

AMERICA'S PEACE WITH RUSSIA????

WHY ARE WE MAKING PEACE WITH RUSSIA?

WHAT DO THEY KNOW ABOUT PEACE?



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AMERICA'S DESIRE FOR PEACE

It is interesting that at Christmas time, December 1987, we have this offer of peace coming from an envoy of Russia. The whole world at this time is thrilled over the peace plan of our country and that of the Soviet Union.

The excitement over this supposed world peace plan is an indication of the hunger in all of our souls of the desire for peace. We are not without information regarding this universal longing for peace. **It is built within all of our souls,** but as to realization, **there is a sure way of having peace,** individually, and collectively, and internationally. We know exactly when world peace will come and we can know when individual peace comes to each and every one of us.

Peace on Earth. Peace to the world. League of Nations, preceding the United Nations. **AND STILL NO PEACE.** "Peace, peace, and there is no peace."

Since we are told and it has been prophesied that **there will be wars and rumors of wars until Jesus Christ returns,** then by that prediction by Christ Himself we know that **peace in our day is not possible.** We know also that inside of us there is an old sin nature, and wars come from the lust pattern in our old sin natures, as told to us by the Lord's half-brother, James.

Can we have peace? Is it a season? Is it a unilateral agreement between two great powers of this world? How can we still this longing in our souls individually and collectively? Is there an answer to this pursuit of peace? Definitely yes!

The great mosque of Constantinople was once a Christian church, dedicated to "the holy wisdom." Over its western portal may still be read, graven on a brazen plate, the words, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." For 400 years noisy crowds have fought, and sorrowed and fretted, beneath the dim in-

scription in an unknown tongue, and no eye has looked at it, nor any heart responded. It is but too sad a symbol of the reception which Jesus Christ offers meet amongst men, and its prominence there, though unread and unbelieved, is a symbol of the patient forbearance with which rejected blessings are once and again pressed upon us. He stretches out His hand, though no man regards, and calls though none do hear.

Our verse is Christ's offer of peace. The world offers excitement, Christ promises peace. "THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH PASSETH ALL UNDERSTANDING, SHALL GARRISON YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS THROUGH CHRIST JESUS," Philippians 4:7.

First of all we must see here in this verse, **THIS PEACE OF GOD.** What is it? What are its elements? Whence does it come? It is of God, as being its Source, or Origin, or Author, or Giver, but it belongs to Him in a yet deeper sense, for **Himself is peace.** And in some humble and but yet real fashion our restless and anxious hearts may partake in the Divine tranquility and which a calm repose, kindled with **that rest from which it is derived may enter into His rest.**

If that be too high a flight, at all events the peace that may be ours was Christ's in the perfect and unbroken tranquility of His perfect manhood. What, then, are its elements? **The peace of God must, first of all, be peace WITH God.** Conscious friendship with Him is indispensable to all true tranquility. Where that is absent, there may be the ignoring of the disturbed relationship, but there will be no peace of mind. The indispensable requisite is a "conscience like a sea at rest." **Unless we have made sure work of our relationship with God, and know that He and we are friends, there is no real repose possible for us.**

In the whirl of the excitement we may forget, and for a time turn away from, the realities of our relation to Him, and so get such gladness as it is possible to a life not rooted

in conscious friendship with Him. But such lives will be like some of those sunny islands in the eastern Pacific, extinct volcanoes, where nature smiles and all things are prodigal, and life is easy and luxuriant, but some day the clouds gather, and the Earth shakes, and fire pours forth, and the sea boils, and every living thing dies, and darkness and desolation come. **You are living upon a volcano's side, unless the roots of your being are fixed in a God who is your Friend.**

Again, **the peace of God is peace within ourselves. The unrest of human life comes largely from our being torn asunder by contending impulses.** Conscience pulls this way, passion that way. Desire says, "Do this." Reason, judgment, says, "It is at your peril if you do." One desire fights against another, and so the man is rent asunder.

There must be harmonizing of all the being if there is to be real rest of soul. No longer must it be like the chaos ere the creative Word was spoken, where, in gloom, contending elements strove. Again, **men have not peace because in most of them everything is topmost that ought to be undermost, and everything undermost that ought to be uppermost.**

"Beggars are on horseback," and we know where they ride. And "princes are walking."

The more regal part of the man's nature is suppressed, and trodden under foot, and the servile parts, which ought to be under firm restraint, and guided by a wise hand, are too often supreme, and wild work comes of that. When you put the captain and the officers, and everybody on board that knows anything about navigation, into irons, and fasten down the hatches on them, and let the crew and the cabin boys take the helm and direct the ship, it is not likely that the voyage will end anywhere but on the rocks.

Multitudes are living lives of unrestfulness, simply because they have set the lowest parts of their nature upon the throne, and subordinated the highest to these.

"From when come wars and fightings among you? Come they not from hence,

even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not," James 4:1, 2. Isn't this a perfect description of the Russia that we are making peace with? Wars and fightings? "Lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, ye kill, ye fight and war. Ye have not." Our unrest comes from yet another source.

We have not peace, because we have not found and grasped the true objects for any of our faculties. **God is the only possession that brings quiet.** The heart hungers until it feeds upon Him. The mind is satisfied with no Truth, until behind Truth it finds a Person who is true. The will is enslaved and wretched until in God it recognizes legitimate and absolute authority, which it is blessing to obey. Love puts out its yearnings, like the filaments that Gossamer spiders send out into the air, seeking in vain for something to fasten upon, until it touches God and clings there. THERE IS NO REST FOR A MAN UNTIL HE RESTS IN GOD.

The reason why this world is full of excitement is because it is so empty of peace, and the reason why it is so empty of peace is because it is so void of God. The peace of God brings peace with Him and peace within. It unites our hearts to fear His Name, and draws all the else turbulent and confusedly flowing impulses of the great deep of the soul after itself, in a tidal wave, as the moon draws the waters of the gathered ocean.

The peace of God is peace with Him and peace within. You don't need to do more than to say one word about that descriptive clause in our verse. It "passeth understanding." The understanding is not the faculty by which men lay hold of the peace of God anymore than you can see a picture with your ears or hear music with your eyes. To everything its own organ. You cannot weigh Truth in a tradesman's scales or measure thought with a yardstick. Love is not the instrument of apprehending Euclid, **nor the brain the instrument for grasping these Divine and spiritual gifts.** The peace of God transcends the understanding, as well as belongs to another order of things than that about which the understanding is con-

cerned. **You must experience it to know it.** You must have it in order that you may feel its sweetness. It eludes the grasp of the wisest, though it yields itself to the patient and loving mind.

Secondly, let's notice, WHAT THE PEACE OF GOD REALLY DOES FOR US. "IT SHALL KEEP YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS." The apostle here blends together, in a very remarkable way, the conceptions of peace and of war, for he employs a purely military word to express the office of the Divine peace.

The words "shall keep" are the same as translated in another of his letters "kept with a garrison," and Paul, familiar with the Roman garrison, says, "The peace of God shall garrison your hearts and minds," like stands guard over. So the Divine peace takes upon itself warlike functions, and garrisons the heart and mind.

What does he mean by "the heart and the mind?" Not, as the English reader might think, two different faculties, like the emotions and the intellect, which is usually what is roughly meant by the heart and mind and its distinctions. "Heart" is KARDIA, which is the mind. And "mind" is NONMATRA, which are the thoughts. The KARDIA, the thinking part of the soul, the mentality of the soul. And the thoughts, the mind and all its thoughts, like the thinking, the viewpoint of the soul. This would bring in the principle of, "As a man thinketh in his mind, so is he."

Therefore, the indwelling peace of God will stand guard, garrison, your mind, with all its thoughts. Peace of mind. Thinking Divine Viewpoint. Notice how profound and real that Divine peace is. **It is to be enjoyed in the midst of warfare. Quiet is not quiescence.** God's peace is not torpor. **The man that has it has still to wage continual conflict, and day by day to brace himself anew for the fight.**

The highest energy of action is the result of the calmest heart, just as the motion of this solid, and, as we feel it to be, immovable world, is far more rapid through the abysses of space, and on its own axis, than any of the motions of the things on its surface. So the quiet mind, the tranquility of the mentality, which moveth altogether if it moves at all,

rests while it moves, and moves the more swiftly because of its unbroken repose. **That peace of God which is peace militant, is unbroken amidst all conflicts.**

"I will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Me, because he trusteth in Me," was Isaiah's way of explaining the same principle of peace. The wise old Greeks chose for the protectress of Athens, the goddess of wisdom, and while they consecrated to her the olive branch, which is the symbol of peace, they set her image on the Parthenon, helmed and spear-bearing to defend the peace which she brought to Earth.

Our emblem is an American eagle, holding in one hand the spears of warfare, and in the other hand, the olive branches. But as Theodore Roosevelt expressed it, **"If I had to choose between peace and righteousness, I would take righteousness every time."** **Righteousness must precede peace.**

So this heavenly virgin, whom the apostle personifies here, is the "winged sentry, all skillful in the wars," who enters into our minds and fights for us to keep us in unbroken peace. Peace of mind.

It is possible day by day to go out to toil and care and anxiety and change and suffering and conflict, and yet to bear within our souls the unalterable rest of the Lord. Deep in the bosom of the ocean, beneath the region where winds howl and billows break, there is calm. **But the calm is not stagnation.** Each drop from these fathomless abysses may be raised to the surface by the power of the sunbeams, expanded there by their heat, and sent on some beneficent message across the world. So deep in our souls, beneath the storm, beneath the raving winds and the curling waves, there may be a central repose, as unlike stagnation as it is unlike tumult, and the peace of God may, as a warrior, keep our minds and our thoughts in Christ Jesus.

What is the plain English of that metaphor, "shall garrison your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord?" Just this, **that a man who has that peace as his conscious possession is lifted above the temptations that otherwise would drag him away.** The full cup, filled with precious wine, has no

room in it for the poison that otherwise might be poured in. As Jesus Christ has taught us, there is such a thing as cleansing a heart in some measure, and yet because it is "empty," though it be "swept and garnished," the demons comes back again. **The best way to be made strong to resist temptation is to be lifted above feeling it to be a temptation,** by reason of the sweetness of the power of peace possessed.

If our souls were filled, as they might be filled, with the Divine repose, Divine rest, do you think that the vulgar, coarse tasting baits which make our mouths water now would have any power over us? Will a man who bears in his hands jewels of priceless value, and knows them to be such, find much temptation when some imitation stone, made of colored glass and a tinfoil backing, is presented to him? **Will the world draw us away if we are rooted and grounded in the peace of God?**

Geologists tell us that climates are changed and creatures are killed by the slow variation of level of the Earth. If you and I can only heave our lives up high enough, the foul things that live down below will find the air too pure and keen for them, and will die, and disappear, and all the vermin that stung and nested down in the flats will be one when we get up to the heights. The peace of God will keep our minds and thoughts, stand guard over our hearts and thoughts.

Thirdly, notice HOW WE GET THE PEACE OF GOD. Our text is an exuberant promise. But it is joined to something before, by the word "and" at the beginning of the verse. It is a promise, as all God's promises are, on conditions. Here are the conditions: "Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplications, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God."

That defines the conditions in part, and the last words of the text itself complete the definition, "in Christ Jesus," describes, not so much where we are to be kept, as a condition under which we shall be kept.

How, then, can I get this peace into my turbulent, changeful life? I answer, **first trust in peace.** It is always so, even when it is misplaced, we are at rest. The condition of repose for the human soul is that we shall

"HAVE TRIBULATION, BUT IN ME YE SHALL HAVE PEACE." And how may I be "in Him?" **Simply by trusting myself to Him. That brings peace with God.**

The sinless Son of God has died on the cross, a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, for yours and for mine. Let us trust to that, and we shall have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. And "in Him" we have, by trust, inward peace. **For He, through our faith, controls our whole soul,** and faith leads the lion in silken leash.

Trust in Christ brings peace amid outward sorrows and conflicts. When the pilot comes on board, the captain does not leave the bridge, but stands by the pilot's side. His responsibility is past, but his duties are not over. And when Christ comes into our souls, my effort, my judgement, are not made unnecessary, or put on one side. **Let Him take the command and stand beside Him, and carry out His orders, and you will find rest to your souls.**

When we accept Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour, we have peace with God. Then as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, when we are in fellowship, God the Holy Spirit controls our life, and the fruit of the Spirit is peace. That is the peace if God that stands guard over our mind and thoughts. That describes for us the spirit-filled life as per Ephesians 5:18. "Be not controlled with wine, wherein is excess, but be habitually controlled by God the Holy Spirit."

And again, then, **submission is peace.** **What makes our troubles is not outward circumstances,** howsoever effective they may be, **but the resistance of our spirits to the circumstances.** And when a man's will bends and says, "Not mine but Thine be done," there is no calm. Submission is like the lotion that is applied to mosquito bites. It takes away the irritation, though the puncture be left. **Submission is peace, both as resignation and as obedience.**

Communion is peace. You will get no quiet until you live with the Lord, until He is at your side. You will always be moved about with every wind of doctrine. So we must fix this in our minds. **A life without Christ is a life without peace.** Without Him you may have excitement, pleasure, gratified

passions, success, accomplished hopes, but peace never. Have you ever had it?

If you live without Him, you may forget that you have not Him, and you can plunge into the world, and so lose the consciousness of the aching void, but it is there all the same. **You never will have peace until you go to Him.** There is only one way to get it. The Christian soul is like the troubled sea that cannot rest. There is no peace for it. But in Him you may get it for the asking.

“The chastisement of our peace was laid upon Him.” For our sakes He died on the cross, so making peace. **Trust Him as your only Hope, Saviour and Friend, and the God of peace will “FILL YOU WITH ALL JOY AND PEACE IN BELIEVING.”**

Then bow your wills to Him in acceptance of His providence, and in obedience to Him and His commands, and your peace will be like as a river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea. Then keep your soul in union and communion and fellowship with Him, and so His presence will keep you in perfect peace, while conflicts last, and, with Him at your side, you will pass through the valley of the shadow of death undisturbed, and come to the true Salem, peace, the city of peace, where they beat their swords into plowshares and learn fear and war no more. **Peace is a Person. It is our Saviour so making peace with God the Father.** And He is our Companion, in fellowship with us, and the Holy Spirit controls our life and we produce the character peace of the Prince of Peace.

Do you have peace with God? Are you saved, in other words? So you have peace in your life as a believer, or do you maintain fellowship with Christ in time? If so, you have the peace of God which passeth all understanding and you have the peace of God which stands guard over your minds and thoughts. But outside of Christ, we have this world-wide commentary, “Peace, peace and there is no peace saith the Lord.”

“BECAUSE, EVEN BECAUSE THEY HAVE SEDUCED MY PEOPLE SAYING, PEACE; AND THERE WAS NO PEACE; AND ONE BUILT A WALL, AND, LO, OTHERS DAUBED IT WITH UNTEMPERED MORTAR: SAY UNTO THEM WHICH DAUB IT WITH UNTEMPERED MORTAR, THAT IT SHALL FALL: THERE SHALL BE AN OVERFLOWING SHOWER; AND YE, O GREAT HAILSTONES, SHALL FALL; AND A STORMY WIND SHALL REND IT. LO, WHEN THE WALL IS FALLEN, SHALL IT NOT BE SAID UNTO YOU, WHERE IS THE DAUBING WHEREWITH YE HAVE DAUBED IT?”

Sounds like the first United Nations building in Genesis, the tower of Babel. **The world system cannot help the world system.** Only the Prince of Peace can.

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