Lesson Three:

JESUS IS MY PEACE

INTRODUCTION

"For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, *PRINCE OF PEACE*" (Isaiah 9:6, NIV).

Isaiah, an Old Testament prophet, foretold the miraculous birth of Jesus. Among other titles, Jesus is called the *Prince of Peace*. A prince is someone who is in charge of a territory, with all the rights and responsibilities of his position. Jesus, as Prince of Peace, therefore, is in charge of *peace*. He can give peace to the hearts of each of us, His sisters. Like all good friends and elder brothers, He is anxious to bestow this gift upon us. We need only accept it. In this lesson, we will explore how we can have a wonderfully peaceful attitude.

A GIFT FOR US

1. What gift did Jesus promise His followers? (John 14:27)

It is interesting to read this text in different versions of the Bible. For example:

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (NIV).

"I leave behind with you—peace; I give you my own peace and my gift is nothing like the peace of this world. You must not be distressed and you must not be daunted" (Phillips).

"Peace is my parting gift to you, my own peace, such as the world cannot give. Set your troubled hearts at rest, and banish your fears" (NEB).

Each translation, while repeating the same thought, adds its own shade of meaning. In each, however, we find that Jesus is giving to us, His sisters, His own peace. "The believer... is to accept Christ as his [her] peace, for with Christ is God and peace" (Ellen White, *Selected Messages,* Book One, p. 395).

2. What does it mean to you to have peace? What other words could you use instead of peace?

One word that reminds us of peace is *rest*. Jesus tells us, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Matthew 11:28, NIV). Have you ever been so weary that you felt ill, yet you could not sleep because you were worried about someone or something? Jesus wants us to accept Him as our peace; He wants to give us rest. "Learn from Me," He says, "for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find *rest*..." There is nothing quite so comfortable as turning our problems over to Jesus and trusting Him to take care of them. We find true rest in this way.

ZECHARIAH PROCLAIMED THE PEACE OF JESUS

Before Jesus was born, His mother Mary's aged cousin, Elizabeth, became pregnant. Elizabeth's husband was Zechariah, the priest. Although doubtful at first that the miracle of birth was possible to a couple of their years, Zechariah finally believed that God had given the gift of a son, and he named the child John as he had been told to do. Zechariah knew that God wanted this child to grow up to be a strong evangelist, preparing people for the ministry of Jesus. Read the "Song of Zechariah" as found in Luke 1:68-79. In his song, he foretells John's work as well as that of Jesus.

3. What does Zechariah call Jesus in Luke 1:78?

4. Where does Zechariah say that Jesus will guide people's feet? (Luke 1:78-79)

Margaret was very ill. Her worried husband had taken her to the best doctors in the world, but no one could find the cause of her illness. Many different remedies were tried; none helped. Her family and friends were concerned that she would not live, and a circle of prayer was formed. Everyone who knew Mary prayed for her recovery. Soon after the prayer circle was formed, Joan, one of the women in Margaret's church, felt very impressed that she should visit Margaret and speak of the peace of Jesus.

"How can I speak of peace to a dying woman?," she wondered. But the feelings were so strong that she quickly went to the hospital. There she found Margaret barely conscious. The hand which Joan took in her own was hot and dry and Margaret's eyes seemed glazed.

"Margaret, Margaret, I must speak with you," said Joan softly. She watched Margaret's disinterested gaze slide toward her, then continued. "My dear, I feel very strongly that I must speak to you of the peace that Jesus offers. Can you hear and understand me?" Margaret's eyes closed briefly, then reopened. She nodded slightly.

"My friend, Jesus wants to take your burdens. He wants to give you His peace, His rest. Is there anything on your heart that would prevent Jesus from entering there?"

Tears trickled down Margaret's wasted cheeks. Haltingly she whispered a secret from her past that had tortured her for many months. "Jesus cannot help me; He cannot erase that sin from me. He cannot...."

"But He *can*!," insisted Joan, wiping the tears from Margaret's face. "He *can* take away this burden from you. If you but confess to Him, ask Him to forgive you, He will forgive you. The Bible says that 'He will again have compassion on us; [He] will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea' (Micah 7:19, NIV). Would you like to pray right now?"

At Margaret's nod, the two women prayed together for the peace that would be brought by the forgiveness of Jesus. From that time, Margaret's health began to improve. Her doctors shook their heads at what seemed to them her unexplainable recovery.

The Bible tells us that "A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones" (Proverbs 17:22, NIV). There is nothing that crushes the spirit worse than a guilty conscience, a burden of shame. And there is nothing that cheers like having the peace of Jesus within the heart. Will you ask Jesus to enter *your* heart today?

JESUS CALMS THE STORM

5. Read Luke 8:22-25. In what danger did the disciples find themselves in this passage?

6. In your opinion, why was Jesus able to sleep through the fierce storm?

7. It sometimes seems to us in reading the Bible story that the disciples should have known Jesus as their peace, and should not have panicked. But often in moments of stress, we also forget His presence. Read the following paragraph from *The Desire of Ages*, page 336. Underline the words that tell you how having Jesus in our hearts gives us peace.

"How often the disciples' experience is ours! When the tempests of temptation gather, and the fierce lightnings flash, and the waves sweep over us, we battle with the storm alone, forgetting that there is One who can help us. We trust to our own strength till our hope is lost and we are ready to perish. Then we remember Jesus, and if we call upon Him to save us, we shall not cry in vain... He never fails to give us the help we need. Whether on the land or on the sea, if we have the Saviour in our hearts, there is no need of fear. Living faith in the Redeemer will smooth the sea of life, and will deliver us from danger in the way that He knows to be best."

8. Share with the members of your study group a time when you were aware of the peace which only Jesus can give.

THE PEACE THAT JESUS GIVES TO MY HEART IS THE ONLY TRUE REST.

The gift of God is peace, sweet peace,
The peace only Jesus can bring.
He took my burdens all away,
and gave me a new song to sing.