

I. Seeking the Way of Peace

A. Two Attempts to Find and Follow the Way of Peace

1. “Speak Your Peace: The Civility Project”
 - a. “By elevating the our level of communication and avoiding personal attacks and general stubbornness, we can avoid unhealthy debate, which can lead to a more effective democracy and help maintain a sense of community by increasing public participation.”
 - b. Workshop: Discussing ideas and identifying difficult issues, including hard-to-solve problems or seizing opportunities that seem out of reach.
 - c. “Disagreements can lead to healthy debate . . . [but] when a particular issue strikes at the fundamental beliefs of a group or individual, debates can become fierce or unproductive. In these situations it becomes more important then ever to practice civility.”
2. The Sentencing of Terry Weekly” (July 24, 2018)
 - a. Interstate 80 near Brule, Nebraska on July 31, 2016.
 - (1) Jamison Pals, 29, was driving with his wife, Kathryne, 29, and children Ezra, 3; Violet, 23 months; and Calvin, 2 months.
 - (a) The family was traveling from Minnesota to Colorado to train for a missionary trip to Japan.
 - (b) Their journey was cut short when they slowed down for a construction zone and a truck slammed into them from behind, igniting a fire.
 - (c) The entire family was killed.
 - (2) Tony Weekly was the truck driver.
 - b. Despite strong arguments from prosecutors and first responder who urged five to nine years of prison for the three felony and three misdemeanors Weekly faced, the judge decided to give him two years probation and 180 days in jail instead.
 - c. The reason? It's what the victims' families wanted.
 - (1) Rick Pals (Jamison’s father) - "I struggle to find the words to describe the grief that gripped me," Pals said, reading from an impact statement he wrote for the sentencing of Tony Weekly. "I know how much God has forgiven me. How can I not forgive you?" Pals said, reading from his impact statement. "I am not in the position of authority to extend you mercy, Tony, however I can request mercy for you."
 - (2) Gordy and Nancy Engel (Kathryn’s parents) - "We ask the court to give the maximum allowable grace,"
 - (a) "We've had people say, 'Well you have to be super

Christians.' No, we're just plain people but we have a super God that just lifted us up," Gordy said.

- (b) "That is how we can walk this path," Nancy said.
"It's because we have hope."

B. "Want to" More Than "How to"

1. What is the difference in these two stories?
 - a. It is not a bad thing to train ourselves to create an environment where interpersonal peace can flourish, but unless there is a "want to" all the "how to" in the world will have little effect.
 - b. Until there is a genuine heart desire for peace all the training in the world won't put the tools into practice
2. **The true way of peace follows a change of heart than can only come from a genuine relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ.**

II. God's Provisions for Finding the Way of Peace

A. How can we find the way of peace?

1. The way of sin can never be the way of peace,
 - a. **Isaiah 57:21** *"There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."*
 - b. **Isaiah 59:1-13 (ESV)** *¹ Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; ² but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. ³ For your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies; your tongue mutters wickedness. ⁴ No one enters suit justly; no one goes to law honestly; they rely on empty pleas, they speak lies, they conceive mischief and give birth to iniquity. ⁵ They hatch adders' eggs; they weave the spider's web; he who eats their eggs dies, and from one that is crushed a viper is hatched. ⁶ Their webs will not serve as clothing; men will not cover themselves with what they make. Their works are works of iniquity, and deeds of violence are in their hands. ⁷ Their feet run to evil, and they are swift to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; desolation and destruction are in their highways. ⁸ The way of peace they do not know, and there is no justice in their paths; they have made their roads crooked; no one who treads on them knows peace. ⁹ Therefore justice is far from us, and righteousness does not overtake us; we hope for light, and behold, darkness, and for brightness, but we walk in gloom. ¹⁰ We grope for the wall like the blind; we grope like those who have no eyes; we stumble at noon as in the twilight, among those in full vigor we are like dead men. ¹¹ We all growl like bears; we moan and moan like doves; we hope for justice, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far from us. ¹² For our transgressions are multiplied before you, and our sins testify against us; for our transgressions are with us, and we know our iniquities: ¹³ transgressing, and denying the LORD, and turning back from*

following our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart lying words.

2. Paul quotes from these words to make a single point in Romans 3:
 - a. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God
 - b. Because all have sinned all stand condemned in the sight of God
 - c. Because all have sinned and all stand condemned all need a Savior, we all need a way to peace with God before we can have peace with ourselves or with others.

B. God Provides the Way of Peace

1. God Provides a Guide to the Way of Peace (Luke 1:79) By the Son of God
 - a. By His actions
 - (1) **Romans 3:23-25 (ESV)** ²³ *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,* ²⁴ *and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,* ²⁵ *whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.*
 - (2) God sent his Son, Jesus to die on the cross in our place, on our behalf, taking upon Himself the justice we deserve
 - (3) God put forth His own holy, perfect, sinless Son to become sin for us and receive in His body the full measure of God's just and righteous condemnation of sin: death
 - b. The way of peace comes through faith in Him
 - (1) **Romans 10:9-13 (ESV)** ⁹ *because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.* ¹⁰ *For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.* ¹¹ *For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame."* ¹² *For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him.*
 - (2) ¹³ *For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*
2. God Promotes Personal Participation in the Way of Peace (Luke 1:79)
 - a. "Our feet"
 - b. Faith is a gift of God
 - (1) The ability to believe comes from God
 - (2) The "want to" for peace with God comes from God - the essence of grace
 - (3) But the choice remains with us.
 - (a) God provides a guide to the way of peace
 - (b) God provides the possibility for real peace
 - (c) God provides the means for attaining the way of peace
 - (d) **But God also lays at our feet the choice for peace.**