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# **Grace and Peace**

**#1353-B**

**Series: God's Amazing Grace**

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# Grace and Peace

*Our loving God, truly Yours is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory. And truly as we come into Your presence, this morning, we have so many needs. We are rushing around, anxious, caught up in a whirlwind of activities, failing on many occasions, many of us, to be testimonies of the Prince of Peace.*

*Our prayer, this morning, Father, is that supernaturally, You would guide us through Your Word and just calm our spirits. Let us crawl up into the Prince of Peace and really rest in Him. May Christ the King be preeminent in all our thoughts and activities.*

*We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

You are all familiar with the song. It goes like this:

There is a place of quiet rest  
Near to the heart of God,  
A place where sin cannot molest,  
Near to the heart of God.

There is a place of comfort sweet,  
Near to the heart of God,  
A place where we, our Savior meet,  
Near to the heart of God.

There is a place of full release,  
Near to the heart of God,  
A place where all is joy and peace,  
Near to the heart of God.

(Text and Music: Cleland B. McAfee)

It's a beautiful hymn. It paints a picture for us of the Christian life the way it was meant to be. It reveals that there is an inner garden near the palace of the Holy One, where, when the believer has quietly slipped into its confines, there is a kind of holy hush, a place where the winds of adversity that blow upon us are

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translated into the gentle breeze of the comforting hand of God. It is a place where hurried, harried believers can find refuge from the harsh storms that assail them and crawl up into the arms of Jesus and rest in perfect peace.

I'm looking around the room, this morning, and if we're honest with one another, at this season of all seasons, perfect peace seems to be somewhat of a mirage. It just seems to many of us, it's something that's not attainable. And yet, God promises, just as the songwriter did, that such a place and such a promise really does exist. The thing that ought to make it so attractive to us is not the relief that it promises us, but the fact that it *is* near to the heart of God.

We have been traveling these past—I don't know how many weeks now—through the exciting, but somewhat challenging waters of the river of grace. How deep it flows, but how rich are the waters to the taste. And the more we look into the depths of the grace of God, the more clearly we see the reflections of the nature of God. Because all that He is seems to be revealed in varying ways whenever we behold His incredible grace. In essence, His grace is His way of giving to us all that He is, and enabling us to let Him live through us. We long to be holy, for instance, but we find that we can't. Then we pray for grace and God miraculously moves in our lives, guarding the gateway to the eye, monitoring the movies in our minds, creating in us a desire to be lifted up above the mind of the world into the heavenlies. And as the grace flows through our lives, God creates a new awareness of His holiness. What happens? We are getting near to the heart of God.

The second area we looked at is the area of love. We long to be able to love the way God loves, don't we? We would like to be able to love the unlovable, to love the needy, to love the hurting, to love the crying. But, we find, it isn't natural. It has to be supernatural. So, God, in His precious mercy, has given to us something we call, agape grace; the ability to love the way He loves. And when it happens, our eyes begin to be opened, our hearts begin to be sensitive, and our minds begin to see prejudices dissolve and priorities change. We begin to experience a kind of love we never thought we could have. It's a gift from God. It's something we do not deserve, can't repay, and it's eternal in nature.

What we find is, God is changing us by enabling us to do supernaturally, what we cannot do naturally; love the unlovable,

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the unworthy, the undeserving, the unappreciative. It's a miracle. It's called grace. We even find that we can love our enemies; those who persecute us and say all manner of evil against us falsely. You say, "I can't do that." No, you can't. But Christ in you, can. And when it happens, you suddenly find yourself near to the heart of God.

You pass through one of life's great trials as we discussed in our last lesson. The pressure is more than you can take. Maybe it's the death of a loved one, and yet, through it all, you experience this incredible calm. There is an inner strength. There's physical stamina. You don't understand it. Then people say, "We've been praying that God would give you comforting grace. Maybe it's a lingering illness where the future is unknown. You begin to be crushed under the weight of the uncertainty of it. But when you begin to pray and others begin to pray for you, something happens. You begin to get a quiet confidence in the sovereignty of God. This uncanny peace settles over your soul, and the world around you is amazed. It's comforting grace. You are getting near to the heart of God.

It may be unceasing pain that is tearing your life apart. But in the midst of the pain, there comes a kind of rest you never knew you could have. It's grace. Maybe it's a sudden trauma, an accident or an unexpected intrusion into your normally placid life. Suddenly, your world is ripped apart. But after the initial shock there comes a time when it's as if you are carried on angels' wings into that garden of God where sin cannot molest, near to the heart of God.

It's as though a loving God has seen you trying to carry a load you cannot bear, as we looked at last week. He heard you whisper in the midst of your pain and suffering, "Too heavy." And as you did, that precious God sent His Spirit, who is called the Comforter, to come alongside and lift that burden from you, taking you as He did, into that place of comfort sweet, near to the heart of God.

We all have the same question, I think. Do we have to be in trouble to find the rest of God? Must our worlds be falling apart before we run to the quiet place? We know that tribulation worketh patience. We know that God's strength is made perfect in weakness. So, should we go around with a bucket on our heads waiting for God to rain down fire so we can pray for grace and

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have rest? I don't think so.

I do think like Job, like Stephen, like Paul, like Joseph, like Moses, like so many in Scripture, we will grow in our walk with God as the cannonballs of life fly in our direction, and we have to cry out for grace. That's true. But the Scripture also indicates, beloved, that in the very center of the will of God, something like in the eye of a storm, there is a place of quiet rest, both in good times and in bad. It's where a man and His God or a woman and her God can have such intimate fellowship with God that He is literally doing the living, and we are watching in amazement as He lives His life through us. Some people call it the "exchanged life." Some people call it "Lordship living." I would like to give it another title, "normal Christian living."

It is of grace. We don't deserve it. But it is of God, therefore, we don't need to. It is that supernatural rest of God. It is so captivating and so overpowering as it happens, that we can cry out like Paul:

I have been crucified with Christ; [and those three incredible words, yet, not I] it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

(Galatians 2:20 NKJV)

You remember what he is saying. "I'm living, I'm alive, but I'm not doing the living, because I'm dead. Christ is alive, and I am watching Him live through me." And then Paul gives us God's definition of love. He said, "Because He loved me and gave Himself for me." That's love. God giving Himself away for those who do not deserve it, cannot repay it, and may not understand it. That same Paul, in the midst of years of imprisonment, persecution, hardship, and facing death, used a prison cell as his personal post office, and he wrote letters from his heart to those outside who were wondering what in the world it was like to suffer like that. This is how all those letters began.

Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

(I Corinthians 1:3 NKJV,

II Corinthians 1:2 NKJV,

Ephesians 1:2 NKJV,

Philippians 1:2 NKJV,

Colossians 1:2b NKJV,

II Thessalonians 1:2 NKJV)

Grace and peace. The Pauline twins. Like two hearts woven

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together, grace and peace seem to be both the cause and effect of each other. Have you ever thought about it? Only the grace of God can bring about the peace of God, and oh, how the peace of God draws on the grace of God for its strength. They are two sides of the same enabling power of Christ in you.

As we draw to a conclusion, this part of our look at the amazing grace of God, we need to look at the subject of peace. We need to steal away into the quiet place near to the heart of God. We need to see what there is about it that makes it so special, and what there is about us that makes us rush away from that garden so frequently and leave behind the serenity we found there. What is the peace of God? Do you have it? Do you keep it? Do you want it? Why did Paul pray for it so earnestly? Why did he always seem to couple it with grace? Let's take a look at what it means to have the peace of God.

There is only one major Hebrew word and one major Greek word used in Scripture, that are defined in our English vocabulary as peace.

The Hebrew word, shalom, שָׁלוֹם shalowm {shaw-lome} or shalom {shaw-lome}, literally means:

- 1) completeness in number
- 2) safety in body
- 3) welfare, health, prosperity
- 4) peace.

But, when it is translated peace, which it is 175 times incidentally, in the Old Testament, you'll find Strong's Concordance will tell you this. It is a kind of peace that deals with:

- 1) human relationships
- 2) God
- 3) peace from war
- 4) peace as an adjective.

But, if you take the Greek word used in the New Testament, ειρενε eirene {i-ray'-nay}, you get a more beautiful explanation. Let me read you what Strong's says the word eirene means. It is a word used throughout the entire New Testament. It defines peace as:

- 1) a state of national tranquility; exempt from the rage

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and havoc of war

- 2) peace between individuals
- 3) security, safety, prosperity
- 4) of the Messiah's peace, the way that leads to salvation
- 5) of Christianity, the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, whatsoever sort that is.

Ouch. Peace. I think it's obvious, then, that it has four facets in Scripture. Let's look at those four and zero in on one. Peace. It is used four ways in the New Testament.

### 1- The cessation of hostilities between two warring nations.

In the Old Testament we find it in I Kings.

Also Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel.

(I Kings 22:44 NKJV)

The war stopped; the fighting was over. There was peace.

So Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them, to let them live;

(Joshua 9:15a)

### 2- The cessation of hostilities in the world, in a relational sense.

Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it.

(Psalm 34:14 NKJV)

Mark the blameless man, and observe the upright; For the future of that man is peace.

(Psalm 37:37 NKJV)

There are many, many other cases.

### 3- The cessation of hostilities between man and God through Jesus Christ and His atoning death.

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

For He is Himself is our peace, [that is, He is the source of our peace] who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,

Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace,

And that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

(Ephesians 2:13-16 NKJV)



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But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.

(Isaiah 53:5 NKJV)

Perhaps, the most expressive verse is Romans 5:1.

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

(Romans 5:1 NKJV)

Cessation of hostilities between man and God; peace with God. We've often passed out those little booklets, *How to Find Peace with God*.

The fourth way it's used is the one we want to look at. It involves not just peace with God, but the peace of God, and there's quite a difference.

4- That inner tranquility of heart that accompanies surrendering to the sovereignty of God.

You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You.

(Isaiah 26:3 NKJV)

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

(John 14:27 NKJV)

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

(John 16:33 NKJV)

Now let's focus for just a few minutes on that aspect of the peace of God, and let's find out exactly what the requirements and promises are. All four kinds of peace have certain things in common; the coming together of warring factions, and replacing conflict or contention with peace. In the first two, there is a need for some kind of agreement between two nations; an overt treaty of some type where they have been openly at war and now, they're at peace. Whether it is with family, individuals or relationships, it's an agreement that we are going to stop fighting and get along. In the case of man's relationship with God, it's an inner Kingdom, and a treaty has to be signed once and for all and that settles it. God signed it in blood at Calvary. And every man and woman who comes to Him, surrenders to Him, and accepts the terms of His treaty, can find peace with God.

But this last kind of peace is the one we want to look at this morning. It's the one we just read in Strong's described as:

*“That tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, no matter what that might be.”*

A “tranquil state of soul.” Isn’t that what you would like to have? What a promise! What a description of that quiet place near to the heart of God; confident of its security and content with its lot in life. In other words, it is resting the weight of its life on the sovereignty of God. God is secure. He will never leave us or forsake us, and He is coming for us so He can be with us. Wow!

Unlike the peace we receive when we receive Christ—a guaranteed home in heaven where there will be no war, no sin, no grief and no pain—this kind of tranquility of which Paul speaks and of which Jesus speaks, is something that is experienced minute by minute. Or so it should be. Now, what can we learn about it from these passages? Let’s take a look.

The first thing we notice is, there is something we have to do to maintain it.

1- It is the result of focus. It is reserved for those whose “mind is stayed or fixed on Thee,” and as long as we, by an act of the will, choose to take our eyes off of Jesus even for a moment, we lose the peace of God. Remember that. It is still present; it is still available, but we have lost it because we have looked the other way.

2- It is an act of faith. It is there, it says, “because he trusteth in Thee.” That’s the reason our minds can be stayed on Him. We are confident of our salvation; we are satisfied with our lot in life. The two-edged sword. So, having not seen, we believe. Therefore, the size of the rain clouds is not a problem to us. We believe the Word of God, and as long as faith does not give way to fear, peace is available. But the minute we take our eyes off of Him, look at the circumstances, and begin to doubt, the peace leaves. Have you noticed that?

3- It is all of grace. It is a gift. Jesus said, “Peace, I give to you.” It is free; You don’t deserve it. Remember grace is F-U-S-E. It is the fuse that links man to God. It’s free, undeserved, sovereign, and eternal. The minute you begin to rationalize your worthiness into the equation, the peace departs. It is a gift.

4- The world will try to imitate it, but they can’t. How do we know? Jesus said, “Not as the world giveth, give I unto you.” They

can't imitate it. They will use physical substitutes to calm the nerves, settle the mind, or remove the evident sources of conflict that destroy the peace. But it doesn't work; it doesn't last. When the alcohol wears off, when the diversion runs its course, you still have to live with yourself. The world defines peace as an external effort to calm the stress or ease the pain. But the pain comes, beloved, from the inside out. It's the flesh's reaction to the external that ruins the peace. Peace only comes from God, and only a believer can have the peace of God. Remember that.

5- When you begin to be afraid and let fear have a stronghold, you lose it. “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” It's a choice; opposites in the Kingdom.

6- Peace then, is never circumstantial; it is eternal. You can't blame your loss of peace on what has happened to you this week. You say, “Well, nobody would have a peaceful heart if they had been through what I've been through.” That's not true. Jesus said, “In this world you shall have tribulation. Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” Now I don't know how many of you claim that. That's a promise. “In this world you shall have tribulation.” How many of you claimed that this week. Nobody ever claims that promise. We don't like it, don't want it, don't even want to talk about it. But tribulation is guaranteed, and we're also guaranteed that the very same tribulation we fear can produce the peace we want. “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

There is one other passage we want to look at and draw some conclusions from. Then we want to look at how we can make it work ourselves. That passage is so familiar to you. It's Philippians 4:6-7, and you remember what it says. Be careful, or literally, be anxious or worried about nuttin'. Now the word, nuttin' is a good Greek word. It comes from the word, nuttin'. It means zero, zilch, never. There is no basis Biblically to ever worry or be anxious. That's what it says. But, instead in everything—literally in every situation without exception, is what that word every means—by prayer and supplication with praise and thanksgiving, tell God about it. Let your requests be made known unto God. And literally, what we will find out is, it's more than telling God about it and then taking it back. It is telling God and thanking Him that you don't have the problem anymore. He does. And if you do that, verse 7, here is a promise: the peace of God that passes all understanding will keep your hearts and minds through Christ

Jesus.

Well, let's see what principles we can add then from that passage.

7- Worry is the antithesis of peace. When you worry, it says that your security and your lot in life is your problem, not God's, and you're not sure you can handle it. Good thought; you can't.

8- Prayer is the method God gives us to relinquish control and get the peace back. "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." You take the things that destroy your peace, and you go to the throne of God and you don't tell Him about them. You tell Him and you lay them down. And when you lay them down, God says, "I will give you peace. I guarantee it."

9- There is no human explanation for the peace of God. Scripture says it. We didn't. It passes all our understanding. There is no logical way to explain it. It is an internal transformation that comes from relinquishing control of worry and fear and allowing God to replace it with something so supernatural we can't conceive of it. An unbeliever can't have it and can't understand it. That's what it says.

Well, we've got a lot of information about peace, don't we? But isn't it strange, information is not enough. We do know about the peace of God from the Word of God, and we know that the child of God can stay close to the heart of God.

This is what we found in summary form. I know what you're thinking. *If it's that easy, why didn't you just give us a summary instead of taking up fifteen minutes!* I don't have a good answer for that. It is a free gift that defies circumstances. It is acquired by faith and requires keeping your heart focused on who God is, rather than on circumstances. There is no worldly equivalent or human explanation for it; it is that supernatural. Worry and fear cause it to dissolve, and prayer is the means God has given us to appropriate it.

Those are the facts. But facts really are not enough. We need to see it, don't we? So, I'm going to ask you to take a trip with me. We're going to take a journey into Matthew 14, for just a few minutes. The only background we need is that Jesus had just finished feeding the 5,000, and the disciples were in awe. But they were tired. They were amazed at this miracle-working man

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of Galilee. Just after the feeding of the 5,000, it says:

Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat, and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. [Church was adjourned.]

And when He had sent the multitudes away, [what did He do? Pull up a chair and turn on the TV? No, I don't think so.] He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. [We could do a 30-week series on that one verse; He was there alone.]

But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea.

And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear.

But immediately Jesus spoke unto them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

And Peter [bless his heart; that's not in the original] answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water. [Can I, huh? Can I?]

So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.

But when he saw the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand, and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

Then those who were in the boat came and worshipped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God."

(Matthew 14:22-33 NKJV)

I'm sure the disciples were tired by now. They were filled with enthusiasm. What a day! What a life! Free food for the multitudes out of nothing. You could kind of hear them whispering, "If they could just get the McDonald's franchise for all of Israel. Why, they would make one Big Mac and ask Jesus to turn it into a mountain of burgers. No telling what He could do with french fries." The world's first mega-meal. And no doubt, as well, they were probably thinking, now that He had performed this miracle,

and it was wide-spread, they would have all kinds of publicity for the church. They could just envision the Channel 4 news crew following their little boat, wanting interviews with the Master's "Secret Service Agents."

So, Jesus put them in a boat, patted them on the head, and sent them across the sea without Him. Once their little boat was on its way, He sent the multitudes away as well, and went up into a mountain to be with the Father, alone. He knew that place of quiet rest, and He knew that unless He kept going there and spending time with the Father, He could not maintain the peace, so He crawled up into His Father's arms once again.

Jesus also knew there was a storm coming, and that little ship with the disciples on it was just about to be tossed in every direction. He had a lesson He wanted to teach these guys, so He tarried until the fourth watch of the night, and then He went toward the sea and began to walk on the water. The incredible, intentional delays of God; think about them. What an incredible thought, that God waits and waits and waits beyond what we think He should wait before He acts, because He knows when the time is right.

The disciples were already afraid because of the storm, and they looked out and saw Jesus coming, walking on the water. They screamed out with fear because they thought He was a ghost. They were petrified and soon they panicked, and Jesus let them. When their panic turned to pandemonium, Jesus spoke. All He said was, "It is I; don't be afraid." Peter, bless his outspoken heart, responded, "Lord, if it's really you, let me walk on the water. Can I, huh? Can I?" Jesus replied, "Okay, Peter, come on, start walking." And sure enough, he could and he did.

Now I don't know what was going through his mind just then, and I can't imagine what was going through the mind of the other disciples watching him. I only know that as he proceeded, the wind began to blow a little harder, and Peter looked at the wind and looked at the circumstances, and took his eyes, for a moment, off of Jesus. Just for a moment. But the second he did, he began to sink. He began to sink big time. You see, beloved, either you walk by faith or you don't. Either you believe that God is who He says He is and He's in total control, or else you believe that you are in charge and life is going to be out of control. Those are the only two options.

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Jesus reached out to him, and about that time, you can read between the lines. Peter said, “Glub, glub, Lord, glub, save me, glub.” Not all those glubs are in the original Greek, incidentally. You can just see the Lord reach out and take Peter’s hands as he’s sinking and pull him up. If it had been us, we would have said to him, “Good job, Pete. You almost made it. Next time, you’ll be able to walk halfway across the ocean.” Jesus looked instead—he wasn’t proud of Peter. He said,

“O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”

(Matthew 14:31b NKJV)

With that, the storm relented; the winds died down. Jesus reached the boat and found a group of grateful disciples who worshipped Him. For what? They worshipped Him because He fed 5,000 hungry people, and He walked on water and calmed a storm.

They loved those miracles. They loved spiritual sideshows. They loved it when Jesus found them in dire circumstances and removed those circumstances. They pictured a life of ease where every problem that came along would either disappear and life’s storms would go away, or they would be able to walk on the water. Beloved, they missed it. They had no reason to fear in the first place. Storms are not a problem to God. And just in case they didn’t know that, Jesus walked on top of the water to remind them.

They lost the peace of God the minute they took their eyes off Him and looked at the winds of life. To them, the place of quiet rest was wherever the miracles were happening. To Jesus, the place of quiet rest was wherever He was, because He was always at rest.

Remember, grace is God doing supernaturally what we cannot do naturally, and the natural mind cannot maintain a quiet rest. Think about your own life. We panic over a bad decision at work and the peace is gone. We panic when the phone rings and its bad news, and the peace is gone. We panic when we have a job to do and we’re afraid of failing, and the peace is gone. We worry over what we can’t control, and forget that we can’t control anything, and the peace is gone. We fear the future and forget the future is not our problem. It never was; it never will be.

What was Peter’s problem? He wanted a God who could calm storms, feed a hungry congregation, and walk on water. His

confidence, once again, was on what his God could do, not on who his God was. Our problem is the same. We're willing not to be afraid if we know God is going to bail us out every time; if we know that the minute we call on Him, we'll either be able to walk on water, or He'll stop the storm.

We are constantly looking for new evidences that God is God. But we'll get on an airplane one time and after that, we'll trust any airplane and any pilot who comes along. We'll walk in, sit down, and be comfortable. We don't understand how it works. We know some of them crash, but we've been on them and experienced them so we trust them.

But we expect our omnipotent, omniscient God to prove Himself every day. If He doesn't, we worry, we fret, we get anxious. And the minute we do, the peace flees like a 90-mile per hour wind. It's gone. The place of quiet rest is history. We're on our own now, and it's up to us to get across the ocean in that storm. Glub, glub, glub.

The key is to maintain the peace of God. The peace of God is:

*"That tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, fearing nothing from God, and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that is."*

Did you get the two-edged sword? Assured of its salvation, and content with its earthly lot, whatever it is. What an incredible formula for peace; satisfied in Jesus. Satisfied that your eternal destiny is settled. God said it is. And satisfied that whatever you have is all you need, and whatever happens, God is in control. Having reached that conclusion, what is there to fear? What is there to be worried about?

It is a heart that is both converted and content. Once a heart reaches that level of confidence in the sovereignty of God and is willing to keep the eyes of its spirit focused on who He is, there begins to be a rest in that person's life, a quiet calm, a satisfied heart, and the absence of fear. What has happened? That person has entered into the place of quiet rest near to the heart of God. Bullets may fly. Bombs may fall. Rain clouds may form. It doesn't matter. Jesus is bulletproof. Don't you know that? And Jesus owns your life. He is the only bomb shelter you will ever need. He is the only umbrella you'll ever need. He is your covering. He is your Rock, your Fortress, your Deliverer. He is everything.



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I beg you, beloved, enter into the rest of God. The issue isn't what God is going to do or not do for you; the issue is who He is. He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. You can trust Him with your life; you can trust Him with your death. He alone knows what you need and nothing can happen without His permission. He knows when it's time to call you home. He knows. Enter into peace.

Who made you, anyway? Who knit you together in your mother's womb? Who has collected all your tears, the Scripture says, and saved them in a bottle? God has. Who died for you? Who lives in you? Who ever lives to make intercession for you? Who whispers to you every time you're afraid or anxious, "It is I; don't be afraid?" You know who. And He longs to hear you say, like Paul, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless, I live; yet not I..." (Galatians 2:20).

You have two choices. You can try to live the Christian life in your own strength and live with fear and worry; or you can say to God every morning when you wake up, "Father, I do not know where You will take me today, but I don't care. I'm yours. You bought me with a price. What a price. Take me wherever You want, and take from me whatever You want. Take me home whenever You want. Only You know what is best."

"So, Lord, what is there to steal my peace away today? If my life is Yours and my death is Yours, if my family is Yours, if my career is Yours, if my finances are Yours and my health is Yours, my worry bin is empty. Dear Lord, I want to enter the place of quiet rest, near to the heart of God. Please draw me into that holy haven where the total weight of my being is so on You that Satan has no place to attack that armor of peace." That's the first thing you have to do. You have to ask God, every day, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving. That's your part. God's part is everything else. God's promise is, the peace of God that passes all understanding will keep you. You know what the "keep" is in Scripture? The keep is the inner place in the castle where the attacking armies couldn't get through. They couldn't destroy you if you were in the keep. It's protection.

But that's only the beginning. That's the quiet time part. The peace will only remain, according to Scripture, if "your eyes are stayed on Him." That means throughout the day, every day, having given the day to God, and having given your life back to

## Grace and Peace

God, you meditate all day long on who He is. You take one aspect of His nature every day and you focus your time when your mind is idle, on that aspect of His character. You write Scripture on cards that denotes that aspect of His character. You take a hymn for the day and sing it throughout the day. *Holy, Holy, Holy, He is Lord, All Hail the Power of Jesus Name*. Sing something that worships Him for that attribute.

You've all heard of the "Peter Principle." I want to give you a second "Peter Principle." We get it from Peter, himself. When you start to sink in the middle of the day, just cry out "Lord, save me!" It's one of the few things Peter did right. The minute you begin to sense that the peace is gone, your eyes and your thoughts have shifted to the storms or events of life, and immediately your faith is gone. It may be just for a second, but that's all it takes. Cry out to God. He wants to keep you in perfect peace. Beloved, He wouldn't have promised it if He didn't intend it.

The keeping is His job. The peace is His job. The grace is His job. You don't deserve it. I don't deserve it. We can't earn it. We can't pay for it. It is free, undeserved, sovereign, and eternal. But we can ask for it, and we were told to. Unless we do, we will miss the blessing. Practice the peace of God. Practice asking for it. Practice focusing on Him. Increase the time you spend with the Prince of Peace, then determine to keep who He is before you all day long. When the peace begins to slip, immediately cry out, "Lord, help me." And He will. He wants to keep you in perfect peace.

There really is a place of quiet rest near to the heart of God. There is no turmoil there. There is no fear there. There is no anxiety there. Life's storms still buffet you, but you are not sinking. You are on top of the water.

Listen carefully. See if you can't hear Jesus calling to you in the midst of the whirlwinds of life, "It is I. Don't be afraid. My peace I give unto you." He wants you to come unto Him so He can give you rest. He wants you to crawl up into His arms and let Him give you perfect peace. Will you do that? Will you purpose that in ever-increasing measure, you will cherish the grace of peace for as long as you shall live? Then, beloved, that place of quiet rest will be reality. Just pray like this:

Grace and Peace

THE PLACE OF QUIET REST

Oh, that the place of quiet rest  
would really belong to me.  
Oh, to experience that wonderful peace  
That, in Christ, will set me free.

Oh, to enter the Holy Place  
Where life is calm and serene.  
Where all my heart is drawn to Him  
With nothing in between.

Oh, to walk through the storms of life  
And as we walk that sod,  
No matter the battle, to quietly know  
We're near to the heart of God.

Oh, dear God, from this day on  
May the miracle never cease.  
May we enter into rest,  
And resting, live in peace.

Let's pray.

*Our gracious God, we crawl up into Your arms, this morning. Keep us there. Keep our hearts stayed on Thee. And may we find in the weeks to come, that peace of God that passes all understanding. And as we find it, may we rest. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

Grace and Peace

A Challenge to Further Study

1- Take a concordance and look up the word “peace.” Now group the words based on the four types of peace found on pages 6 and 7. How does one find “peace with God?” How does “peace with God” differ from the “peace of God?” Can you explain this to an unbeliever?

2- Reread Isaiah 26:3. Look up the meaning of the words “keep” and “stayed.” What is the relationship between the two in this passage?

3- What unusual promise is found in John 16:33? Why would Jesus give that promise while He was talking about peace?

4- Read Philippians 4:6,7. What are the prerequisites for peace found in that passage? What is the promise? Is it a conditional promise? What is the relationship between worry and peace?

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