

# Jesus' Promise of Peace

John 14:27

Perhaps you saw on the news that 28 year old Bethany Storro was celebrating her new job in Vancouver, Washington this past week. She was getting out of her car to go into Starbucks when a woman, a total stranger, approached her and said: "Hey pretty girl, do you want to drink this?" Then the woman threw a cup of acid into her face. Storro fell to the ground screaming in pain. She said she could hear her face sizzling.

Just 20 minutes before the attack, Storro had just purchased a pair of sunglasses which most likely saved her from being blinded. Storro said this was a miracle from Jesus because doesn't like to wear sunglasses.

What is amazing to many people is that the day after her surgery Bethany was laughing and joking with her parents and the press corp and then very seriously said, "In time I'm going to forgive her."

Peace is not the absence of trouble.

Jesus who commands us twice in John 14:1 and 27: "Let not your heart be troubled" knew life was not trouble free.

Jesus spoke this command on Thursday evening less than 12 hours from His own death by crucifixion on Friday morning. In John 12:27, Jesus admitted, "Now is my soul troubled." Yet He had peace.

What is troubling you this morning? Is it your health, family, finances, friends or the lack of friends, marriage, work or unemployment, or sin?

Jesus says there are two kinds of peace in John 14:27.

## ***1. First there is the World's Peace. Jesus said, "My peace I give unto you: not as the world gives."***

A. The world's peace is simply the absence of conflict. This form of peace is only a ceasefire or a temporary truce. Jesus refuted this notion of peace in John 16:33. One historian calculated in the last 3500 years there have been only 300 years of peace or no wars.

B. The world's peace is at the sacrifice of principle or truth. Again Jesus corrected this false idea in Matthew 10:34-36. Jesus said He did not come to bring peace based on compromise but a sword or division to all relationships where family or friends did not compromise. Apparently, Peter misunderstood Jesus' statement in John 18:1-11. Just as soon as Jesus was through with this Upper Room Sermon and Prayer, He and His disciples went to the garden of Gethsemane and was approached by Judas and a band of Roman soldiers. When the Roman soldiers attempted to arrest Jesus, Peter pulled out his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant. Jesus corrected Peter's false concept of solving problems physically.

For some people peace is not rocking the boat and making waves. Avoid conflict at all cost. Bob Jones Senior used to say, "You must have little problems to avoid the big problems."

John Maxwell says that leaders should practice the 24 hour rule with their staff: “Before 24 hours is up solve any issues that have arisen. If you don’t, those issues will grow and eventually lead to an explosion of anger.”

**2. Next, there is the Peace of Christ. Jesus said to His troubled disciples, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.”** There are two kinds of peace Jesus gives.

**A. “Peace with God” for the Unsaved**

1. We read of Jesus experiencing this peace with God in Mark 14:34-36 as Jesus faced the cross.
2. The unsaved can have peace with God according to Romans 5:1. It is the instructions in Colossians 1:20-21 that describes the two necessary steps for reconciliation or peace with God.
  - a. The first step was taken by God. Peace with God was provided at the Cross (Col 1:20). The doctrine of reconciliation assumes two parties are out of harmony. Man has been at war with God since Adam sinned. The sinner is “alienated” and “enemies in your mind by wicked works.” Isaiah 57:20-21 describes this state of hostility. At the cross, God took the first step for reconciliation 2000 years ago. Isaiah 53:5 describes the necessity of the death of Christ for the sinner to have peace with God.
  - b. The second step must be taken by the sinner. Peace with God is experienced at salvation (Col 1:21). God the offended party took the initiative at the cross. Now the offending party, the sinner, must respond to God’s initiative. The sinner responds with faith. Faith is the white flag of surrender. When the sinner believes and confesses that Christ died for our sins and that God has raised him from the dead, that believing sinner is shall be saved.

Harry Ironside told of an incident “at the close of the war between the States, when a troop of Federal cavalry were riding along a road between Richmond and Washington. Suddenly they saw a poor wretch, clothed in the ragged remnants of a Confederate uniform come out of the bush. He hailed the Captain who drew rein and waited for him.

He gasped out, ‘I am starving to death. Can you help me? Can you give me some food?’

The Captain said, ‘Starving to death! Why don’t you go into Richmond and get what you need?’

The other answered, ‘I dare not, for if I did I would be arrested. Three weeks ago I became utterly disheartened and I deserted from the Confederate army, and I have been hiding in the woods ever since waiting for an opportunity to get through the lines to the north, for I knew if I were arrested I would be shot for deserting in time of war.’

The Captain looked at him in amazement and said, ‘Haven’t you heard the news?’

‘What news?’ the poor fellow gasped.

‘Why, the war is over. Peace has been made. General Lee surrendered to General Grant at Appomattox two weeks ago. The Confederacy is ended.’

‘What!’ he said, ‘peace has been made for two weeks, and I have been starving in the woods because I did not know it?’

Peace with God was provided for by Jesus’ death 2000 years ago.

Not only can the sinner have peace with God but believers can have the peace of God.

## **B. “Peace of God” for Believers**

1. “Peace with God” has to do with the believing sinner’s position in Heaven. This peace never changes. The war with God is over whether we realize it or not. The war is over no matter how we feel.
2. “The Peace of God” has to do with the believer’s state of mind. It is possible for a believer to have peace with God because of salvation but not the peace of God in difficult circumstances.

- a. Not only did Jesus have peace with God His Father, but Jesus had the peace of God as He faced the longest and most difficult night and following day of His life. His enemies will falsely accuse Him and physically abuse Him. His nation will reject Him and His government will the next day wrongfully put Him to death. His disciples will forsake Him. Yet, in His last sermon, He focuses on His disciples’ needs not His.

Jesus could sleep in a wave tossed boat out in a raging storm. External Circumstances did not determine Jesus’ internal peace.

- b. Jesus also commanded His disciples, “Let not your hearts be troubled neither let it be afraid.” The believer has a responsibility to enjoy the peace of God.
3. Paul explains how the believer can enjoy “The Peace of God” in Philippians 4:6-7. Like Christ, Paul is in a difficult trial. He is in prison for preaching the Gospel. Like Christ not only were his enemies opposed to him, but also other believers had turned on Paul. Yet Paul writes in response the other believers’ opposition to his ministry in Philippians 1:18, “I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.” In 4:6-7, Paul tells us how to have the “peace of God”.
    - a. Stop being anxious over your problems and start praying about them.
    - b. Stop focusing on your problems and start being thankful all the time.

## *Hymn Story: It is Well with my Soul*

Horatio Spafford is the author of the hymn that has blessed our hearts hundreds of time, "It is well with my Soul". A number of traumatic events preceded and followed the writing of this song.

Early in 1871, Horatio's and Anna's 4-year-old son died of scarlet fever. That was only the beginning of a lifetime of tragedies for the Spaffords. Horatio was a prominent lawyer in a successful law firm in Chicago and had purchased a large amount of real estate by the shore of Lake Michigan in growing Chicago in the spring 1871.

In October, the Great Chicago Fire reduced Chicago to ashes and decimated the Spaffords' sizable investments.

In spite of their own economic ruin, the Spaffords the next two years worked tirelessly to help the other fire victims get back on their feet financially.

The famous evangelist, D. L. Moody, was friends with the Spaffords and suggested they take a needed a vacation after all they had experienced. So the Spaffords, in 1873, decided to travel to England and help Moody and Ira Sankey in their evangelistic ministry.

At the last minute, Horatio was delayed from travelling with his family because of zoning problems following the Great Chicago Fire. So he sent his wife, Anna, and four daughters ahead of him: eleven year old "Annie", nine year old Margaret Lee, five year old "Bessie", and two year old and Tanetta.

As the mother and daughters were sailing, their ship was struck by a British iron sailing vessel and within 18 minutes the ship sunk. All four daughters died along with 226 other passengers.

Mrs. Spafford was knocked unconscious and later picked up on a floating platform.

After the survivors and Mrs. Spafford arrived at Cardiff, Wales, Spafford's wife cabled her husband the now famous telegram, "Saved alone. What shall I do?"

A fellow survivor of the collision, Pastor Weiss, recalled Anna saying, "God gave me four daughters. Now they have been taken from me. Someday I will understand why."

Upon receiving the tragic news from his wife, Horatio left Chicago and traveled to meet his grief stricken wife in England.

As the ship neared the location where tragedy occurred the captain of the ship called Horatio to his cabin and informed him that they were sailing near the vicinity where his four daughters had died. Horatio wrote sometime later to his wife's sister, Rachel, "On last Thursday we passed over the spot where the ship sank, in mid-ocean, the waters three miles deep. But I do not think of our dear ones there. They are safe, folded, the dear lambs."

As Horatio passed their watery grave, he wrote the hymn, "It is well with my soul".

### **“It Is Well With My Soul”**

*When peace like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,  
It is well, it is well, with my soul.*

*Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,  
Let this blest assurance control,  
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,  
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.*

Horatio did not focus on his troubles and heartbreak but on Christ’s redemptive cross work and soon return as the next two stanzas show:

*My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!  
My sin, not in part but the whole,  
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!*

*And Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,  
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;  
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,  
Even so, it is well with my soul.*

Three years following the tragedy the Spafford's second son, Horatio. He died in 1880, also at the age four of pneumonia.

The Spaffords continued to faithfully serve the Lord in spite of a lifetime of tragedy. Only two of their eight children survived: two girls, Bertha and Grace, born after the shipwreck. Soon the Spaffords moved to Jerusalem to found a group called the *American Colony*, to help the poor during and after World War I. They ran soup kitchens, hospitals and orphanages.

On October 16<sup>th</sup>, 1888, Horatio Spafford died on malaria and was buried in Jerusalem.

Like the great hymn, the Spaffords did not focus on their difficulties but on Christ and serving others and effectively ministered having experience the peace of God amidst a lifetime of hardship.

Is it well with your soul? It can be with “peace with God” and “the peace of God” that Jesus gives to all who trust Him as Savior and rely on Him in the troubles of life.