

Celebrating God's Gift of Peace

Peace - a state of tranquility or quiet: such as. a: freedom from civil disturbance b: a state of security or order within a community provided for by law or custom.

Peace (*Scriptural perspective*) - Biblical peace is more than just the absence of conflict or state of rest. It means completeness or wholeness, and it points to the presence of something else.

Currently in my life, despite what may be happening to me and around me both directly and indirectly; I have been feeling a sense of calmness, stillness and peace. I have been enjoying the moments of quietness and solitude a lot more intently and noticing the difference in how I feel now verses two weeks to a month ago. I am not sure why I have been blessed with these moments and can only attribute it to God's everlasting grace and mercy.

In fact, the word peace is mentioned around 420 times in the KJV and much more in several other versions of the bible. The NIV translation mentions the word peace only 230 times and in place of the word peace, it substitutes different words that make more sense in English. Some of the words used are: *safety, silence, quiet rest, still, treaty, satisfy, ease, and fellowship.*

Peace is something that God wants to give us and I believe it is something that a lot of us yearn to possess but what if the way that we have been responding to life's circumstances at times has been blocking God's peace that we so desperately desire?

Typically, at the first sight of trouble, if we are not guarded with the sword of truth, we will immediately go into silent inner panic, turmoil and unnecessary emotions that sends our blood pressure climbing and anxiety brewing. We can literally have a conniption by reading simple news headlines such as:

- **New Daily COVID cases in NC top 4,000 for first time since February**
- **NC medical experts worry as more schools won't require masks**
- **Rents in Charlotte up 2.7% Over Past Month – August 2021 Rental Report**
- **Median Sales Prices for Single Family Homes in U.S. have increased to \$374,900**

Christ tells us plainly about the peace he wants for us.

- John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

The Israelites were physically freed from bondage and slavery and God was with them literally day and night guiding them to their freedom of peace and prosperity that he promised them, yet they were still enslaved mentally through the circumstances of life. They grumbled, complained and were not thankful for anything and never met their true freedom as they walked themselves to death and died in the dessert. God did not want this for them. He wanted to free them wholly. To give them rest and completeness in Him. He wants the same for us too.

- Philippians 4:7 "And the peace that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

Let us remember as we may glance at headlines and overhear meaningless chatter about the chaos of today, that God wants us to think of good things instead.

- Philippians 4:8 “Finally, **brothers and sisters**, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”

Turning away from chaos:

- We can turn off the TV for a time.
- Put down the phone.
- Avoid social media.
- Disengage from unfruitful conversations that cause *doubt, anxiety and fear*.

Some things to do instead:

- Go for a walk and meditate on God’s word and his promises.
- Remember what God has done for us and how far we’ve come.
- We can pray for others.
- Practice self-care.
- Call or text someone to let them know we are simply thinking of them.
- We can choose to focus on the good and with thanksgiving in our heart.
- Take it one day at a time for the day has enough troubles of its own.

Additional scriptures pertaining to peace:

- Psalm 4:8 “In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.”
- Isaiah 32:17 “And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever.”
- Romans 5:1 “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- 2 Corinthians 13:11 “Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.”