

The Peace of Christ

by

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“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” John 14:27 (ESV)

Well this was a strange one. Before writing this devotional I prayed and asked God for His leadership with the subject that I should write on, feeling that there is someone out there who needs some special assurance. There was a thought already going in me that I needed to write about *peace*. I even thought of the scripture above, or it came to mind for some reason. This is where it gets strange. Before starting my work I turned to *My Utmost for His Highest* to read what Chambers was inspired to write for this day, and guess what? His devo was on *peace*, and he used the same scripture. Therefore I feel that I have been led to encourage someone who is reading this devotional that God is with you, and you should not be afraid of what you are facing. I know someone in particular that this assurance speaks to, but there may be more. We will see. The main thing is there is a peace that only God can give to you, and it will overcome anything coming at you if you will allow it. However, you must make a choice if you will accept this peace, for it will be a battle to release your illusion that your worry and fretting somehow minimizes a negative outcome. It will not. But you can release your concern to Him who can control it. So, let's consider that option which you have.

What is it about Jesus that He can give us peace even in the most troubling and challenging times? Understand that following Jesus has always been challenging, since He went public with His ministry over two thousand years ago. It is a given that He will lead us into some disturbing and even dangerous situations, for His way is opposed to most things in this world, especially those things that are near and dear to His heart. In fact, it was this opposition that got Him crucified. Therefore, if we are His disciples He will take us to places that will challenge the norms of the situation we enter, that is if we live a contrasting life to the ways of this world. A life lived like this will bring criticism and even persecution, as it did Him. Count on it.

Historically we know that Christians have been persecuted, murdered, abused, shunned, burned, stoned and discriminated against because of their faith in Christ. For centuries persecutions could have been avoided if those persecuted Christians had simply denied Christ. But it is not only from a history long ago that persecution occurred. This abuse is still happening, giving a clear indication that challenging times goes with following Jesus, no matter what century we live in. Ask the Christians whom Islamic State Militants expelled from their own homes and hometown in Mosul simply because they were Christians. Similar to the three hundred year persecution of the Christians by the Romans who would have exempted from persecution those people who denied Christ, the Islamic thugs in Mosul told those Christians there to either bow down to Muhammad, or leave their homes and country. Rather than bow down to a false prophet, they left their homes. So the big question is how is it Jesus can say that He *leaves us with His peace*, when in fact that our peace is the very thing that is disturbed when we follow Christ? Is there something that we are not seeing

here? Could it be that the peace that He gives transcends understanding? If we can figure out how to get that kind of peace, then we can find a peace that will weather any storm that assaults us. Look what the following scripture says for an answer:

“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Phil 4:4 (ESV)

The first thing we must embrace is that the peace of God is not driven by circumstances or the securities the world would try to unsuccessfully give us, and that is why it transcends understanding. Those securities are fickle, fleeting and inconsistent at best. What kind of peace could we have if it was based only on a security that might leave us at any moment because of rot, erosion of net worth, thievery, death, diminishing health, or thugs with AK47s that kick us out of our own home? And yet, the strategy the world gives us for obtaining its kind of peace cannot insure us against those problems, and these things will for sure rob us of that kind of peace. The false strategies cannot address the problem of safeguarding us against all risks. They do not, for what they offer cannot be totally safeguarded, and that is the dilemma within a worldly strategy for obtaining peace. You see, we cannot give our life to obtain something from this world that gives us a sense of peace, without at the same time losing our sense of peace because of the thought that we could lose what we have obtained at any time. This formula the world gives us for obtaining peace leads us into a “Catch 22” situation. Remember: A ***catch-22*** is a paradoxical situation from which an individual cannot escape because of contradictory rules.

The world’s ways of trying to obtain peace contradicts itself, for its formula just doesn’t work without a problem each way you turn. However, the peace God gives us “transcends” the understanding of the world, and its ability to grant it. This is why the Romans could not succeed in stamping out Christianity in its three hundred years of terrorism against Christians, and this is why the Muslims, nor the atheists, nor any government contrary to Christ, will rid this world of true followers of Christ. They cannot succeed, for they have nothing to threaten a Christian with except death or a few years of misery, and even then, the peace of God in those Christians lives will have a place that will be bewildering to observers. Terrorists against Christians may take our land, our savings, our homes, our towns, our families, and burn us, stone us, and torture us ... as Christians have been treated for centuries. But they cannot take our peace, for they cannot take from us what the Holy Spirit gives to us. What He gives to us transcends all understanding, for it is God Himself within us comforting us.

Historically we know that a true Christian will not deny Christ, for God’s Spirit is alive within him or her, and it is the Lord who sustains that person. It is this indwelling of the Holy Spirit that gives us the peace that will stay with us through thick and thin, and help us endure to the end. That is why there will never be a paradox in the life of a true follower of Christ. We can never lose what He has given us. We didn’t earn it to have it, and we do not have to work to keep it. We need never fear losing what He has given to us, for we are sealed by His mark on us, and we are held secure by the greatest power of the universe. If God be with us who can be against us, and that thought gives us a peace that transcends the understanding of the world? A true believer cannot deny Christ, for Jesus is just too real to us, and this is why His peace reigns in our life. But, it is the choice of the Christian if he will receive this peace that surpasses comprehension, and that is the final thought I will give you about what you must do to receive this peace that is offered to you. Consider the following verse:

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Col 3:15 ESV

Two things we see in this verse. First we must “let” this peace into our heart. It is you and me who hold at bay this unimaginable peace, and it is up to us to invite it in. How do we do this? We see it in the next point. We must invite this peace into us, and then allow it to rule in our heart. What does it mean to have this peace *rule* in our hearts? It means that it *rules*. It takes priority. It trumps any negative thought, or threat, or challenge that comes against our peace. It means that we will not be swayed away from this peace, for *it rules us*. Many things die around us, including our bodies that will wear out. But that ruling peace will not die in us, or will it fade when we grow old. Rather it will grow and build momentum as we move toward the end. This happens because *it rules*. Finally this peace must rule our heart. Our *heart* is our deepest emotional center, and our deepest core values. It is the “inner-man” in our life, the man who no one knows but God and our self. It is this deep, heart felt conviction and determination deep within us to allow the *peace of God to rule in our hearts* that takes this peace to the surface of our life, and it is then lived out in a daily expression. This is how we embrace a peace that surpasses comprehension, and transcends understanding into our life, and allow it to nurture us through any challenge that comes our way. This is what Jesus means when He says to us,

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you..”

I guess I will summarize this devotional by simply saying, ***“His peace is unimaginable and indescribable. But, so is He, and that is what He offers to us. He offers Himself to walk us through any challenge given to us, and that is why it transcends understanding.”***