

Christ Is Our Peace

Monday, 7/21/08 – Read Acts 10:34-43

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: This week we approach the central meaning of "The New Humanity." God's New Humanity is not merely toleration; it's not just getting along with others. It's not being nice. ... It is a new community because its members have a higher allegiance. In the New Humanity people relate to one another not only at a human level. They are deeply connected to each other through a common devotion to God's love in Jesus -- and a devotion to the work that God is doing in the world today. ... Can you think of a time when you felt a special connection to someone because you shared a common devotion?... Have you ever experienced a special connection with someone because of your shared devotion to Christ?

Tuesday, 7/22/08 – Read Ephesians 2:13-22

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Pay special attention to verse 14. This is the core meaning of The New Humanity: **Christ is our Peace.** He is the cornerstone, the foundation of God's whole building project. To use the imagery of today's reading: God is bringing us together into a holy temple. Together we are the building in which God lives and through which God acts. ... Imagine two people at odds with each other. Imagine that both of them discover that God loves them passionately and individually. And imagine that the differences they may have had become much less important -- in the light of the love of God in Jesus. He is their peace. Because of Jesus they can be together peacefully and creatively because they realize that the other is passionately loved by God too. ... Is Christ your peace?

Wednesday, 7/23/08 – Read John 14:25-29

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: On the night before his death, Jesus said to his close friends: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives." Jesus' parting gift was his own peace. It's not just the absence of

conflict -- that's the world's peace. It is a creative engagement with one another that flows out of a heart which has received the love of God. ... Can you remember a time when your own heart was full of the love of God, when God's love flowed through you to the other people in your life? Can you remember a time like that? If you can, describe that experience. If you can't, in your prayer today, open your heart to God and ask God to fill your heart with God's overflowing love.

Thursday, 7/24/08 – Read Colossians 3:12-17

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: So, practically and realistically, how do you live as part of God's New Humanity? ... First let the peace of Christ **rule** in your heart (verse 15). In other words focus your attention on God's love for you in Christ. When contrary impulses sneak in, speak directly to the impulses you feel and tell them that Christ's peace is now in charge in your heart. ... Then pick one of the virtues that are mentioned in today's reading -- compassion, kindness, patience, forgiveness. Pick one of these virtues and intentionally act on it in your relationships for a few days. ... Soon you'll notice subtle unexpected differences in some relationships. Soon you'll discover that indeed you are part of the one body (verse 15) -- that is the Body of Christ, God's New Humanity.

Friday, 7/25/08 – Read Ephesians 4:11-16

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Today's reading gives us another specific "how to" -- how to live in The New Humanity. Look at verse 15: "speaking the truth in love." Some people pride themselves on always telling the truth -- no matter whom it hurts. Others think of themselves as loving -- even if that means that they don't always tell the truth. Today's recommendation is really, really hard: speaking the truth in love. ... What do you think that means? ... Can you think of an example from your own life? Think of a time when it would have been far easier either to speak truthfully -- or to speak lovingly. But what was needed was BOTH truth AND love.

Describe the situation. Describe the response that would have been both truthful and loving. ... God's New Humanity is not just tolerating each other. It's not just being nice or getting along. It means engaging one another deeply, truthfully, lovingly. Jot down your thoughts about this.

Saturday, 7/26/08 – Read Romans 12:9-18

My Observations: _____
A Question to Answer: Here's one more "how to" for this week. Again, we are asked to live in harmony. Now look at verse 18: "so far as it depends on you, live peaceably ..." Some relationships are really hard -- even in the church, even in God's New Humanity. Sometime you will run into someone who just won't do their part; they won't meet you half way. You try. But they don't seem to be trying. ... It's easy at that point just to give up on them, to write them off. Today's recommendation is very sensible. You cannot make that other person do their part. But you can do your part. And that's what God wants each of us to do. Just do your part. ... Think of a relationship where you have wanted to give up and throw in the towel. What is your part of the relationship. You're not responsible for their choices or actions; you're not responsible for success. You're responsible only for your part. ... Write down what you can do as your part of that relationship.

Sunday, 7/27/08 – Read Philippians 4:2-9

My Observations: _____
A Question to Answer: God's New Humanity is a mysterious thing. Sometimes we feel it when our common gratitude for Christ and our common devotion to him brings us together with people very different from ourselves. At those times we know that Christ is our peace ... and that God's peace surpasses all understanding (verse 7). ... In your prayer today, open your heart to God's love for you and open your heart to include God's love for the people you have trouble with. Just tell God that you are open to whatever God has in store for you.

My Faith Journal, July 20, 2008
The New Humanity #10
Getting Personal (2)

What do I want to remember out of today's message?

What action do I intend to take as a result of today's message?

Each day this week, READ through the Bible passage indicated on the inside of this guide. WRITE your thoughts, reactions, observations. ANSWER THE QUESTION to begin connecting the Bible with your life experience. Use additional paper or your own notebook if you need more space to write.