

# Fruit of the Spirit

## Week 3: Peace

Philippians 4:6-9

Dr. Matt Cassidy ---- June 25, 2023

Well, let's keep that in mind as we look at a passage today. We're in the Fruit of the Spirit series. We're on our third week, and we're going to be looking at Galatians chapter 5 if you want to turn there. I'm thrilled about today's lesson. Today's teaching time is going to turn your life right-side-up.

When we talk about the fruit of the Spirit, it's referring to the Holy Spirit causing fruit in our lives. And the fruit is characteristics, attributes, character qualities, that are found in Jesus Christ. And when we say we're going to become like Christ in all of life, that's what the fruit looks like. Today we're going to look at the fruit of peace.

And if you want you can go by the front to our little fruit stand. We have various stickers—we've got love, joy, and peace—I have patience because there's no way I'm waiting until next week to get patience. And then we have a study guide. We have plenty of these printed up this week—sorry about last week. So, I want everybody to get one of these. I'll explain how that works in just a few minutes. We'll be going through the study guide together this summer.

But today, like I said, I'm especially thrilled because we're going to look at taking the mystery of how the fruit of the Spirit even works. Today we're going to talk about the power of the Spirit and how it works in our lives. Again, the fruitfulness is not our fruit; it's the fruit from the Holy Spirit. It comes when we yield to Him and His direction in our life. That's what we'll be explaining today. And like I said, it's a paradigm shift. It'll be fun.

### **The Flesh and the Spirit Are at War**

It's kind of a problem/solution type of lesson. The problem is we are at war. We are at war, and that war prevents the Spirit working in our lives to produce this fruit.

We're going to look at Galatians chapter 5, because that's the context in which the fruit of the Spirit is listed. It's in this bigger context talking about two critical words that explain what

this war is—two critical terms that you need to understand in order to understand what Paul will be talking about.

### **Flesh: Our Sin-Desiring Nature**

One, he'll be using the word "flesh" multiple times. And the flesh isn't the meat here. Rather, it is our sin-desiring nature. It's a sin-desiring nature, and I'm choosing those words carefully, as opposed to God-desiring. It's ultimately about desires. And in the context of Galatians, the war is not between our two nature. We might have two natures. It is our sin/desire nature and the third person of the Holy God. It's the Holy Spirit versus these flesh desires.

Which leads me to the second word that we need to make sure we understand, and it's the word "desire" itself. In the passage in Galatians chapter 5, every time the word "desire" is going to be used in Greek, it has a prefix attached to it. The prefix is *epi-*. And *epi-* means "super." In other words, the word "desire" is used, and then Paul intentionally writes: *Wait, I'm going to add "epi-" to that. I'm going to make sure that you understand that these are super-desires. These are controlling desires. This is crucial to understand this prefix epi-, because it will change our understanding of the passage, but it is what motivates us to do whatever we might do.*

And some of the desires we might have are immoral and some of them are moral. But once they become *epi-*desires, they are in contrast or are working against the Spirit at that point. So even something like safety is a good desire. *Epi-*safety becomes a lust. And then the Spirit can't work in us to produce this fruit.

#### **Galatians 5:17**

**For the flesh has super-desires that are opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit has super-desires that are opposed to the flesh, for these are in opposition to each other, so that you cannot do what you want.**

So, the idea is this. The war is concerning what we allow to motivate us, what we allow to control us. And we can see that now that we know the phrases and the terms. Let's look at Galatians 5, verse 17. It says, "For the flesh has super-desires that are opposed to the Spirit. But look, the Spirit has super-desires that are opposed to the flesh. For these are in opposition to each

other, so that you cannot do what you want.” They’re the super-desires. They’re desires and they fuel us. They control us.

Just to review again, some are immoral—various passions that we might have. The classic phrase—how does it go?—“It worked until it didn’t.” Classic addiction in context of a passion would be something in our culture like, certainly, alcohol. Someone says, *Yes, I participated in that. I had it wrapped around my finger.* And then it devolves. It becomes an *epi-* demand or desire. And next thing you know we’re wrapped around its finger.

But they can also be moral desires. Good grades—that’s a good thing. They become *epi-* good grades when we find ourselves devastated when we don’t hit that mark that we wanted to. To be a good parent is a good desire. But if it becomes a super-desire, then what happens when Little Billy gets in trouble at school or in front of other people? We are ashamed, and we bring that emotion in and we find ourselves scolding little Billy way more than we ought to because we’re trying to teach him a lesson—*Never shame me again. I’m the super-parent; I’m the epi-parent.*

See how *epi-* makes a good thing a bad thing? Because it starts wrapping us around its finger and telling us the way it ought to be. We don’t just want comfort—that’s a good thing—we need comfort. *I must be respected.* And we can see those *epi-* desires show themselves a lot of times in our reactions, or, I would say, overreactions to something when we don’t get that desire, that *epi-* desire.

### The Solution for Winning the Battle

#### Galatians 5:16, 18

**So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the super-desires of the flesh.**

**<sup>18</sup> But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.**

So now the solution to the battle, the way we win, is found in chapter 5, verse 16. How do we overcome these *epi-* desires? He says this: “So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not

gratify the super-desires of the flesh.” And then verse 18 gives us another clue on how to do that: “But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.”

Those two sentences help us understand what it means to walk by the Spirit and how to overcome the *epi*- desires. In the first one he says to walk by the Spirit. Later it says to be led by the Spirit. The reason that I’m thrilled to be here today is because that’s what we’re going to talk about. Hold that thought for just a minute, because a clue to do that is in verse 18, the way it ends. It says, “But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” That seems like it came out of nowhere. Wouldn’t it say that if you’re led by the Spirit you’re not under the flesh? Aren’t we in a war between the Spirit and the flesh? It’s about the law here.

He says, *Look, you can’t have the Spirit work powerfully in your life if you’re under the law.* This is the shocking theme of Galatians itself. If you want to overcome *epi*-desires, Paul is saying you’re going to have to get out from underneath the law. If you want to settle this war on the flesh, you can’t live by the law.

So, what is the law? In the context of Galatians, what Paul is talking about right here, the thing that’s keeping us from growing is the value system that we are to work and do good things to please God. We have to earn God’s love. And so, the regular consequence is just to try harder. And if you’re disciplined, so much the better.

Another way of looking at it is that it’s a paradigm. It’s an entire worldview of a belief system that says that I have to earn my right, not only to be approved by God; but if I’m going to grow and become like Christ, if I’m going to pick up attributes or fruit, I’m going to have to do that. I’m going to have to work on that.

So, Paul is saying that whole paradigm, that whole law thing, can’t be part of your life, or you won’t experience the Spirit, and you won’t have the Spirit grow fruit in your life.

### **Galatians 5:22-23**

**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.**

Look how the law system shows up again and prevents us from enjoying the Holy Spirit’s work in our life, in verses 22 and 23. This is literally the list of the fruit of the Spirit. But look how he ends it. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness,

goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” But watch ... “Against such things there is no law.”

There it is again. He brings up the law in a list of all this spiritual fruit. And the point is this: that legal system doesn't work with God. It doesn't work with the Spirit. The fruit doesn't save you. It's not even your fruit. It's not our fruit. It's the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit is just evidence that the Holy Spirit is working through us, not through the law; so that the Holy Spirit gets credit for the love and the joy and the peace and the patience in our life, just like in salvation it is by grace alone that we're saved and only Jesus gets credit for that. Here only the Spirit gets credit for becoming like Christ in all of life.

The point is this: the only way we can grow in Christ, the only way we can grow fruit, the only way we can transcend these *epi*- desires is to stop thinking we can work toward God's approval. Let me say it a different way. The merit system of earning God's respect doesn't work. It short circuits this. Let me say it another way. Here's how Paul says it: *What God began in the Spirit supernaturally, He won't perfect in the law. What He began with the Spirit, He's going to perfect in the Spirit. What began as grace, a gift, He will perfect and finish with grace.*

This is such a foreign concept to us. I think we're bent and wired against it. I just want to summarize what we've talked about and apply it in different ways so that it makes more sense. We have a sin nature, a bent. That bent causes us to sin and have *epi*-desires. But also, it causes us to desire to earn our way into a good standing with God. When we say “*epi*-desires”, that's the fuel that we run on. It motivates our choices. And so, we have passionate choices where we want to feel good, and then it devolves into *I must feel good*. And when we must feel good, that *epi*-desire motivates us to make some dreadful decisions that usually hurt people that we love the most.

But we could also have an *epi*-desire that's moral, like security—that's a good thing. But when it becomes an ultimate thing, then it starts to be what motivates us to live our lives. So, we find ourselves worrying, angry, and jealous toward other people who have more security. We never get security. We get compulsive about it. Do you know how much security you need in retirement? A little more. It's always going to be a little more. You can always be more secure.

So, that's the problem. And how do we get away from these super-desires? How do we let the Spirit of God work in our lives? How do we release ourselves to the Spirit so that He will take us places and have us do things that the law would never do? Did you hear that? The Spirit

will take us places and have us do things that the law would never do—more things. How do you get that? You change the fuel that you’re running on. You’re changing the paradigm that you’re living for. You’re no longer under the law, a merit-based system. But he says that you go over here. It is a grace-based, loving relationship with God. And you do whatever you have to do to protect and to pursue that intimate relationship. But it means to walk in the Spirit, to be led by the Spirit, in any and every activity that enhances a relationship that is based on love. And that love is just based on a gift.

So, throughout the Bible you’ll see a list of dos and don’ts, but they’re not to earn good standing; they’re to protect the relationship with God. So, you’ll see in the Bible, cover to cover, honestly—you’ll see it throughout the New Testament as well—a list of things to stop doing. *Stop doing this, start doing that. Stop thinking this way, start thinking that way.* Paul will say one time, *Get out of your dead flesh clothes and be clothed in Christ.* Quite often Paul will say, *You’ve got to kill that old nature.* And part of the old nature is pride, thinking that you could earn God’s love. *And then live by the Spirit.*

It’s not moralism. It can look like moralism. But it’s the physics of relationships—let’s put it that way. It’s the physics, it’s the truth of how relationships work. So, let’s read what it means and how to walk in the Spirit. He’s going to say, *Don’t do this, but do this.* Don’t look at them as rules; think about it as intimacy with God.

### **Galatians 5:24-25**

**Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and super-desires.<sup>25</sup> Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.**

## **1. Crucify the Flesh**

Look at verse 24: Stop doing this. “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with all of its passions and its super-desires.” Here’s what we start doing in the next sentence: “Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” So, we crucify our flesh in these fleshly super-desires. We look at when we fail or when we sin and we try to figure

out why we would do that. And the answer is going to be because we love that. We desire that more than we desire a relationship with God.

The war here is really a fight for first love. It's a battle between what is the highest desire in a person's life. And so, when he talks about crucifying the flesh, sometimes that is a very strong love. And in the context of addiction, that's why we have such a wonderful ministry here called Celebrate Recovery, because sometimes we love things way more than we ought to. Sometimes with hurts, habits, and hang-ups we need other brothers and sisters in Christ to come around us and say, "We've got to put that where it belongs. You need to crucify that."

## 2. Walk in the Spirit

And then he says, "Now walk in the Spirit. Be in step with the Spirit." And it looks like that's a law—*don't do this, do this*. But it's not. Because it's about motive. And the motive is love. It's not my power to do things so that I will produce fruit; it is stopping bad, starting good, so that I can be intimate with God who provided salvation for me--and not just salvation, but what is called sanctification. And He will produce His fruit in me. It looks like—I know, it's dos and don'ts—it looks like law. But he says we're not under the law. So, it's about relationships.

Let me put it another way. A really great marriage looks a lot like slavery. And I probably ought to say that differently. But think about it—a really great marriage looks a lot like slavery. It looks a lot like law. You've probably had this experience in some venue. I and all my buddies love hunting. I love my buddies and I love hunting. And you get married and somewhere in that timeline my buddies call and say, "Well, let's go hunting. It's that time of the year again."

And then I say, "Well, I've got to check with my wife."

And then here it comes. "Oh, is she the boss of you?" Or, "Do you have to earn her love?"

And the answer is, "No, see, here's how it's going, my buddies. I love my wife more than hunting. And I love my wife more than you. So, I'm going to check with my wife."

It's not law; it's love. And love will take you places the law will never take you. Love will take you places the law will never have you go. Love is stronger than the law. It's not about what you love; it's about what you love the most.

## **Galatians 5:16**

**So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the super-desires of the flesh.**

Watch what happens in verse 16: “So I say to you, walk in the Spirit, and you will not gratify the super-desires of the flesh.” Here’s how the law works—it doesn’t say “Walk in the Spirit and do not gratify the desires of the flesh.” It says “you will not.” Because you’re running on a different fuel. You’re running on love. He first loved us.

Let me put it another way. “Love Melinda”—my wife—“and do not pursue other women.” No, “Love Melinda and you will not pursue other women.” I’m not under law. I’m under love. And love will take you places the law will never take you. Love will have you do things the law will never have you do. Love is stronger than the law.

So, the solution to the battle of the flesh and its *epi*-desires versus the Spirit and His *epi*-desires is to walk in step with the Spirit in everything and all the time. Make Him your first love. Make the Lord Jesus Christ the object of your first love. And that will make way for the Spirit to produce His fruit in your life.

## **The Spirit Desires That We Experience God’s Love**

Let me give you a picture of what that could look like. Let’s be four again and have a vivid imagination. Let’s just pretend that left at your door is this immaculate invitation to a very special dinner. It has a gold seal on it and you find out it’s real gold. And it says, “I want to meet you at the finest restaurant in all of the world with the most spectacular view that you have ever seen.”

And so, of course, you’d attend that dinner. And when you get to that top floor and the elevator door opens there is no one in that restaurant. It’s empty except for one table by the window. Now you’re a little nervous and maybe a little scared. So, you walk over to the table just waiting for time to pass. You look out and see that view that you never thought you’d see in your whole life, and then you turn back around and across the table is a man, but not like any man you’ve ever seen. He’s the ultimate expression of the original design of a real man. He

stares into your eyes and you can't take your eyes off him. He is gentle and strong. He is beautiful. He's the Prince of Peace. He is Jesus the Christ, the King of all kings. Aslan has returned. And He's looking through you. It's hard to breathe.

And then He says this: "I have come, I've invited you, to tell you some truths, and I want you to listen to me."

Let's do this. Let's get there. Let's close our eyes. Just humor me—just close your eyes and listen. You're at this table and Jesus says to you—you're the only one—"I have come to tell you some truths." And He says this: "I know you. And now you know that I know you." So, we start to cry.

And then He says, "I don't need you for anything. I am sufficient. I'm not being cruel; I'm just here to tell you some truths. I don't need you to do anything. I can do everything. That's just true. I know every thought and every motive of everything you've ever done and not done, everything you will do and not do." And then He says, "I love you. I have chosen to love you. And I choose because I can. I have chosen to love you, and I want you to believe in my love. And I want that belief in my love to set you free to love me and to love others. Your belief in my love for you will set you free to love me and to love others."

You think He's done, but He's not. He says, "Now this is going to hurt." But the Lord says this: "It insults my love for you when you try to earn it. It grieves me. It insults my love for you when you try to earn it. Let my free gift of my love be the sap in your soul."

He says, "I'm going to leave you two things. I'll leave you a letter that explains who I am and what I'm like. I'm going to give you promises to live by. We'll call that the Bible."

Then He takes off this spectacular ring and He gives it to you and He says, "This I want you to take. It's my Spirit. Look at it like an engagement ring. It's a ring filled with promises. This Spirit shows that you belong to me. I own you. It says that I'm coming back, and I'm coming back for you. I'm going to give my Spirit to remind you that I've paid for you. And because of that there is no condemnation in our relationship."

And then He says again, "Stop even thinking about trying to pay me back. What do you have that's valuable? Me. This is all a gift. My love fuels our relationship. And that fuel changes your whole reason and motive for living."

And all God's people said, "Amen."

What if you had a meeting like that? I mean, if you read your Bible all the time, you know that's based on the Bible. That happened. What would that change? That would change the fuel you run on. That would change the absolute motive for the choices that you make. A loving relationship that is based on the gift of love produces fruit, because the Spirit, walking by the Spirit, causes that fruit to break out.

Walking in the Spirit, being led by the Spirit, is envisioning your life as though you're holding hands here. A five- or four-year-old boy or girl, and you're just living life holding hands with your Savior. And He will never let go of you. And that is how love will take you to places and have you do things that the law would never have you do.

Because do you know what changes a soul? Not the law. Only grace transforms. Only God's love has that kind of power. What God began in the Spirit, He wants us to allow the Spirit to perfect in our lives. That's the point. And that changes our lives, because it changes the motive. It changes the fuel that we run on.

Think about the last time you lied. Why did you lie? The reason we lie is because there is something that we want. It's a desire. It's become an *epi*-desire, a super-desire. And we're afraid to lose whatever that is. And so, we will make up a lie if it assures that we keep that thing. It could be something like approval or power or security or happiness. But I'll lie so I can keep that—because we have the wrong first love.

But what if the first love is this relationship with God? And His love flows through us. That changes the paradigm. And that thing we used to desire becomes a regular desire. And we're willing to tell the truth at the risk of losing it. If we lose it we still win because we still have this ring. We have this Spirit within us that we love more.

The desires of the flesh don't go away; they just become petty. They used to be driving the car; now they're in the backseat. Sometimes we need to throw them in the trunk where they belong, right? And not even listen to them. *Shut up!* (Sorry, I know it's a cuss word—it is in my house too. But for that kind of stuff, yeah.)

This is how the fruit of the Spirit works. That's how we are led by the Spirit. That's how we walk in the Spirit, okay? It's a great day at Grace.

## How Does That Apply to Peace?

Now how does that apply to peace? There's the fruit of love and joy, and now we're on peace. How does this apply to peace?

### Philippians 4:6-7

**Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

Well, we can look at the passage we looked at last week, Philippians chapter 4, because that passage, oddly enough, is the most highlighted set of Bible verses in Kindle. I don't even know what any of that means. I just found that out. But apparently, Kindle highlighting—you can tell other people. This is it, because it's about joy and it's about peace.

But let's look at this now. It is a command, mind you. But let's read it as though it were physics for a relationship with the great King Jesus. Look: "Do not be anxious for anything, but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your heart and your mind in Christ Jesus."

What is he telling us to do? It's a law, it's a rule, it's a command. But it's a love thing. He says to constantly talk to God about everything. Constantly talk to God about everything. That's the physics of a great relationship. In a great marriage you see people constantly talking to each other about everything, checking in once or twice a day. When they finally get together again, *Tell me about your day. Tell me everything ... everything.* We're working on that. Everything. Not just the big stuff. If you're waiting to share the big stuff with God and then start praying, there's nothing all that big for God. (Empires ... whoosh.)

But when Jesus talks about peace, when He's talking about your anxiety, He brings in prayer and peace, and He says the same thing. He says "Ask, seek, knock," and then He says it again: *Ask, seek knock. I'm a good father. You're a bad father and doing pretty good at this. I'm a good father.* And then He says, *Listen, I know every hair on your head. Everything's trivial. I*

*mean, I know everything about you. He says, If the sparrow falls to the ground and dies, I know that. And you matter more than a sparrow.*

*So, what is He saying? Let's keep the relationship going. Talk to me all the time about everything, because that's what a loving relationship is. Tell me about your job. Tell me about your hobbies. Tell me about staying in shape when you're going to the gym. Let's go. Let's talk a lot.*

The fruit of the Spirit is not like a self-help technique, because there's no self in this. The fruit belongs to the Spirit and we're trying to get Him to get involved in our lives. So, we're not creating peace within us; we're doing things to allow Him to empower us. It's like a sailboat. You don't cause the sailboat to move. You just lift the sail up on the mast and make sure you're pointed in the right direction. But what causes it to move? It's the Spirit that causes you to enjoy the day on the lake. That's what He's doing. This is just the physics of relationship. It's just the physics of sailing.

So, here's what we're going to do. We're going to take this advice about how to get peace in our life, the peace of God in our life. We talk to Him about everything all the time. So, we have homework. This is our devotional. What we're doing here is that we have a devotional together. You can download it on the internet if you want. There it is. We have plenty of copies this time, I assure you. We have enough for north Austin. We're all going through this together and we kind of have three points to what we're trying to do. We're picking a passage. We'll all be going through this together. You can look at a passage that we're studying from our time together. You can look at a passage that's in the notes themselves--sometimes it's a different passage—or the memory verse that's on the little sticker that you get. You find that verse that you want to memorize, you write that down, put it on a post-it note or some kind of paper. You want it in front of you all the time. You're praying through that verse throughout the day. And the third thing we're doing is that we're praying throughout the day.

This is what I'd like us to do. This is the challenge for the summer. Let's turn our radios off in our drive time, our regular drive times maybe to or from work or whatever it might be. Turn the radio off or whatever the noise is and just use that time to talk to God about everything—all the anxiety, all the celebration, everything. I'm going into a meeting: "Lord, help me see people as human beings." I'm drowning in monotony with what's going on at home with

the kids: “Help me enjoy this very moment. Let me see these moments. Help me put my phone away and look into the eyes of my children.”

Here’s a great prayer—what is your gift and how are you using it at our church? Melinda prays this daily. She has the gift of hospitality. How does she do it? She prays for it all week long and when she shows up here she’s looking for people so that she can take out her hospitality on them and make them feel like this is a home for them. (She would say that differently, I’m sure.)

You want a place to start? Philippians chapter 4, verses 4 through 9. That’s a fabulous paragraph because it talks about how to experience the peace of God. And it’s not our peace trying to get out. It’s this other peace from God. And the peace that we’re talking about here has a name.

I love how in the first section that we read there that we pray all the time about everything with thanksgiving, and it says that the peace of God which is beyond our understanding will guard your heart and your mind. Think of some guy in tactical gear, a police officer: *I’m guarding the heart and mind of this person with the peace of God.*

#### **Philippians 4:9**

**Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.**

And then what’s interesting is that Paul turns in verse 9 of the same paragraph, and it’s not about the peace of God anymore. Look what he says in verse 9. He kind of concludes this section on peace. He says, “Whatever you’ve learned or received or heard from me, or even seen in me—put this into practice, and the God of peace will be with you.” The God of peace will be with you. It goes from “the peace of God” to “the God of peace”, because this peace has a name. It’s Yahweh. It’s Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

And what Paul is saying in this section here is *Just look at my relational physics that I’m working. What you’ve received from me, learned from me, heard from me—everything. Look at my love relationship that I have with God. Look at what fuels my life. My old life—Saul/Paul—law. And the law can’t change a soul. But look at what happened to me now. What you’ve seen in me and learned from me, witnessed in my life, that kind of relationship ... Look where love has*

*taken me. Look what love has had me do. It's so powerful. Do that, and the God of peace will give you the peace of God and He will guard your hearts and minds. And it's way past your ability to understand it.*

That is how you get peace. It's from the Spirit. We need to just yield and abandon this model of insulting God's love by trying to earn it or pay it back. I hope your life just got turned right-side-up. It's a beautiful passage. Let's pray that we might believe that.

*Holy Father, You first loved us. First I confess that I have injured You and insulted Your love by trying to earn it. And I know there are so many men and women here who have maybe never experienced this in their own lives, who maybe had to earn their parents' love or lost their respect. Everything was on a grade, somehow, of performance. It's so part of our culture as well. So, Lord, that bent is in me, and I bring it to our relationship, and it's scandalous.*

*You loved me first, and that should be the sap of my soul. Lord, I'd ask that grace would transform the church and everyone in it, that we would abandon any model of law, and that Your love would take us places and have us do things that the law would never require. Because love is stronger than law, and only grace can transform.*

*So, Lord, I'd ask that peace would come over us, because we are regularly all the time talking to You about everything, because that's what a loving relationship has. And we want to do that. We want the God of peace—shalom--to bring us shalom, because You will not let go of our hands as we walk through the valleys of even the shadow of death. We pray this because this is a promise that You gave us and we live by those promises. In Jesus' name. Amen.*