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Daily Devotional, Thursday, November 30, 2017 - Jesus: The Source of Peace

NOVEMBER 30TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Colossians 1:15-20

Before we knew Jesus Christ, our life was full of godlessness and wickedness—we had self-seeking ways and stubborn, unrepentant hearts (Rom. 1:18; Rom. 2:5, Rom. 2:8). Like our strife-filled world, we clamored for peace and tried to find it, but our efforts failed.

When we came to faith in the Savior, all of that changed. We were rescued from the dominion of darkness and brought into Christ's kingdom (Col. 1:13). Every one of our sins—past, present, and future—was forgiven. Divine justice was satisfied by Christ's sacrifice, and God's wrath upon us was removed. We became a new creation, washed clean by Jesus' blood (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Now that sin's power over us has been broken, we can become members of God's family rather than His enemies (Rom. 5:10). He sent His Holy Spirit to be our personal guide in this new life, helping each of us experience Christ's peace (Rom. 8:6). We also can look forward to an eternity spent in heaven, where righteousness, tranquility, and joy abound (Rom. 14:17).

The story of the Prodigal Son's return is a picture of our reconciliation with the Lord (Luke 15:11-32). The young man had chosen to leave his father, living instead to please himself. Repentant, the son eventually returned home; his father joyfully greeted and forgave him, and

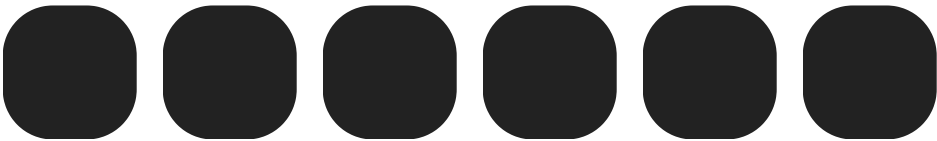
there was harmony between them. God has done all this for us.

Our unity with the heavenly Father came at a great price—the sacrifice of His only Son. Christ gave His life for us so that we could be reconciled to God (Col. 1:20). Christian lives are to testify that Jesus is the source of our peace. Does your life communicate this message?

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Daily Devotional, Wednesday, November 29, 2017 - Peace With God

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Romans 5:1-2

One day I posed a question to the waitress at a restaurant: “If you could ask God for anything, what would your request be?” Her answer was immediate. “I want to feel at peace.” She tearfully explained that her grandmother had died and emotional turmoil resulted.

Many in our world are like this woman, in that they desire inner calmness but have no relationship with the Lord. People often seek contentment by trying to improve their appearance, physical fitness, financial situation, or social status—or by abusing substances. But such things can’t bring tranquility of heart or mind. Only a relationship with Jesus leads to true peace.

Prior to salvation, we were slaves to sin and living in opposition to God (Col. 1:21). Our transgressions had formed a barrier of hostility between Him and us, and on our own, we were helpless to cross it. Without God’s intervention, we could not have found the way of peace. But our heavenly Father provided the perfect solution to our sin problem. He sent His Son to pay for our iniquities and remove the separation that existed between us and Him.

When we trusted Jesus as our Savior, we were reconciled to the Lord and no longer at odds with Him (Rom. 5:10). In Christ, we have peace with the Father.

Our triune God has provided everything we need for inner tranquility. The Father opened the way for us to be in His family. Jesus continually offers His peace so we can experience serenity of mind and heart (John 14:27). And the Holy Spirit cultivates the fruit of peace in our lives (Gal. 5:22).

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Daily Devotional, Tuesday, November 28, 2017 - Heirs to a Grand Inheritance

NOVEMBER 28TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Tuesday, November 28, 2017 - Heirs to a Grand Inheritance

Ephesians 1:9-14

Did you know that you are an heir to unimaginable wealth that will never fade away? If you're a believer, then God has an inheritance reserved for you in heaven. In fact, He says you have already obtained it. (See Eph. 1:11.) Your right to this treasure is not based on anything that you've done, but on the one to whom you belong. If you are a child of God, then the inheritance is yours and will be "revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:4-5).

No one can take our inheritance from us, because God has guaranteed it by sealing us with His Holy Spirit of promise. The transaction is complete and merely awaits the ultimate consummation when everything will be brought under the headship of Christ. This seal shows His ownership and authority over us, and one day our full redemption will come.

Naturally, we all want to know what we're going to inherit. Much of that is beyond our earthly comprehension, but Scripture gives us a few hints. It will involve the transformation of both our body and soul. The goal for which God predestined us will be completed as we stand before Him, conformed to the likeness of His Son (Rom. 8:29; 1 John 3:2). And these weak, perishable bodies will be changed into strong, glorious ones that are free from sin and death (Phil. 3:20-21).

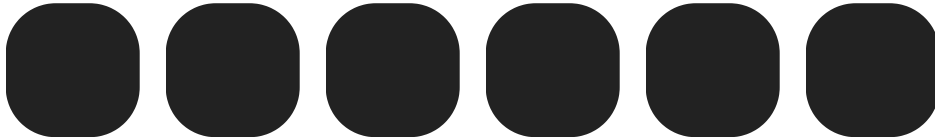
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Why has God done all of this for us? Amazingly, He says it's so that throughout eternity He can show us "the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:7). In love and gratitude for such amazing goodness, let's devote each day of our life to living for Him.

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Daily Devotional, Monday, November 27, 2017 - Defending the Faith

NOVEMBER 27TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Monday, November 27, 2017 - Defending the Faith

1 Peter 3:13-16

Knowing God's Word and understanding what we believe are essential for growth in Christ and protection from deception. However, these alone aren't the final goal. We are not left on earth merely to know for ourselves what God has said. Rather, we're to share His good news. In other words, we're to be "ready to make a defense to everyone who asks [us] to give an account for the hope that is in [us]" (1 Peter 3:15).

The word *defense* means "an answer one gives to explain himself." Believers should be ready to give an account of their motives and reasons for holding on to their hope in Christ. Because of busy lifestyles, many Christians have never taken the time to really think through their views and beliefs. When someone challenges them, they feel a sense of panic because they're totally unprepared.

Giving an account for our faith must be accompanied by a gentle, respectful delivery. Aggressively dumping a load of truth on a questioning person rarely leads him to God, but a gentle answer opens hearts as well as ears.

And remember, people watch to see if all we profess is backed up with a life of integrity. A Christian who is living a hypocritical lifestyle will have a worthless testimony.

These verses were not written to scholars; they were intended for ordinary people with jobs and families. The task isn't impossible, yet it requires time spent reading and studying God's Word. In setting Christ apart as the Lord of your heart, you will find that time with Him becomes a joy, not a sacrifice.

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Daily Devotional, Friday, November 24, 2017 - Is God in Everything?

NOVEMBER 24TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Genesis 50:15-21

The Old Testament story of Joseph is one of the best-known examples of the Lord blessing someone's life through harsh experiences. In today's passage, the slave-turned-prisoner-turned-national leader stands before his brothers who sold him into servitude. He speaks kindly to them, saying, "Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive" (Gen. 50:19-20).

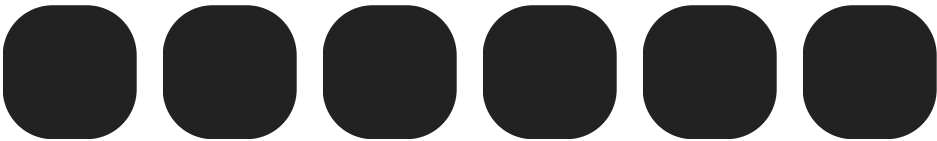
One individual's sin or failure oftentimes affects another person's life—something we tend to deem unfair. But our ways are different than God's ways (Isa. 55:8-9). From Scripture, we can glean that Joseph desired to serve the Lord (Gen. 39:9; Gen. 40:8; Gen. 41:16). Yet his brothers were permitted to sell him as a slave. And Potiphar's wife wasn't prevented from making false accusations, which landed the young man in prison. The Bible promises, "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them" (Psalm 34:7). In other words, hardship and trial could touch Joseph—or any of the faithful—only because God purposefully allowed it.

No one can say for sure why bad things happen. But we can draw comfort from the fact that God knows: “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law” (Deut. 29:29). Our part is to learn from the example of men like Joseph, who trusted the Lord and followed His commands.

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