

Lesson 14

JESUS, OUR PEACE

Introduction

In our previous lesson, Jesus washed His disciples' feet and taught us a lesson of humble service. When He finished, He returned to the table to recline. Judas left before the meal was over, slinking out into the darkness of the night, which reflected the state of his soul. Could any night be darker than the one on which Jesus was betrayed? When He looked around the table after Judas had left, He felt freed to talk to the remaining disciples, knowing that although most of them would soon abandon Him, they would need the lessons He was about to share when their hearts returned to Him.

Jesus spoke these words to His disciples knowing that their worlds were about to be turned upside down. He wanted to give them practical advice so that when all seemed lost, they would not lose hope. His words apply to us today. No matter how dissatisfying, unsettling, or frightening our circumstances, Jesus can be our peace.

I spoke recently to a couple on the brink of divorce. The wife said to me, "He doesn't do anything to fulfill me, and I don't do anything to fulfill him. I think we both could be so much happier if we were with someone else. We're just not compatible," she said. This couple is unhappy. They both want relief from the fighting and tension. Like so many, they are hoping that another person will resolve their interior emptiness, lack of purpose, and feelings of unrest. They want to experience inner peace. Where can peace be found? Is it found in the perfect spouse, a fulfilling career, or financial security?

Our passage for today begins with Jesus' words: "Let not your hearts be troubled." Troubles come our way; none of us are able to avoid them. So how can we have trouble-free hearts in the midst of unhappy circumstances? How can we have peaceful hearts if our marriages aren't what we hoped for? How can we have peaceful hearts when the medical report brings bad news? How can we have peaceful hearts when our children disappoint, finances are tight, or death robs us of a loved one?

Our emotions run wild when we face difficulties. Our imagination kicks into gear. We analyze every detail over and over again. Fear takes over and peace seems elusive.

Yet, if Jesus told us not to have troubled hearts, then peace must be possible. Jesus never asks anything for which He doesn't give the means. He said, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. Trust also in me." Therein lies the key. Trust, and have faith.

Day One

Read John 14:1–6.

1. How did Jesus describe His Father's house? What place was He describing?
2. How does CCC 2795 describe the Father's house? What enables us to return there?
3. What will heaven be like? See CCC 1024 and 1025.
4. A. Developing an eternal perspective means that we fix our eyes on heaven. How can this help us when trouble comes into our life? See 2 Corinthians 4:17.

B. What did Jesus promise in John 14:3?

5. How did Jesus say we are to reach the Father in heaven? What was He claiming by this statement? See also Acts 4:12.

Quiet your heart and enjoy His presence. . . . Take a moment to contemplate how the decisions you make today affect your eternity.

The single most important decision you will ever make is whether or not you will trust Jesus. Your decision will determine where you spend eternity. Have you placed your trust in Jesus, or in something or someone else?

Thank you, dear God, for your limitless love for me. I need you. Without you, I'll never experience the forgiveness and freedom that I desire. Thank you for your sacrifice on the cross. Thank you for loving me and dying for me, even when I have been such a mess. Forgive me for all the times that I've chosen what I want instead of what you want for me. I don't deserve your grace, yet you pour it out on me. Fill my emptiness with your presence. Be my peace. May my will be changed so that what I want is what you want, when you want it, and how you want it. I've tried to run my life for so long. I want you to run it from this day forward. I want you to be in the driver's seat of my life. I trust you. Thank you for loving me. Thank you for forgiving me. Thank you for filling me.

Day Two

Read John 14:7–14.

1. Describe Jesus' emotions in His response to Philip's statement "Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied."

2. What was Jesus claiming when He said, “He who has seen me has seen the Father”? How does Colossians 1:15 affirm this truth?

3. What needed to happen before Jesus’ followers could do the works that He did, and greater works than those?

4. What did Jesus promise in John 14:13? What was the stipulation in His promise? What was His purpose in fulfilling His promise?

5. What does it mean to ask in Jesus’ name? See CCC 2614.

Quiet your heart and enjoy His presence. . . . Take a moment to contemplate the needs and desires that are on your heart today.

Write them down or mentally lay them before Christ. Ask Him to reveal to you if the things you are asking for correspond to His will. If they do not, ask Him for the strength to let them go. Then ask God to replace those desires with good ones from Him. Ask Him for the strength and wisdom to want His will above all things. Psalm 37:4 says, “Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.” People sometimes misinterpret that verse to mean that God will give us whatever we want. We must make sure that we are first delighting ourselves in the Lord. When we do, and when pleasing God and loving Him are what bring us the most pleasure, the things that our hearts desire will be the things that God wants to do for us.

Day Three

Read John 14:15–26.

1. How do we show God that we love Him? (John 14:15, 21, and 1 John 2:5–6)
2. The word *commandments* recalls the Ten Commandments given to Moses on Mount Sinai. In Matthew 5:17, Jesus said, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them.” Jesus asked His disciples not just to live in accordance with the law but also to embrace it in spirit. For example, the Ten Commandments say, “Do not commit adultery.” Jesus told His followers that to look at a person lustfully means you’ve already committed adultery in your heart. He asks His followers to go beyond mere compliance and to live with holiness of heart. What is the standard of holiness that God requires of us? See 1 Peter 1:14–15 and Hebrews 12:14.
3. God knew that on our own, we would never be able to be truly holy. Whom did He send to help us? How does He help us? See John 14:16–17 and the following note.

Counselor (John 14:16)

Parakletos (Gk.): an “advocate” or “helper.” The word is used five times in John’s writings, always with reference to Jesus or the Holy Spirit. It is a legal term for an attorney or spokesman who defends the cause of the accused in a courtroom. Jesus uses it for a heavenly intercessor who is called to the side of God’s children to offer strength and support. Jesus is a “Paraclete” because in heaven he pleads to the Father for believers still struggling on earth (1 John 2:1). The Spirit, too, is a “Paraclete” because he is sent to strengthen the disciples in Jesus’ absence (John 14:16), instruct them in the truth (John 14:26;

15:26), and defend them against the prosecutions of the devil (John 16:7–11), who is the “accuser” of the family of God (Rev. 12:10).¹

4. What else did Jesus teach about the Holy Spirit, in John 14:25–26?

Quiet your heart and enjoy His presence. . . . Take a moment to contemplate the work of the Holy Spirit in your life. Pray the Come, Holy Spirit prayer with an increased awareness of the role He plays as you study God’s Word:

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and you shall renew the face of the earth. O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the gift of the same Spirit, we may be truly wise and always rejoice in His consolation, through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

Day Four

Read John 14:27–31.

1. In John 14:27, Jesus differentiated between the peace He gives and the peace the world gives. How would you describe the difference between the two?
2. List some ways in which many people seek peace apart from Christ.

¹ Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, RSV, 190.

3. In what area of your life would you most like to experience greater peace?

4. Why did Jesus tell His disciples that He was going to be leaving them? See John 14:29.

5. What did Jesus tell His disciples about Satan in John 14:30? Why? How does this reinforce His previous words to them in John 10:17–18?

Quiet your heart and enjoy His presence. . . . Take a moment to contemplate these words from the Lord, spoken through Saint Catherine of Siena:

Why don't you have confidence in me, your creator? Why do you rely on yourself? Am I not faithful and loyal to you? Redeemed and restored to grace by virtue of the blood of my only son, man can then say that he has experienced my fidelity. And, nevertheless, he still doubts, it would appear, that I am sufficiently powerful to help him, sufficiently strong to help and defend him against his enemies, sufficiently wise to illuminate the eyes of his intelligence or that I have sufficient clemency to want to give him whatever is necessary for his salvation. It would appear that I am not sufficiently rich to make his fortune, not beautiful enough to make him beautiful; one might say that he is afraid not to find enough bread in my home to nourish himself, nor clothing with which to cover himself.

Original sin causes us all to struggle with mistrust of God. We question whether He really wants what is best for us and whether He is powerful enough to deliver it. Ask God to help you to grow in confidence in Him. Contemplate the ways in which He has more than adequately provided for you spiritually, physically, and emotionally.

Day Five

Read John 14.

After reading John 14 in its entirety, fill in the following blanks for a summary of the ways in which we can experience Christ's peace as revealed in this chapter of Scripture.

1. John 14:1–6

We grow in peace when we focus on _____.
See also Colossians 3:2, 2 Peter 3:13, and Revelation 21:1–5.

2. John 14:7–14

We grow in peace when we pray in Jesus' name, which means that we align our will with _____'s _____.
See also Romans 12:2, Proverbs 3:5, Matthew 6:33, and 1 John 5:14.

3. John 14:13–14

We grow in peace when we _____, and trust God with the results.
See also Philippians 4:6–9, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, and Mark 11:22–25.

4. John 14:15–26

We grow in peace when we stop trying to do things in our own strength, stop trying to control everything, and instead rely on the _____
_____.

Quiet your heart and enjoy His presence. . . . Take a moment to contemplate whether your prayers show evidence of trust and faith in God.

When you come to God with your prayer requests, do you really believe He listens and cares? If you do, then after you pour out your heart to God, you can immediately thank Him for the answer that He is going to give. It may not be the answer you want, but it will be the answer that is best for you. Instead of continually asking for the same thing, you can thank God for the fact that He is "on it." He is working on your behalf. God starts to answer your prayers long before you see evidence that He is doing so.

Conclusion

Never look ahead to the changes and challenges of this life in fear. Instead, as they arise, look at them with the full assurance that God, whose you are, will deliver you out of them. Hasn't He kept you safe up till now? So hold His loving hand tightly and He will lead you safely through all things. And when you cannot stand, He will carry you in His arms.

“Do not look ahead to what *may* happen tomorrow. The same everlasting Father who cares for you today will take care of you tomorrow and every day. Either He will shield you from suffering or He will give you His unwavering strength that you may bear it. Be at peace, then, and set aside all anxious thoughts and worries.” —Francis de Sales

My Resolution

In what specific way will I apply what I learned in this lesson?

Examples:

1. When I feel I don't have peace, I will check myself to see if I am:
 - A. overanalyzing every detail repeatedly
 - B. letting my imagination run wild
 - C. becoming consumed with what-ifs and if-onlys

I will acknowledge that this shows my lack of trust in God and His provision for me. I'll say a prayer about whatever is causing me anxiety, and then I will thank God for answering my prayer.

2. I will start my day by praying an Act of Faith prayer. Each time I begin to worry or be afraid, I will pray it again.

Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three Divine Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your Divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths the Holy Catholic Church teaches because You have revealed them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

My Resolution:

Catechism Clips

CCC 1024 This perfect life with the Most Holy Trinity—this communion of life and love with the Trinity, with the Virgin Mary, the angels and all the blessed—is called “heaven.” Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness.

CCC 1025 To live in heaven is “to be with Christ.” The elect live “in Christ,” but they retain, or rather find, their true identity, their own name. For life is to be with Christ; where Christ is, there is life; there is the kingdom.

CCC 2614 When Jesus openly entrusts to his disciples the mystery of prayer to the Father, he reveals to them what their prayer and ours must be, once he has returned to the Father in his glorified humanity. What is new is to “ask in his name.” Faith in the Son introduces the disciples into the knowledge of the Father, because Jesus is “the way, and the truth, and the life.” Faith bears its fruit in love: it means keeping the word and the commandments of Jesus, it means abiding with him in the Father who, in him, so loves us that he abides with us. In this new covenant, the certitude that our petitions will be heard is founded on the prayer of Jesus.

CCC 2795 The symbol of the heavens refers us back to the mystery of the covenant we are living when we pray to our Father. He is in heaven, his dwelling place; the Father’s house is our homeland. Sin has exiled us from the land of the covenant, but conversion of heart enables us to return to the Father, to heaven. In Christ, then, heaven and earth are reconciled, for the Son alone “descended from heaven” and causes us to ascend there with him by his Cross, Resurrection, and Ascension.