



Baptist Hour Messages

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God Bless America

July 4

Recently a young man's personal effects were returned to his mother and father from Korea. This young man had died in a Russian prison camp. Among these personal possessions was his dog tag. That's a little metal tag that hangs around every soldier's neck for identification purposes. As they examined the tag they noted that on the back the young man had scratched the words of my text today. It is found in Romans 5:1 and it reads:

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

On the back of the metal dog tag he had scratched with a nail or a knife, the words: "Justified by faith, peace with God." As he listened to the thunder and the rumble of the guns outside, and saw the world that seemed to be set on fire by the incandescence of the bombs; these words brought peace to his heart. I'm wondering if "peace with God" didn't have more meaning with him than it has with you and me today. We can have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, even as that lonely, soon-to-die, G.I.

Quiet Desperation

In 1914, in America, normalcy disappeared, and in its place there came inflation, depression, war, inflation, depression, war, and on and on. Actually, living on an even keel is almost a thing of the past. Someone has recently said: "We're living in a day of quiet desperation." How very, very true! I heard a great throng a few weeks ago singing, "God Bless America," and I couldn't help but ask myself the question—WHICH AMERICA? Drunken America, criminal America, gambling America, pleasure - mad America? Which America are they asking God to bless?

Yes, we are living in a day of quiet desperation. Much of the desperation is our world. The desperation in our country is the result of the corruption in our government. It seems that a battle goes on day after day, a battle between good and evil.

This corruption is the direct result of the moral breakdown in the lives of individuals who hold high office. At one time in recent years there were six members of the United States Congress in federal prisons. Men of no religious convictions, of loose morals have slipped into key spots and have played havoc with civic righteousness. Men with hidden aims have stolen into government circles to rob us of our precious heritages. Men with no sense of public trust have crept in and have disregarded the voters' desires and have cast ballots in legislature to satisfy their own personal greed and lust, and we're desperate because of it. We're desperate because we feel as if we have fallen into the hands of robbers and thieves, and we, unarmed, dare not defy them. Or, daring enough, we know not how.

Much of the desperation which we feel today is the result of a sense of guilt. We've gone on a binge of lawlessness against God, ruled him out of our affairs. His house is deserted, His laws are despised and His day is desecrated. We're known as the most lawless nation on earth and we know it, and we're afraid. The newspapers of our land are outspoken enough to remind us. Recently the New York Times said, "If we do not change our ways, we will go the way of Babylon, Rome and Greece."

America Is Guilty

Americans, individually and nationally, stand with unclean hands and hearts before Almighty God—guilty. But most

of our sense of desperation arises from a fear of what tomorrow should and will bring. So much has already happened in our world. The last war cost us 84 billions of dollars. Two hundred million people died as a result, and yet the clouds have not lifted. We have no brave, new, post-war world. Instead, so much is threatening that tomorrow's headlines may set the world on fire, so much of all this is well deserved. Now what is the answer to it all?

First, I believe we can cure the desperation that arises from the corruption which we see in our government. Yes, we can have a new birth of self respect and decency if we select Christian men to serve us in government affairs.

Secondly, we can cure the desperation that comes from a sense of guilt, by the confession of sin, and receive cleansing at the hands of a merciful God. Like a common criminal who commits his crime and races to a hiding place, so men today are in open rebellion against God.

Condemned and reckless we've tried to choke down, stifle and kill any thought or pain of conscience, and all the time He is the one who has the answer. "Repent or perish," the Master cried. No pulpit in this land dare trim that message and be a faithful Christian and a patriotic American. It's our only hope.

Peace of Mind

We can cure the desperation arising out of fear of what tomorrow will bring. Have you looked at the book stands lately? They're literally loaded with books on peace of mind. Listen, friend, living in sin always causes men to lose their peace of mind, and the way to regain it is not to read a book or practice some pet philosophy. The way for a man or a woman to find peace of mind is to be justified by faith through Jesus Christ our Lord.

You cannot play fast and loose with Him and still maintain peace of mind and contentment of soul. It's no wonder there are so many men in America who literally cower before the thought "what will happen to me tomorrow?" They have left God behind!

But I would remind you of this Scripture that points out Christ, He is the answer. It's through Him that we find peace.

Hear His last will and testament as He speaks to His disciples saying, "My peace be unto you." Are those the words and actions of a man who knew peace with God? Why? He was a storm swept island lashed from all points, yet, inwardly he was at complete repose; because of His faith in His heavenly Father, because he was in God and God was in Him, and He was God. And, living in perfect harmony with the will of God, with an uncontaminated heart, He had peace which He is ready to pass on to all men everywhere.

Jesus is the Answer

The Bible has many beautiful expressions but one of the most beautiful of all are the words: "Peace that passeth understanding." How can a man find that peace in the troubled world in which we live. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and Paul had found it as sinful as he was, with crimes that had managed to accumulate in his life. He was one who cried out: "I have peace with God." John knew it, as he sang out at the top of his voice, "the Lord God omnipotent reigneth," and you can have it too. In Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus he writes those wonderful words: "He is our peace. He is our peace . . ."

In our world that's troubled by flaming headlines, by newspaper columnists and radio commentators that predict despair and gloom and destruction, let me tell you that the God who created this world. In His hand it spins this very moment. He has control of the headlines as well as the heart lines of the world and were you to go to Him quietly and say, "Take the confusion out of my heart and give me peace through Jesus Christ my Lord," God would answer that prayer—no matter who you are or where you are, no matter how desperate you may be. Dear friend, wherever you are, drop down on your knees if possible, or simply bow your head and humble your heart, and say, "God be merciful to me, I'm a sinner, and save me through the blood of Jesus Christ and save me for Jesus sake." God will hear that prayer and He will answer it.