

**January 25 Worship
Reader-**

Announcements/Joys

Time Of Quiet Meditation- *“Strive for peace with all men, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.”* Hebrew 12:14

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Opening Scripture- Psalm 27:1,5-13(page477-478)

Opening Chorus- 343- Bind Us Together

Responsive Call To Worship-

Leader: The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

People: The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

Leader: One thing I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after:

People: To behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.

Leader: "Come," my heart says, "seek his face!"

People: Your face, Lord, do I seek.

Leader: O Lord God of our salvation, we worship and adore you,

People: We will sing your praises for ever and ever. Amen!

Hymn of Praise- 400- Jesus Calls Us O'er The Tumult

Unison Prayer/Lord's Prayer- God of goodness and mercy, of gentleness and kindness, of righteousness and faithfulness: be the light of our salvation and sustain our souls. We offer the daily tasks that consume us to you, for we accomplish nothing without your grace. We submit to your will, that we should love you with our everything and love our neighbors, and even our enemies, as ourselves. Renew us and transform us by your steadfast love into the people of God. We pray in the name theone who taught us to pray, saying... *“Lord's Prayer...*

“Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

Gloria Patri- Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. World without end.
Amen, Amen.

Old Testament Scripture- Isaiah 9:1-4(page 593)

Special Music-

Gospel Scripture- Matthew 4:12-23(page 837)

Children's Time/Echo Prayer/Passing of the Peace

Hymn- 671-In Christ There Is No East Or West

New Testament Scripture- 1 Corinthians 1:10-18(page 991)

Message

“Play Nice”

There is something in our lives that seems to be an elusive goal or an idealistic dream. I am talking about peace, not worldly peace, simply peace among individuals. There are days when it feels as if no matter where we turn there is conflict. Not just on the news but in our personal lives. Conflict and strife surrounds us and clouds our interactions with those we love. Is there any hope in this world of chaos and strife? First of all we must realize that there is a good kind of peace and a bad kind of peace. In the gospel of Matthew, chapter 5, verse 9, Jesus said “Blessed are the peacemakers,” but He also said that sometimes making peace is not good. In Matthew 10:34-37 He says; “Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man’s foes will be those of his own household. He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.” The peace that Jesus promises does not sound very appealing does it? His peace requires something we will speak of later.

We are in desperate need of “Peace Makers” today. We need more people who will make peace and be peacemakers. We have enough conflict. We have conflict on every side. We have conflict in families. We have conflict at school. We have conflict on the job. We have conflict in churches. We have conflict in our communities and in our nation. And we’ve got conflict between nations today. When you go back and read the Bible from beginning to end, you see that conflict is as old as mankind. We discover interpersonal conflict very early on in the book of Genesis and it continues throughout the scriptures. You find in the Bible that

conflict is man's creation. It's not God's creation. There is no conflict between God and Christ and the Holy Spirit. Conflict is from man. And that conflict really goes back to the Satan himself. He's the author of it. God is the author of peace in 1st Corinthians 14:33; "For God is not a God of confusion but of peace." The Bible says God is not the author of confusion, but of peace. He wants peace, not conflict and fighting, because those things come from pure selfishness. The source, the origin, of conflict is in selfishness. He talks about wars and fighting. He's not talking about physical, literal battles and wars. He's talking about the conflict between human beings.

In our conflict with each other, we must decide what peace means to us and what kind of peace we require. We can find peace with each other in different ways. They say that it requires compromise and this may be true. Remember, however, compromise does not mean giving up your faith and your principles. Jesus wants us to get along, yes, but the deeper truth is that we get along in God. Keeping God's truth is what allows us to love others even when they disagree with us. We must develop, within us, a spirit of tolerance for what others may believe. This does not mean that we need to take on someones beliefs or agree with them that they are right. We must recognize that we all have a God given right to our own way of thinking.

In our search for tolerance, we need to be cautious of certain ways of thinking. There is something known as "moral relativism" that we must be aware of. "Moral Relativism" is often considered to be the "supreme virtue." Every philosophy, idea, and faith system has equal merit, says the relativist, and is worthy of equal respect. Those who favor one faith system over another or, even worse, claim a knowledge of absolute truth are considered narrow-minded, unenlightened, or even bigoted. In this way of thinking, tolerance becomes intolerant of anyone who believes strongly in anything. Having faith and believing in the truth is not wrong. We must be able to back up our faith with knowledge. It is not enough to simply say, "I believe," we need to be able show why we believe and where we get our beliefs. Knowledge of the Bible is important if we are to have the ability to show why we believe.

If we are to get along with others in this world where confrontation seems to be the way we communicate, we must, as Christians, understand that arguing about faith is not the same as discussing faith. We have been given the blessing of free will and it applies to all of us. We have the right and along with comes the responsibility to extend that right to others even if they think differently from us. Just remember that it works both ways. We are not required to change our beliefs because someone disagrees with us, just as they do not have to change because we think differently. It is through mutual respect that we can agree to disagree and love each other as Jesus wants us to.

In our discussions with others who may have different viewpoints, we must be careful to not allow ourselves to disparage or demean those with whom we may disagree. It is not our place to judge people for their opinions. We can judge their actions, not their thoughts. Everyone has the right to be wrong, even us. God will make the final judgment and that will only happen when God is ready. Until then we are called to love each other, even those who oppose us. Ephesians 4:15 refers to "speaking the truth in love." 1st Peter 3:15 instructs Christians to defend their faith, but to do so "with gentleness and respect." Colossians 4:6 proclaims, "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt." Sadly, some Christians fail to follow these biblical instructions. Some Christians (or at least people who claim to be Christians) speak the truth, but speak it in such a way that it is very hateful. We are not allowed to hate those who we perceive to be sinning against God because we would be required to hate ourselves as well. Romans 3:23 says; "since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." There is not one of us who can make the claim that we are without sin. We are commanded not to judge another, that is God's job.

I know that there are times that getting along with some people is not easy. How do we get through those times? As hard as it is, there are times that we must bite our tongues and walk away. It is built into our DNA to prove to others that we are right and they are wrong. We need to fight that urge to turn disagreement into conflict. Turning away and keeping silent when it becomes obvious that conflict is imminent does not mean that we are compromising our beliefs. It only means that we are acknowledging the fact that we are not going to change their minds anymore that they are going to change ours. Agree to disagree.

There are things going on in this world that are troubling and hurtful. As much as we would like to, we are limited in our ability to change them. We can, however, change the way we interact with those around us and in doing so help to change the world, one relationship at a time. Practice the power of your faith by doing what Jesus tell us must be done; love our enemies as well as our friends. Do not allow those who wish to tear down everything make us a part of that destruction. Play nice with others. Praise Be to God. Amen.

Prayers of the People- God, our Light and Salvation, forgive us for those moments when we have walked in darkness, stumbling in the wilderness of quarrels, division, and bickering. You have called us to follow you and to fish for people but too often we think that our way is the only way to do your will. Forgive us, Lord, for the brokenness that we bring upon ourselves. God, the Stronghold of our Life, hear our cry as we come to you for unity. Send your Spirit to gather us as you desire us. Remind us that unity does not mean uniformity. Teach us that the "same mind" you

call us to have is not ours, but the mind of your Son, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Closing Hymn- 589- O Jesus I Have Promised

Benediction- Go now in peace, for Christ has called you to live in peace among your brothers and sisters in Christ. Go now in courage, for Christ has called you from the places of your life to be agents of redemption and partners in healing. Go now in joy and thanksgiving, for Christ is our light! Go now as one body, to love and serve God as you love and serve the world!