



Scripture nugget - Peace comes from freedom from bondage to sin

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, so I send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained." (John 20:21-23).

Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid (John 14:27). The human heart yearns for the true peace that only God can give: peace of heart, peace of mind and peace of soul. True peace comes from God's forgiveness of sins of the repentant sinner. God's forgiveness breaks the bondage of sin and brings about spiritual freedom, the highest form of freedom. Peace can be experienced when we are delivered by God from all the sinful things in our hearts that stand against our loving relationship with the Lord and others: selfish desires, unruly passions, anger, hatred, unforgiveness, grudges, unholy fears and anxieties, bad habits and vices, enslavement to false gods such as money, sensual pleasures, sinful entertainment, power, popularity, etc. How mightily God can work in our lives is limited only by our faith. God's mercy is for the repentant. Without repentance or the forgiveness of others, there will be no forgiveness for our sins either (cf. Matthew 6:14-15). Jesus greeted His disciples with "peace" when He first appeared to them after His resurrection. It is only through Christ's death and resurrection that the bondage of sin is broken for those who ask God for forgiveness, only then making peace possible for repentant souls.

Jesus answered them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin" (John 8:34). Many unenlightened souls remain in slavery to sin because they do not recognize sin, or have got used to sin, and therefore fail to seek forgiveness from God through sincere repentance. It takes humility and help from the Holy Spirit to have self-knowledge of our own faults and failings and to feel the need to ask God for forgiveness. Without the desire to increase in personal holiness as we are called to by our Lord (cf. Matthew 5:48), a soul very easily falls into slavery to sin. Slavery to sin produces its own unsavory fruits even in souls that were once ardent in love of God: complacency, indifference, apathy, loss of horror of sin, loss of perseverance in the fight against sin, an inability to concentrate on the things that are eternal, easy distraction of earthly attractions, the gradual loss of faith and love of God that the soul has in the beginning. Souls that remain complacent in its spiritual condition stand in danger of losing their faith. Jesus warns us: *To anyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; from anyone who has not, even what he has will be taken away (Matthew 13:12).* The wondrous Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) is an effective antidote against the danger of slavery to sin.

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, You instituted the Sacrament of Reconciliation immediately after Your Resurrection. You gave divine power to the Apostles to forgive sins on Your behalf. What a beautiful and much needed gift! I need not plunge into a river or scale a peak in order to get my sins forgiven! Repentance is our key to heaven and to peace. Help me understand the true nature of sin. It is the worst thing in the world because it alone has the power to separate me from Your love. May I never take Your love for granted but always work sincerely on my growth in personal holiness. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.