

Moments *for* You

Volume 56, Number 4

Theme: Peace



THE PRINCE OF PEACE

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

The passing of another year witnesses the world in the grip of turmoil and unrest; discontent and unhappiness affect every sphere of life. The efforts of rulers and the legislation of governments are seen to be powerless in dealing successfully with the growing dissatisfaction which abounds on every hand. In His Word, God, speaking of all men, makes the solemn pronouncement: “the way of peace have they not known” (Romans 3:17).

The Scriptures leave us in no doubt at all as to the source from which this unrest and lack of peace came. When God placed man in the garden of Eden there was an atmosphere of tranquillity. In 1 Corinthians 14:33 we read, “God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.” It was by man that sin came in, with all its consequent ruin and disorder. Satan was also responsible, as he succeeded in displacing God from Adam’s affections.

To disobey the command of God was an act of unrighteousness on the part of man, and Scripture most definitely asserts that peace cannot be known and enjoyed if unrighteousness prevails: “There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked” (Isaiah 48:22 and Isaiah 57:21).

We have noticed the dual cause of the ruin—sin in man and the opposition of Satan to God. Wherein lies the remedy? All depends upon the

revelation of God’s purpose made known in Christ. In Isaiah 9 one of the names given prophetically to our Lord is “Prince of Peace.” Man was the author of confusion—hence the wreckage; Christ is the Author of Salvation—the ruin and disorder will be banished forever.

This necessitated the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ as we read in Colossians 1:20, “having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself.” Thus the sin, sorrow, breakdown and distance from God has been dealt with to God’s complete satisfaction through the precious blood of Christ. In the death and resurrection of Christ, Satan has been completely defeated and the day will arrive when he himself is banished to the lake of fire forever.

This marvelous work of Jesus Christ, the complete restoration of peace, should bow our hearts in worship as we contemplate the personal greatness of the one blessed Person alone competent to effect this: One in whom all the fullness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell (Colossians 1:19; 2:9). How gladly we say “amen” to the Spirit’s testimony “that in all things He might have the preeminence” (Colossians 1:18). —F.A. Hughes

The secret of peace is more than knowing that our sins are forgiven. It is having the Person of a risen Christ before our souls, having our hearts engaged with the One who has done it all, and gazing by faith upon the marks of His accomplished work. This is peace for the inner life. —C.H.M.

GOD'S WAY OF PEACE

THE VERDICT

God knows us; He knows what we are, He knows what He meant us to be, and He sees the vast difference between these two things. God's testimony concerning man is that he is a sinner: "there is none righteous, no, not one.... There is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Romans 3:10-12). God declares man to be a lost one, a stray one, a rebel, a hater of God. Man is not a sinner occasionally, but a sinner always; not a sinner in part, with many good things about him, but wholly a sinner, with no compensating goodness. He is evil in heart as well as life, "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1).

When the Holy Spirit opens the eyes of the soul it sees this judgment is true. Conviction of sin is just the sinner seeing himself as he is—the way that God has seen him all along. Then every fond idea of self-goodness vanishes away. The things in him that once seemed good appear empty, and the bad things so very bad, that every hope of being saved because of something in his own character is taken away. He sees that he cannot save himself, nor even help God to save him. He is lost, and he is helpless.

Doings, feelings, strivings, prayings, givings, abstainings, and the like, are found to be no relief from a sense of guilt, and, therefore, no resting-place for a troubled heart. If sin was just a disease or a misfortune, religious deeds might be seen as favorable symptoms of returning health. But sin is more than a disease, and the sinner is not merely sick, but condemned by the righteous Judge. None of these goodnesses can give him peace, for they cannot assure him of a complete and righteous pardon.

THE REMEDY

The question, "How can I be made fit to come before the Lord?" cannot be answered with an appeal to personal character, or goodness of life, or prayers, or performances of religion. The sinner's peace with God does not come from within. No grounds of peace or elements of reconciliation can be extracted from himself. His one qualification for peace is that he *needs* it.

A sinner's peace can only come from God, and it is in knowing God that he gets it: "Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace" (Job 22:21). God Himself is the fountainhead of our peace. His revealed truth in the Bible is the channel through which this peace finds its way into us, and His Holy Spirit is the great interpreter of that truth to us.

God has declared Himself to be gracious, and has told us that this grace is for the ungodly, the unholy, the unfit, the dead in sin. He has embodied this grace in the person and work of His beloved Son. Turn your eye to the cross and see these two things: the *crucifiers* and the *Crucified*. The crucifiers, the haters of God and His Son, represent us. The Crucified is God Himself—incarnate love. It is the God who made you, suffering and dying for the ungodly.

Hear the word of the Lord concerning this finished work:

- "Christ died for our sins" (1 Corinthians 15:3).
- "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5).
- "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Hebrews 9:28).
- "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18).

- “His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24).

These expressions speak of something more than love. The deep, true, real love of God is in each of them, but so are justice and holiness. If we were going to be saved from eternal death, there was the need of a death; righteousness demands this. To meet this terrible necessity, the Son of God became a man and died! Love led Him down to the cradle; love led Him up to the cross! He died as the sinner’s substitute. He died to make it a righteous thing for God to cancel the sinner’s guilt and annul the penalty of his everlasting death.

Had it not been for His death, grace and guilt could not have looked each other in the face. God and the sinner could not have been brought together; righteousness would have forbidden reconciliation. As we know, righteousness is as divine and real a thing as love. Without this perfect sacrifice, it would not have been right for God to receive the sinner, nor safe for the sinner to come.

What peace there is for the stricken conscience in the truth that Christ died for the ungodly! The cross is the payment of the sinner’s penalty, the extinction of his debt, and the tearing up of the charges which were against us. Just as the cross is the payment, so is the resurrection God’s receipt—for the full amount—signed with His own hand.

THE RESPONSE

The sinner may well ask: “How can I come before God, and stand in His presence, with happy confidence on my part, and gracious acceptance on His?” He wants you to come to Him exactly as you are, without even one vain thought that by a little waiting, or working, or praying, you can make

yourself ready, or persuade Him to make you fit to receive salvation.

Faith is the link, the one link, between the sinner and the Sin-bearer. Faith is not a work or exercise of our minds, which must be properly performed in order to qualify or fit us for pardon. Faith is not a religious duty, which must be gone through according to certain rules, in order to induce Christ to give us the benefits of his work. Faith is simply receiving the divine record concerning the Son of God, recognizing the completeness of His great sacrifice for sin, and the truthness of the Father’s testimony to that completeness.

Here are just a few examples of what God has spoken about faith:

- “Without faith it is impossible to please [God]” (Hebrews 11:6).
- “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36).
- “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31).
- “To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Romans 4:5).
- “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Romans 10:9).
- “This is His commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 3:23).

These are some of the many texts which show that it is our belief of God’s testimony concerning His own free love, and the work of his Son, that makes us partakers of the blessings which that testimony reveals.

They show us that it is the object of faith—the person, or thing, or truth of which faith lays hold—that is the soul's peace and consolation. They also announce most solemnly the necessity of believing, and the greatness of the sin of unbelief.

God can never be satisfied with you on account of any goodness about you, so why should you attempt to be satisfied with anything which will not satisfy Him? There is just one thing with which He is entirely satisfied—the person and work of His only begotten Son. It is with Him that He wants you to be satisfied. How much better would it be to take God's way at once, and be satisfied with Christ? Then pardon and peace will be given without delay.

"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17).

—Condensed from *God's Way of Peace* by Horatius Bonar.

Every one who has peace with God knows that his sins are gone forever, that he is standing in God's eternal favor, and that the glory of God awaits him in the future. Happy is the soul that lives in the enjoyment of this blessed knowledge!

—Edward Dennett

ONE HEART

Jim Walton was translating the New Testament for the Muinane people of La Sabana in the jungles of Colombia. But he was having trouble with the word peace.

During this time, Fernando, the village chief, was promised a 20-minute plane ride to a location that would have taken him 3 days to travel by walking. But there was a mix-up, and the chief missed the plane. Fer-

nando was livid; he went to Jim and launched into an angry tirade. Fortunately, Walton had taped the chief's diatribe. When he later translated it, he discovered that the chief kept repeating the phrase, "I don't have one heart." Jim asked other villagers what having "one heart" meant, and he found that it was like saying, "There is nothing between you and the other person." That, Walton realized, was just what he needed to translate the word peace.

To have peace with God means that there is nothing—no sin, no guilt, no condemnation—that separates us. And that peace with God is possible only through Christ (Romans 5:1).

Do you have "one heart" with God? —Dave Branon, *Our Daily Bread*

PEACE ASSURED

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace" (Isaiah 26:3). Who does not desire such an experience: the perfect peace of God Himself filling our hearts and minds? It is there for every child of God who wants it, yet many are often unhappy and do not have the peace they desire because they are neglecting three simple tools: *trust, prayer, and thanksgiving.*

TRUSTING GOD

Our failure to believe that God's way is always best makes it hard to fully yield to Him and trust Him with all our heart. When Satan talked Eve into believing that God was withholding something good from her, she began to distrust God. He had told Adam that if they ate the forbidden fruit they would die (Genesis 2:17). But Eve relied on her own judgment instead of yielding to God's. What unhappiness she plunged herself into!

Today this is still the root cause of all the unhappiness in the world.

Keep this fact clearly in mind: if we want happiness and peace we must stop thinking we know better than God what will make us happy. Isaiah 26:3 tells us the Lord will keep us in perfect peace *if we keep our minds on Him and keep trusting Him*. Why let our thoughts run wild with anxious fear? The Lord has all things under control. He is, after all, the One who is above all and able to change all; and He wants to do what is for our greatest good. If we trust Him completely and keep our thoughts on Him, we will have peace of heart and mind.

Notice in the Psalms how often David talked to himself about God's care for him when he was cast down and harassed with fears. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.... In God I have put my trust" (Psalm 56:3,4; see also Psalm 42:11; 116:7). We can never go wrong if we follow David's simple method of exhorting our own souls to trust God. We need to learn these verses and repeat them over and over again. Doing this will help to keep our minds fixed on the Lord instead of on our feelings or circumstances.

PROVISION OF PRAYER

Prayer is a wonderful provision of God to ease our burdens, tensions and fears, and restore peace to our hearts and minds. The value of prayer as a vital factor in a life of peace and happiness can never be overestimated. "Be [anxious] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7.)

When we speak of the relationship of prayer to happiness, we are not talking about a few minutes spent

each day repeating a stereotyped form of petition. Scriptural prayer is pouring out our hearts to God. How can we do this effectively?

When praying, we should think of who He is and of His infinite power, wisdom, and ability to understand and solve our problems. We should also be conscious of our relationship with Him: He has made us His children; He is our Father. As our Father, He has a very personal interest in us and our problems—more than any earthly father ever could. If He gave up His dear Son to die on the cross for us, we can be sure He is ready to give all that we need for our good. The Lord Jesus said: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" (Matthew 7:11).

Tell Him what our problems are as honestly as we can. So often, when we don't really understand our problems, the very act of putting them into words gives us a clearer picture of them. Then too, telling our Father about them gives Him an opportunity to give us a clearer picture of what our real need is. Confidently expect that, because of His personal interest in us, He will lead us into the right solution, or solve our problems through divine intervention at the right time.

The invitation to bring our requests to God—"in every thing by prayer and supplication"—does not necessarily mean long hours spent on our knees pouring out our hearts in prayer. While quiet times are important, we cannot overstress the importance of constantly talking to God about everything during our daily activities. This is what the Bible means when it says "pray without ceasing" and "praying always" (1 Thessalonians

5:17; Ephesians 6:18). Habitually referring everything to our Father in the midst of our daily routine keeps us in touch with Him so that His peace can keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

VALUE OF THANKSGIVING

If we are sad and depressed, we need to try thanksgiving. If we are discouraged and feel like complaining, we must try praise. God tells us in His Word that we should be found “giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 5:20).

The prophet Jeremiah was greatly depressed as he listed many things that weighed him down: “He hath set me in dark places.... He hath hedged me about, that I cannot get out.... He hath made my paths crooked.” In all, he named some thirty complaints about his desperate circumstances, ending on this sad note: “My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord” (Lamentations 3:6,7,9,18).

He felt as though he was hopelessly sinking under his burdens. But then his thoughts suddenly turned to God and he broke out with another thought altogether: “This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in Him” (Lamentations 3:21-24). What a change! And that’s always the way it is when we turn to God in our troubles. We find there is so much to thank Him for.

We should take all our sorrows to the Lord, but we should never leave His presence without thanking Him for all our blessings. This will surely turn our complaining into praise, and our depression into rejoicing. Paul

made no mistake when He wrote, “In everything give thanks.” He knew what was needed to lift us up. The unconverted have nothing to fall back on in times of trouble. But we have the eternal God with unlimited resources who takes a personal interest in us.

How sad to see so many confused and burdened Christians disregarding the Lord’s gracious offer: “Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). How grateful we should be, knowing that He will sustain us when we come to Him with all our burdens. We should even thank Him for our troubles, since they bring us closer to Christ and are stepping stones to greater intimacy with God (see 2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

Some of us bring our burdens to the Lord, but are still weighed down with them, because we do not heed the Lord’s simple instructions to give thanks in everything. If we did this every time we talked over our troubles with the Lord, we would find our souls uplifted by the awareness of our many blessings. We remain preoccupied with our troubles, when instead we should go on our way rejoicing because we have a loving Father who never fails His children. Praise and thanks work wonders.

JESUS OUR EXAMPLE

If the Lord Jesus exhorts us to give thanks in every situation, He is not asking us to do something He Himself did not do. We should never forget that He was tested in every point just as we are. When He was tested by that unrepentant generation, even after all His labors of love and mighty miracles, notice how He reacted: “I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth ... for so it seemed good in Thy sight” (Matthew 11:25,26). And in Luke 10:21, where the same inci-

dent is given, we find it also recorded that “Jesus rejoiced in spirit.”

The Lord found peace in the midst of trials by submitting to them and thanking His Father for them. We will find peace too if we do likewise. There is no other way. We cannot get peace by worrying or complaining. The more we yield our will to His, the more we will find the peace and joy of Christ in our souls.

—Condensed from “You Can Have a Happy Life” by E.C. Hadley.

THE SECRET OF PEACE

“I laid me down and slept ... for the Lord sustained me” (Psalm 3:5).

How emphatic and simple! Is it so with you reader? Do times of trouble find your heart so resting on God as your Father that your spirit is at rest and your sleep is sweet as if all was peace around you, because you know God is in control of all things?

The secret of peace is to be occupied with Him for His own sake. When trouble comes, we shall find peace in Him and through Him, knowing that His tender care is always with us.

—J.N. Darby

PRINCE, LORD, KING

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14).

The Child that was born in Bethlehem is the Son of God who has taken away the sin of the world. His sacrificial death has provided a way for all men, women, boys, and girls to be eternally set free from the bonds that enslave them.

- He is the **“Prince of Peace”** because He came in submission to His Father’s will and proclaimed peace to all on the basis of His shed blood.
- He is the **“Lord of peace”** (2 Thessalonians 3:16) because He gives peace that passes understanding to all who keep in prayerful fellowship with His Father with thankful hearts.
- He will reign as the **“King of peace”** (Hebrews 7:2) over the whole earth when He has put all enemies under His feet.

Do you know Jesus Christ as your Savior? Has He filled your heart with peace? He desires to give you a peace that the world can never give. Trust in Him today!

—P.D.J.

PEACE LIKE A RIVER

“O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! then had thy peace been as a river” (Isaiah 48:18).

The peace of God is a higher thing than comfort, a deeper thing than joy, and a more solid thing than rest. While my comforts may be diminished, my joy be disturbed, and my rest be broken, my peace still flows as a river.

Interrupt the flow of a river, and it is no longer a river. You may dam up its waters, but you only make them stagnant, for their freshness and their fruitfulness depend upon the continuity of their changeless flow. A flowing river is the perfect scriptural illustration of the peace God provides: “Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river” (Isaiah 66:12). Fittingly, “the troubled sea” illustrates the state of those who have no relationship with God, and therefore have no peace (Isaiah 57:20,21).

—W. Rickards