



Series: The Fruit of the Spirit
Title: Peace
Courage Church, Detroit, MI.

Elevators.
I Hate them.
They make me so incredibly anxious.

Austin told me that he loves them, because it means that he doesn't have to walk. I would rather walk up 15 flights of stairs than take an elevator.

I was on a trip with a few people, in Washington DC a few years ago and we were in like a super fancy building with elevators that were obviously nice... in fact they had a person running the elevator. But as it filled it made one of those sounds elevators make... the ones that probably don't mean anything but I immediately thought meant "Get off of this elevator now, it is going to get stuck!" Of course, I hesitated, but as soon as the door started to close I stuck my arm in the door to try and stop it from closing. I wanted out. The door didn't want to close... my friends had to pull me into the elevator and assure me that it was going to be okay.

It was. That time.

Rewind two years before that, and I find myself in a rickety old elevator in a Manhattan apartment. I always was a bit leery of elevators, and this one in particular because it was old... it shook and rattled, it was tiny, and there was no "emergency call for help button" that called the fire department and got them to you right away. Our pastors lived on the 7th floor of this building and they offered to watch Milly while I took Dawn out on a date for her birthday. She was pregnant with Brooklyn at the time, so stairs weren't really an option... so after we dropped Milly off, we called the elevator. Eventually, it got to us, and was empty, so we got in, pushed the button to go down to the first floor, but instead it went up to the 8th floor because someone else had called it first. We get to the 8th floor, and there had to of been at least 7 or 8 smelly boys, one girl and her dad and they all got into

the elevator. We were packed. I began to sweat, they all smelled terrible, and the elevator crept slowly down the 8 floors, and got to the first floor, but the door wouldn't open. The old elevator was carrying way more weight than it was suppose to, and it weighed the car down so it went below the point when it would open safely, so it just stayed shut. Immediately, I panicked. My wife was pregnant, I was dressed for a hot date with her. They kept sending the car to different floors seeing if it would position itself properly... nothing. we even went to the basement, figured, if its the bottom floor it basically has to work, right? Nothing! I got out my phone and called 911... but we were in an elevator. I called again, and again... the calls just kept dropping.

So I did what anybody would do in that situation, I started taking off my clothes. It was hot in there, it was packed. It was smelly, and I had layers on. I kid you not I started stripping, and finally, Dawn knew that if she didn't act fast it was going to be a very embarrassing elevator ride, so she thought on her toes and had the idea to line up the emergency "door open" button - which had not worked up until that point, but she tried to line it up right as we were passing a floor and on one random floor it actually worked and opened.

So don't be alarmed if I ever am with you, and you hop onto an elevator, and I say these words to you "I am going to take the stairs." They are actually words of kindness for you... I am sparing you of an elevator ride with me and it would certainly be in all of our best interests. Since that day, I kid you not... no matter how nice the elevator is, I always get in it, and from the moment that the door closes, I wonder anxiously, "Is it going to open?"

I have no peace inside those instruments of Satan.

And that leads me to the anti-peace. Because before we can get into peace, we have to understand the anti-peace. And this is a hard one for me. To be anxious is the opposite of peace.

Paul, in **Philippians 4:6** says **"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."**

The word anxious is the word *merimnaō* (marymn-now)... It means to be IN PIECES, or to be troubled with cares. It means you are a mess, and you care too much... the King James version actually says “be CAREFUL for nothing.” That sounds opposite of what everyone ever told us right? What our parents tell us every time we go out? BE CAREFUL!

The bible says: Do not be *merimnaō* (marymn-now) about anything, but in everything by PRAYER with *eucharisteō* (you-har-estay-o) - Thanksgiving, Grace, Joy... make your requests known to God because he is the only one who can actually make anything happen in your life. We have talked about that a lot lately... The fruit of Joy manifests itself in our world through Thanksgiving, through *eucharisteō* - But it comes by knowing God holds the world in his hands. It works the same way with peace. You will never have peace in your life if you think someone else other than Jesus is in control. You will never have peace in your life if you think that YOU are in control, or you try to gain your own control... because you will always be worried that someone else is trying to take that control from you. You will always have *merimnaō* (marymn-now) - you will always be in pieces, anxious that the elevator door won't open even as it is working.

Here is a bit of transparency, possibly a bit more transparent than I should be but it's real. So, every week, every time I pray before I teach I ask the Holy Spirit to take control of the situation... I prayed it today... I ask that the words that are “not of Him” would fall to the ground before I even say them. I begin by relinquishing control of the whole thing.

I also have been trying to use less notes on the stage, because the more I can get it into my heart, the more I not only will be able to better communicate it, better explain it, better retain it... So instead of taking up the podium I have been just making small little reminder cues that point me to the next thought, and they come up on the monitor screen as I go, mainly to trigger the thoughts that I have prepared for you.

So last week was our first week of trying that, and of course, I unknowingly unplugged the monitor during the part that I probably needed it the most... and even though I say every week that I am giving control to the Holy Spirit, when it actually came down to it, I was livid that I did this.

I lost my peace in that moment.

I panicked... I had worked so hard to put it together and now I was going to totally botch the delivery...

I lost my peace, and as I dwelt on it, I began losing my joy, the very thing I was trying to communicate. And it spiraled a bit and it revealed something to me about the Fruit of the Spirit.

I lost it all in that moment.

All the way from love, to joy, to peace, to patience, to kindness, to goodness, to faithful, to self-control, were all affected.

You see, you can be a loving person, and but not have the fruit of the Spirit.

When we study the gifts of the Spirit, we see that Paul says that “there are a variety of gifts, but the same Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:4), he says: “For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues” (1 Corinthians 12:8-10)

But we are all members of a body. Each gift contributes to a needed role in that body.

The FRUIT of the Spirit is not like that. That is why its called FRUIT, not fruits, yet then goes on to list 9 of them. Because it is all one thing. Dawn explained this really well in her “love” message.

You can manufacture or to a degree “fake” a peace in a moment, or joy in a moment, but if you have the fruit of the Spirit, then you will have all of them, and as you grow in one, you will be growing in all of them. They work cohesively together, and so when I got frustrated and to a degree, stepped out of the spirit... all of them basically unraveled at the seam.

So after last Sunday, I felt really defeated, like “How can I teach these people about the Fruit of the Spirit, when this very moment they seem to be so absent from my own life?”

and the more and more I study peace, the more and more I realize, this is the one, of all of them, that in my own life has kept me from the fullness of all that the Spirit wants to do in my life, and there are moments of anxiety that I have had and still feel that have been establishing chaos in my life... have made me feel like I am in a thousand pieces... and its one of those things that I need to get a hold of if I am going fully to live and walk in a spirit filled life.

like Dawn said, when it comes to the fruit of the Spirit you are only as strong as where you are the weakest.

I was so encouraged talking to Andy Jump. he said to me, “you know what Pastor, (now, Andy has been here like, from the beginning. He may as well of built this place with his bare hands yet he is so respectful, so encouraging, so on board with what God seems to be doing... he said) I love where things are going because it feels like we are all growing together. Obviously, you are growing, you are out of your comfort zone a little... its not like you have this arsenal of a sermon archive... every week you are growing and learning so that you can teach us, and because of that it feels like we, as a body, are all kind of moving some place new together.”

and as I look back on my life so far... I completely believe that Dawn and I's whole journey has been preparing us for such a time as this, I have no doubt of that... but the anxiety that some times comes with inadequate feelings that I think anybody would feel doing the job that I have the honor here to do, its something I have to identify and work out! But Andy is right... yes I have been prepared for this, yes God has been working this out in my wife and I and our family for years, but right now, here, I am growing more every single day as I study the word differently, as I pray for this community, as I get excited about what God is doing here. And I am learning to rest in the peace that God really does have this church in his hands.

I have learned this. If I beat myself up when things are not as great as I want them to be in our church.. if I beat myself up when I think we could

have done something better or I could have preached better... if I beat myself up and carry burdens now that I am not meant to carry... then when things get bigger, and things get better, and I become a less awkward preacher and communicate more clearly... then I will take credit for it.

and I don't want to do either. Its Jesus that builds his church, and I want to live in the peace of knowing, Courage Church belongs to Jesus!

So what is peace?

The Greek word that Paul uses in Galatians 5 is the word *eirēnē* (i-rain-a) - The first definition you will probably come in contact with as you are doing a word study on *eirēnē* (i-rain-a) would be "freedom from worry."

Worry, and the father of all worry "Anxiety" - are the anti peace. Which of course resonates with me. Being stuck in a tiny elevator with a pregnant wife and tell smelly boys... that is the anti-peace.

The bible also speaks of peace as a state of national tranquility... and describes it as the "exemption of the rage and havoc of war."

When all is well in the nation, when they are good terms with their neighbors.

The old testament, written in the Ancient Hebrew language, the word that translates to peace is the word "Shalom" - and the literal of the word essentially means "completeness, being whole." Isaiah 53:5 says that "He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities, upon him was the chastisement that brought us PEACE..." Upon Jesus was the chastisement that brought us completeness... wholeness.

With the fruit of the Spirit, we will say it throughout the whole series, these things come natural in your life when the Spirit is in you... but that doesn't mean that you can just mossy through it all and never go to battle for your relationships. Never go to battle for your family and friends... for your community. Your salvation is secure if you accept Jesus. If you give your heart to Jesus and you accept the work of the cross, the that is what saves

your soul, but you can live a pretty crappy life on earth if you don't learn to walk in the fruit of the Spirit. So lets look at peace.

So lets look at this word, Shalom.

Like we have talked about a few times already, in ancient Hebrew every letter is also a picture and the pictures sometimes tell an even more clear and vivid story behind a word. And "Shalom" is one of those words.



Hebrew is read from right to left. So looking at it that way, starting from the right the first letter is: "Sheen" and the picture is of Teeth, which symbolizes to consume or destroy. The second letter is **Lamed** (la-med), it is a shepherds staff which represents authority. So if you were to look just at the first to letters of the word peace, it says "destroy the authority" - all of the anarchists in the building are getting really excited right now... we get peace by

destroying authority... no, there is more.

The third letter is the letter "**vav**" and it is a nail or hook, it connects things... It means To hook to, connect to or to establish, and the last letter is "mem" and the image represents crashing waves of water, and twice in Genesis "**mem**" is used for the word "chaos." - which is fitting... My family lived right on the beach when Hurricane Sandy hit the Rockaway's in New York... and that is exactly what we watched those enormous crashing waves do... they caused chaos. Just like the how the Greek word for anxiety, *merimnaō* (marymn-now) means to be in pieces... that whole place was broken. Nothing was where it was supposed to be. The boardwalk we had walked on that very afternoon was now spread across the entire beach in a thousand different pieces... it was chaos.

What the word picture is saying is this, to find shalom... to find peace, you must first destroy the authority that is establishing chaos.

What does that even mean? The root of the word “Shalom” means “wholeness, or completeness,” but you will never get there until you destroy the authority that is establishing chaos in your life.

You will never have wholeness, if you have chaos.

But you will always have chaos, until you identify the areas of your life that are causing the chaos. That are keeping you from peace. That are keeping you from shalom - from wholeness, and completeness. Mark 3:27 talks about how no one can enter into a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. You have to know what you are up against, and you have to bind it.

My pastor (Brad Reed) explains it this way, and its so powerful. He says that “Chaos finds a home in the unmet desires of our lives.”

It finds a home when I desire to give a sermon a certain way and instead I pull the plug out of the wall and lose half of my notes.

It finds a home in wanting to get married but not even being in a real relationship with anybody... but you are trying to fulfill these desires by having these multiple physical relationships. Its a healthy desire that you are fulfilling in an unhealthy way and its causing more and more chaos in your life.

It finds its home in areas that we don’t give to God because we aren’t actually sure that God is involved in that. I can have peace about my salvation, and trust God completely that when we die we are going to go to heaven, and yet when I get in an elevator I am not even sure the door will open when I get to the desired floor. We can trust Jesus with our souls but not our paychecks. Maybe not our relationships. Not the fractured, broken parts of our lives that we assume, “we got ourselves into this mess, why would God get us out?”

But God wants to get us out!

David, in Psalm 112, is feeling that way. Like “I got myself into this, why would God get me out?” It was written after he had the affair with

Bathsheba, and then had her husband killed so that he would not get caught and he is here in this moment and he starts by saying "Have mercy on me, God! according to your steadfast love.... wash me thoroughly from my iniquities, cleanse me from my sins.... my sins are EVER BEFORE ME! He is basically saying, "God, ALL I CAN SEE IS MY SIN! ALL I CAN SEE IS THE CHAOS"... because against you I have sinned.

He has found himself in this place, where because of his own actions he had lost his peace. He had done so many awful things.

But listen to his petition.... listen to this request that he makes of God: (Psalm 51:10-12):

"create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit."

And David is the one that the bible says is a man after Gods own heart. He is a guy that certainly had moments when he he did walk in the fruit of the spirit... the works of the flesh were EVIDENT in his life, yet when he identified the strong man, and he destroyed the authority that had been establishing chaos in his life, God restored to him his joy.

We talked so much about joy last week, but it is so connected to peace. Look at your life. Is there a single area that you have Joy in but have no peace about? If there is then I can assuredly say that you are manufacturing that joy from a source other than the spirit.

We talked about how you can, and should, have joy in the midst of pain. In the midst of hard circumstances, in the midst of circumstances that you maybe do not understand.

But it is impossible to have joy in the midst of anxiety.

How can you have Joy in the midst of anxiety? In the midst of worry? In the midst of always in the back of you mind wondering how much longer this will last, or how long it will before before this person stabs you in the back

like the last person stabs you in the back? In the midst of literally telling Jesus with your life that you don't trust him to do what is best for you.

It does not work. Anxiety works against Joy. Peace is wholeness. Its the assuredness that everything is as it should be. That Jesus is on the throne of your heart.

How could you have joy on an elevator that you think has an 80% chance of not opening, when really there is like a .0002 percent chance of it not opening?

Some people actually say that severe anxiety is essentially the same thing as something called "infinite sadness."

But the bible says that anxiety weighs down the heart.... but a kind word will cheer it up! (Proverbs 12:25)

If your heart has been worn down by your own anticipation of an awful tomorrow, let me give you a kind word. You are beautiful. You are amazing. You are loved. Jesus loves you. Dawn and I love you. Courage Church loves you. You are needed. You are necessary in the bigger picture of what God is trying to do here in Detroit. God has your back. He has your best interests at heart.

and let me remind you what brings Joy. We talked about this last week as well. Hope Brings Joy. (Proverbs 10:28) but not just any hope, the hope of the righteous. The hope of the one who trusts in the Lord. But as much as anxiety is the absence of peace, it is also the absence of trust.

If you want to diagnose those chaos areas in your life, the areas where it feels the devil may have ahold of you... where it feels there may be a strong man that needs to be bound, an authority that needs to be destroyed... start there. "Where do I lack trust?" What part of my life do I make sure stays mine even when I know its the part that is unraveling me. Even when I know its the part that is killing my joy? Even when I know its an area that I so desperately need peace in.

“Where do I lack Joy?” And what source are you pulling from other than Jesus if you are managing to be happy yet don’t have peace?

Last week, we kind of studied through a passage in John 16:20-22, about Joy. Well, today we are going to look at a passage only 9 verses later, John 16:33:

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

I hope you are catching a pattern in this series. Our kingdom is not of this world. What our fruit is, is the way that we bring Jesus into this world. The world we live in, Jesus has overcome it. We will have trouble here, but that is okay... because Jesus has overcome it. Sometimes we as Christians, we try and regulate the rest of the world as if they are us. We work to pass laws and more laws so that we can have our own role in policing peoples morality... but you can’t actually legislate morality.

Laws can't change you. In Galatians 5 Paul lists the fruit of the Spirit... And ends by saying, against which there is no law." What he is saying is that you can't legislate morality... You can force a rule on someone and they may obey that rule out of fear of the consequences but it doesn't make them any better of a person having not done them.

A law does not change someone's intentions.. it doesn't change someone's heart... But Jesus tells us to have peace! He says “Its okay! I have overcome all of this. Don’t worry when you have trouble, have peace!”

Last week, I closed the service out by telling you that You have joy because of Jesus. Because of the gospel.

and we talked about how the word gospel, the literal word in the greek is the word *evangelion* (*you on gelly on*)- we like to say “the good news” but the literal is actually “the joy news” - it comes from the word “messenger” and in ancient Greek, an euangelos was a person who brought a message that caused the hearer “JOY.”

The example I gave was in a war, the message may be for a commanding officer, “we have won a great battle.” or even better yet, “The war is over... you get to go home and be with your families.” Joy. The gospel is Joy News.

But the reality in a war is this, it usually does not end without a treaty. It usually does not end without some sort of negotiation. In some cases, if the war is being lead by an insane tyrant who just wants to kill as many people as possible, eliminating him may begin to start the end the war but in most cases there needs to be some sort of a cease fire agreed upon. And then even as you enter what we call a “time of peace,” people are still a little bit on edge about what the others are doing. You hear about movement, you hear about missiles, you hear whispers of a new army being built, and suddenly there is this worry, a bit of a panic amongst the people, that there will be another attack... Peace is fleeting.

But the peace that Paul is talking about in Galatians 5:22 can only come by the assurance that the victory that has been won, is once and for all. And that is what Hebrews 10 says. if you have your bibles, I want you to open them right now to this... Hebrews chapter 10. I am not going to put this on the screen in its entirety, some of it I will... but I want you to read along. Verses 1-10... Its actually one of the most brilliant parts of all of the scriptures I believe when it describes Jesus. Its just beautiful.

It starts by saying that the law is but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities.. Now, we don't know for sure who wrote Hebrews, but what we do know is that he was writing it to HEBREWS. Hebrews loved the law... so he clearly is working on their hearts towards the law here... he is trying to get them to pull back from this idea of rules, and get engulfed in this idea of Jesus. The writer is saying, the law, it can never make you perfect. People were offering these sacrifices over and over again in accordance with the law, but they were not making them perfect. They were still leaving feeling empty, and here is why. Hebrews 10:3 “In these sacrifices, there is a REMINDER of sins every year.”

Every time they lay a goat on the altar... every time you sacrifice a bull... Every time you think you are being made new... you are reminded, every time, that you will have to do this again.

The elevator may have opened... you may be on the 45th floor... but you are going to have to get into the elevator again when you want to go back home.

You are going to sin again. You are going to have a thought, say something, act out something in your flesh... and you are going to find yourself right back in the same place again. Sinful... looking through the farm for the perfect animal to lay at the altar to make you new all over again.

The war is over. Until it starts again.

But look at Hebrews 10:5-7, it says that Christ said when he came into the world:

“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’”

If Jesus came to fulfill the law then that means that the law should be leading people to Jesus. It should be this constant reminder, “no. I can’t do this. Its impossible. I need something else.”

Verse 9, “He does away with the first in order to establish the second.”

He does away with the truces that are so easily broken to establish a peace that is forever. and verse 10 wraps it up perfectly, “And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

One time. It is done. Jesus, on the cross, he cried out these words before he breathed his last breath, he cried out “It is finished.”

You don't have to sacrifice goats anymore. It is finished.
I have crushed the enemy once and for all.
It is finished.

The anxiety that causes you to get saved over and over again every single week because you can't overcome guilt but you also can't put enough trust in Jesus to start living for him, that is chaos. Its not the gospel. The gospel says that it is not about works, that any man should boast (Ephesians 2:9).

Its just like what I said about our church. If I beat myself up on bad days, I will give myself credit on good days. If you beat yourself up on your bad days, then when you are doing good, you will pat yourself on the back, and that is religion! It won't save you.

and as long as you are living day to day based on the way you acted that day, you will never have peace.

The gospel says that it is once and for all. It is a done deal. Believe in Jesus. Its all about Jesus.

and That my friends, is joy news.

He says something in Ephesians 6:12-15 that only builds onto this Joy News. He says this:

(v12) For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the **authorities**, against the cosmic powers over this present **darkness**, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

The word darkness, is the word skotos (skoat-ose) and the obvious translation is darkness but can also mean death, darkness of water, or a gathering of water. Do you remember the last picture in the word picture for shalom? The letter "mem" - the flood of water... When water gathers and gathers and keeps on gathering... Chaos.

We don't wrestle against flesh and blood. We battle against the authorities that are not of this world but are causing chaos in this world.

The Spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

(v13-15) Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of **peace**.

In Sunday school you have probably gone through what each of these things are... the armor of God... but remember this... this is pretty incredible. You are putting on the whole armor of God to go into a battle that Jesus has already won. Always be ready to withstand evil in this world... having the peace to know that in the Kingdom we are actually a part of, the war is already over.

But I love the last line of this... in this world, put on the readiness given by the GOSPEL of PEACE.

The Joy News of Peace.
The War is over. Forever.

Jesus has won.

eirēnē - (i-rain-a) - the Greek word for peace, can used to describe an exemption of the rage and havoc of war.

Shalom - wholeness, because of Jesus.

Because of the Joy News that Jesus destroyed the authority the causes chaos in your life, you can live confidently in him. He is the author and the perfecter of our faith. (Hebrews 12:2)

Because of the Joy News that Jesus has destroyed the authority that is causing chaos in our world, you can put on the armor of God and be able to withstand the days that are getting more evil by the second.

The Joy News that there is a forever peace, in the middle of a land where there is no peace.

Last February, many of you may remember hearing about the 21 Egyptian men who were beheaded for their faith. Well, it is recorded that one of them, named Matthew Ayairga, went into that day without faith in Christ. He was not a professing Christian.

When he was asked the question while being video taped, “Do you reject Christ?” He looked around at his brothers around him, and he saw their peace. Their peace even when these cowardly terrorists worked tirelessly to cause chaos.

He saw people dying around him...and others certain that the end is only a few moments away, and yet they had peace.

What was trying to cause chaos in their spirit was destroyed by the Shalom of God in that moment, and he saw it!

and knowing that he had only seconds... only a few breaths left to enjoy it if he were to choose it, he internally debated life or death, deny the God he never even knew, or accept him now, when they asked him, “Do you reject Christ?” He internally decided “I want what these guys have” and he externally answered: “Their God is my God!”

He proclaimed and received Jesus in the last moments of his life because he was a witness to the **peace** that comes to those who serve Christ.

Where does that peace come from? Shalom... that wholeness? That completeness? That joy of knowing that if it ends right now, then I finished my race with confidence. It is finished. It is complete...

It comes from destroying the authority that established chaos.

Matthew Ayairga destroyed the authority that was establishing chaos in his life in that moment. It had him his whole life, but it didn't win.

He looked chaos in the face and he said you can't have me...

the enemy thought they had won, but apparently they missed the memo.

The war is over.

Jesus has won.

There is absolutely no peace apart from Jesus, but in him there is rest.

We already know the ending.

Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega. The first and the last. The beginning and the end and he is coming soon.

And as we live and steward the beautiful world that he has given us in the meantime, we have to always remember that as citizens of His Kingdoms but Ambassadors here on this one, We do not wrestle against flesh and blood. But against the authorities that are not of this world but are causing chaos in this world. That are causing chaos in our lives... that are causing chaos in our families.

What is it for you?

What is the authority that is causing chaos in your life that needs to be destroyed? What is the authority causing chaos in your marriage? In your family? In your relationships? In your job? In your body?

Jesus died so that those things would not have power over you anymore... He has given you the power to destroy the authority. Use it.