

Why is this such a struggle for us?

1. We have never experienced the *"peace of Christ"* in the *"eternal sense."*
    a. We need to repent and believe.
2. We have three enemies that "disturb the peace."
    a. The World.
        i. The world is broken.
            1. There is bad news all around us.
            2. The world operates on a different set of values.
    b. The Flesh.
        i. We are broken.
            1. Even though we have been 'saved,' we are still a work in progress.
            2. We get busy, distracted, anxious, etc.
    c. The Devil.
        i. Direct spiritual opposition.
            1. He knows and exploits our weaknesses.
        ii. Our understanding of his role requires balance.
            1. We have to give him *some* credit, but not too much.
            2. We must be aware but not afraid.

How do we do what God is telling us to do?

1. Recognize that this calls for a 'care plan' and not a 'band aid.'

2. Work from the Inside Out (just like Paul suggests in the Text):

a. God's Word:
    i. For starters: Matt. 6, Phil. 4:6-7
    ii. Use your concordance for your additional specific struggles (fear, worry, control, etc.)

b. God's Spirit:
    i. Illuminate the Word to us.
    ii. Identify what is really going on in our hearts and convict sin.
    iii. Empower us do what God is calling us to do.

c. God's Gospel:
    i. Our peace is disturbed when are idols are threatened.
    ii. Our responses (worry, anger etc.) reveal our idols as we fight to defend them.
    iii. The answer is to repent and trust Jesus. This is a way of life.

d. God's Plan (Practical Steps):
    i. Evaluate how the World, Flesh and Devil "disturb the peace" in your life.
    ii. Evaluate your focus.
        1. If you focus on the temporal, it will be impossible.
            a. Money? Security? Health? Never enough.
    iii. Live one day at a time in light of eternity. (Mt. 6:34)

e. God's People:
    i. Honestly share your struggles with your group.
        1. Support. Encourage. Gospel Accountability.

The Gospel is our only hope for letting the peace of Christ rule in our hearts.

Works Consulted: *Expositor's Commentary, Life Application Bible, MacArthur Study Bible, ESV Study Bible, Jesus: Lord of Your Personality by Bob Russell*