

Read: Colossians 3:12-17

The Peace of Christ Fills Our Hearts

Colossians 3:15

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

“You cannot have dessert until you eat your dinner,” Mom says with wisdom. She knows that if you fill your belly with sweets, you won’t eat the good food that is nutritious and beneficial for you.

What’s true for our bellies is also true for our hearts, spiritually speaking. In our reading today, the apostle Paul tells us what God wants to fill our hearts: *the peace of Christ*. That’s the quietness and contentment we have because we know Jesus and his forgiveness. It’s the good stuff that allows us to grow and thrive.

Still, we look longingly at the sweets—things that are not good for us—and we are tempted. Why is that? We are born with sin in our hearts, and we sin because we are weak. Sometimes we even scheme to get the things we crave, even if they are not good for us. Who of us has not hidden some of that Christmas candy to eat between meals?

Fortunately, Jesus earned forgiveness for all our sins, big and small. When we repent, that is, turn away from our sins and turn to Jesus for forgiveness, we have it. The bad stuff is washed away, and peace can fill our hearts. Our reading even goes so far as to say that the peace of Christ can “rule” in our hearts. That means the peace of Jesus wins every time ... sin loses!

With temptations all around us, we need to be strong, filled with the powerful peace Jesus provides. God in his wisdom sets good, nutritious food right before us in his Word. Each time we hear gospel-filled words like, “You are mine,” “you are dearly loved,” and “forgive as the Lord forgave you,” the Holy Spirit is giving us spoonfuls of nourishment for our faith. That’s when peace fills us up and strengthens us. Then we have more power to do the kinds of things strong Christians do: show compassion and kindness to others, be gentle and patient with others, be humble. These are difficult things to do, especially if others around us are not kind, compassionate, or humble. But the peace of Christ strengthens us.

All this growth and strength doesn’t happen overnight. We are always learning and growing. We get stronger and more mature in our faith when we feast on God’s Word—the good stuff—and hear that message of peace daily, so it fills our hearts.

Soon, the Christmas candy and the sweets of the season will be gone. The peace of Christ proclaimed at Christmas will last and has the power to make us stronger. Let’s fill up on that gospel peace every day!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Is there a sin you keep doing, even though you try not to do it? What does Jesus do with that sin?
- How can you grow stronger in your faith? What does God provide that strengthens your faith?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- What does the peace of Christ mean to you? Why does it matter?
- When the peace of Christ fills your heart, describe how you think it would impact your behavior. Why does that matter?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- What temptations do you struggle with? What happens to your desire for sin when the peace of Christ fills your heart?
- Name one wholesome habit you would like to put in place to be sure you are receiving spiritual nutrition from God's Word every day.

Closing Prayer:

Dear Savior, please let your peace fill my heart and rule over sin. Never let me forget the peace I have in you. Help me build spiritual strength, so that others may see my behavior and know that I am your child. Amen.

Hymn: CW 32:1,2,5 – When Sinners See Their Lost Condition

When sinners see their lost condition
And feel the pressing load of sin
And Jesus comes on his blest mission
To heal the sin-sick heart within
All grief must flee before his grace,
And joy divine will take its place.

When Jesus enters meek and lowly
To fill the home with sweetest peace,
When hearts have felt his blessing holy
And found from sin complete release,
Then calm and joy within shall reign
And hearts divided love again.

Oh, may he soon to every nation
Find entrance where he is unknown,
With life and light and free salvation,
That Satan's power be overthrown,
And healing to all hearts may come
In heathen land and Christian home!