

The Peace of Christ

John 14:27

John 14:27 (NKJV)

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.

Introduction

“Turmoil, both public and personal, is a reality that marks this fallen world. Such unrest is perhaps most clearly seen on the international level, as nations clash against each other in war. Many years ago, historians calculated that in the previous 3,500 years, the world had seen less than 300 years of peace (cf. Will and Ariel Durant, *The Lessons of History* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968], 81).

It has also been estimated that in the last five and a half millennia, more than 8,000 peace treaties have been broken, and more than 14,000 wars fought with a combined total of about four billion casualties. Even though there have always been

illusions of global peace, this world continues to be unsuccessful in the effort to pursue that elusive goal.

The concept of peace is, of course, much broader than just the realm of international social harmony. People want peace in their personal lives, relief from the relentless pressures and problems that each day brings.

The language of peace fills conversation. People seek “peace and quiet” to be refreshed from the din of life; they are told to “make peace” with their past; they expect local law enforcement to “keep the peace” and stop those who disturb them. Even when this life ends, the concept of “resting in peace” is so commonplace it has become a synonym for death itself.

Sadly, though people pursue it their entire lives, left to themselves they have no idea how to find true peace. Those who look for it in temporal things like social change, economic stability, or some recreational experience are always disappointed.

This was pointed out rather forcefully to me by an interview that I read with Dr. Robert Coles, C-O-L-E-S. Dr. Robert Coles is a social psychiatrist. He is perhaps as esteemed as any man in our country in terms of his area of psychiatry. He is an M.D., he is

professor emeritus of psychiatrist for Harvard University, he was professor of psychiatry and medical humanities at Harvard Medical School.

His work has been recognized with numerous awards, including election to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1971, a Pulitzer Prize for General Non-Fiction in 1973 for his series of books *Children of Crisis*, a MacArthur Award in 1981, the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998, and the National Humanities Medal in 2001. He later co-founded the magazine *DoubleTake*, which documented the lives of ordinary people with photographs, articles, essays, poetry, and short stories. The magazine won several awards, including the 1998 National Magazine Award for Editorial Excellence in the category of General Excellence.

He has authored more than eighty books and 1300 articles, nearly all of them centrally concerned with human moral, spiritual, and social sensibility and reasoning, mainly in children but also in adults.

He is a very decorated, esteemed, and respected psychiatrist.

This interview points up the futility of his own area. While understanding superficially some things about Christianity, he will not call himself a Christian,

does not believe he is a Christian, and makes that clear in another part of the article. But his answers are very interesting. They asked him why he was not a surgeon. His answer, "I'm sloppy, not a great quality for a surgeon." He said, "When you get a combination of a befuddled slob who doesn't have the necessary toughness and is a little mixed up himself, you've got a psychiatrist."

Question: Is it futile, then, to search for ultimate answers in psychiatry or psychology?

Coles: "The futility is in searching for ultimate answers in the entire secular culture. Psychology happens to be a temporary secular religion. How long will it last? Fifty years. Secular religions come and go. Today it's psychology, tomorrow it will be weight reduction or cholesterol or getting to the moon or Mars. Who knows what our culture will be preoccupied with next? But none of this is going to give us answers to the moral, spiritual questions that we ultimately hunger for. Psychology isn't equipped to answer those questions. Psychology gives us some information about the mind but the mind is not the soul." **Question:** But even ministers today are becoming psychologists. **Coles:** "That is paganism." Who are these secular experts anyway? What do psychologists and psychiatrists

know about the Christian life? What can they tell us?”

Quite an interesting response, isn't it? You get the feeling he's been dropping his bucket in a dry well and he's come to that conclusion.

Only God's Word can authoritatively point to the relationship that produces lasting peace.”

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12-21](#) (pp. 121-122). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Review

There is only one source of true peace, as this simple yet profound verse (27a-b) reveals. The setting in which this magnificent promise was given is the upper room on the night before Christ's death. The Lord, knowing His disciples were brokenhearted because He was leaving them, gave the eleven a farewell message of comfort and hope. As noted in the previous chapter of this volume, Jesus promised them that through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit He would continue to be with them, as would the Father and the truth. That marvelous legacy would turn the disciples' temporary sorrow over His death into eternal joy. It also served as the basis for the supernatural peace that He now promised to them.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12-21](#) (p. 123). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Lesson

I. Its Significance

II. Its Source

III. Its Supernatural

IV. Its Solution

I. Its Significance

²⁷ **Peace**

eiréné: one, peace, quietness, rest.

Original Word: εἰρήνη, ης, ἡ

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: eiréné

Phonetic Spelling: (i-ray'-nay)

Definition: one, peace, quietness, rest

Usage: peace, peace of mind; invocation of peace a common Jewish farewell, in the Hebraistic sense of the health (welfare) of an individual.

1515 eirénē (from eirō, "to join, tie together into a whole") – properly, wholeness, i.e. when all essential

parts are joined together; peace (God's gift of wholeness).

1. a state of national tranquility; exemption from the rage and havoc of war:
2. peace between individuals, i. e. harmony, concord:
3. after the Hebrew **שָׁלוֹם**, security, safety, prosperity, felicity, (because peace and harmony make and keep things safe and prosperous):
4. according to a conception distinctly peculiar to 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, of whatsoever sort that is":

Peace. "These are last words, as of one who is about to go away and says 'good-night' or gives his blessing" (Luther)

Vincent, M. R. (1887). [Word studies in the New Testament](#) (Vol. 2, p. 247). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Both the Old and New Testaments underscore the divine source and character of true peace. One of

the most important theological terms in the Old Testament is the word *shalom* (“peace”).

The word, which occurs approximately 250 times, was sometimes used as a greeting (Judg. 19:20; 1 Sam. 25:6, 35), as it is in modern Hebrew. *Shalom* can also refer to the absence of strife between people (Gen. 26:29), nations (1 Kings 4:24), and between God and man (Ps. 85:8).

In this latter sense, it will be the hallmark of the future messianic kingdom (Ps. 29:11; Isa. 2:4; 9:6–7; 52:7; 54:13; 57:19; 66:12; Ezek. 37:26; Hag. 2:9). But *shalom* also speaks of personal peace—not merely in the negative sense of absence of trouble or conflict, but positively of completeness, wholeness, contentment, welfare, health, prosperity, harmony, and fulfillment. Peace is one of the blessings that flow from a right relationship to God.

True biblical peace does not depend on the circumstances of life, but lives above them. One Greek lexicon defines the New Testament word for peace (*eirēnē*) as “the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that is.”

It was this type of peace that characterized the apostle Paul, who wrote: “I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how

to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need” (Phil. 4:11–12).

Paul remained calm and at peace in the midst of the most trying circumstances, such as being thrown into prison (Acts 16:23–25), savagely attacked by an unruly mob (Acts 21:30–39), or caught in a raging storm at sea (Acts 27:21–25).

Humanity defines peace primarily in negative terms. For example, in some languages the word for peace means, “to be without trouble,” “to have no worries,” or “to sit down in one’s heart.” Peace to most people means the absence of war, strife, quarrels, disagreements, hostility, or unrest.

They see it as deliverance from or the absence of any external conflict and every inner turmoil, resulting in an undisturbed and tranquil state of mind. But this understanding of peace is incomplete, because true peace is much more than just the absence of conflict. Armed with an inadequate definition, unbelievers are incapable of finding peace. They do not understand what they are looking for, and therefore fail to look in the right place.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12–21](#) (pp. 122–123). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

2 Kinds of Peace

1. Objective

2. Subjective

Peace with God, of course, is the bedrock on which all other peace is based. If there is no peace with God, then there cannot be any real peace in this life. Thus, objective peace is a necessary prerequisite for subjective peace, neither of which are possible for the unsaved person to enjoy.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12–21](#) (p. 123). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

1. Objective —Peace With God

Since the rebellion of Adam and Eve (cf. Gen. 3), the human race has been at war with God. All violate His holy law and deny Him glory, and therefore are His enemies. The Bible calls this rebellion sin, and declares every human being (with the exception of Jesus Christ) to be a sinner (Rom. 3:23). From birth, every man and woman opposes God—both by

heritage (Rom. 5:18; cf. Pss. 51:5; 58:3) and by personal choice (cf. Rom. 3:10–18). No one is neutral because, as Jesus said in Luke 11:23, “He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.” In Genesis 8:21 God’s own commentary on His fallen creation was that “the intent of man’s heart is evil from his youth” (cf. Job 15:14). Thus, having set themselves against God’s law, all people inevitably face His wrath and the penalty of eternal punishment.

Humanity hates God (cf. John 15:18–19; 1 John 2:16–17), and all who are part of the world system cannot be at peace with Him: “You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God” (James 4:4).

The good news, however, is that enemies of God can be reconciled to enjoy eternal peace with Him through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12–21](#) (pp. 123–124). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Romans 5:1 (NKJV)

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

Romans 4:22–25 (NKJV)

²² And therefore *“it was accounted to him for righteousness.”*

²³ Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, ²⁴ but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵ who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

Romans 5:1 (NKJV)

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

Romans 5:8–10 (NKJV)

⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

¹⁰ For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Ephesians 2:14–16 (NKJV)

¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, ¹⁵ 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, ¹⁶ and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

Colossians 1:19–21 (NKJV)

¹⁹ For it pleased *the Father that* in Him all the fullness should dwell, ²⁰ and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

²¹ And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled

2. Subjective — Peace of God

Philippians 4:6–7 (NKJV)

⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

That objective peace of justification results in experiential peace. This is not peace with God but “the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension,” meaning that it transcends human insight, analysis, and understanding. This peace “will guard [believers’] hearts and [their] minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:7). The Greek word translated “guard” is a military term meaning, “to keep watch over.” The peace of God protects believers from anxiety, doubt, fear, and distress. Thus, it is not passive but active; far from being affected by circumstances, it triumphs over them, turning sorrow into joy, fear into boldness, and doubt into confidence. This is the peace that Jesus promised to His followers.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12-21](#) (p. 124). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Philippians 1:2 (NKJV)

² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Numbers 6:22–26 (NKJV)

²² And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ²³ “Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, ‘This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them:

²⁴ “The Lord bless you and keep you;

²⁵ The Lord make His face shine upon you,
And be gracious to you;

²⁶ The Lord lift up His countenance upon you,
And give you peace.” ’

Psalms 29:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ The Lord will give strength to His people;
The Lord will bless His people with peace.

Romans 8:6 (NKJV)

⁶ For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.

Romans 14:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13 (NKJV)

¹³ Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 13:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

Galatians 5:22 (NKJV)

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Colossians 3:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

2 Thessalonians 3:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord *be* with you all.

I. Its Significance

II. Its Source

²⁷ **Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you;**

ειρηνην αφημι υμιν ειρηνην την εμην
διδωμι υμιν

Because He is the “God of peace” (Rom. 15:33; 16:20; Phil. 4:9; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 13:20; cf. Judg. 6:24; Isa. 9:6; 1 Cor. 14:33; 2 Cor. 13:11; 2 Thess. 3:16), God is the one source of all true peace; hence Jesus said, **My peace I give**

As with every blessing in the Christian life, peace comes from all three persons of the Trinity. The oft-repeated salutation in the New Testament Epistles, “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:3; Eph. 1:2; Phil. 1:2; Col. 1:2; 2 Thess. 1:2; cf. Eph., 6:23; 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; Titus 1:4; Philem. 3; 2 John 3) indicates that God the Father and Jesus Christ are the source of peace. It is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to impart that peace to believers (Gal. 5:22). Like the rest of the legacy Jesus left the disciples, the **peace** He promised to **give** them would come in fullness on the day of Pentecost.

I leave — — My peace PAI

aphíēmi (from 575 /apó, "away from" and hiēmi, "send")
– properly, send away; release (discharge).

And so ἀφιέναι (still according to Tholuck) should be taken in the sense of leaving behind, namely, as a parting gift, and it is the peace of reconciliation that Jesus speaks of.

Lange, J. P., & Schaff, P. (2008). *A commentary on the Holy Scriptures: John* (p. 446). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

My peace

emós (from 1700 /emoú, "my, mine") – an emphatic "possessive pronoun for the first person ('mine')" (J. Thayer), "representing the emphasized genitive (emou, 'mine,' Abbott-Smith).

I give — — My peace PAI

John 16:33 (NKJV)

³³ **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."**

“The peace which Jesus bequeaths (ἀφίημι ὑμῖν) is His to give as a permanent possession (cf. 16:33),

and is given, not by way of hope or assurance of good will only, as the world (*i.e.* the ordinary run of mankind; see on 1:9) gives it in farewells, but in the plenitude of Divine power. εἰρήνην δίδωμι ὑμῖν is no less absolute a gift than that other ζωὴν αἰώνιον δίδωμι αὐτοῖς (10:28)”

Bernard, J. H. (1929). *A critical and exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to St. John*. (A. H. McNeile, Ed.) (p. 554). New York: C. Scribner' Sons.

The Roman Empire achieved its pax Romana of Augustus and his successors by the sword, but here Jesus proclaims a peace far different from the way of the world.

Borchert, G. L. (2002). *John 12–21* (Vol. 25B, p. 133). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

This peace was the gift of Jesus which would calm their troubled hearts and ease their fears of his departure. It is the peace that Christians would come to experience in the postresurrection era of the Spirit, when Paul could proclaim a peace of Christ Jesus that goes beyond all human understanding and guards believers “hearts and minds” (Phil 4:7).

Borchert, G. L. (2002). *John 12–21* (Vol. 25B, p. 133). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Isaiah 9:6 (NKJV)

- 6 For unto us a Child is born,
 Unto us a Son is given;
 And the government will be upon His shoulder.

And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

It is the same peace that kept Him calm in the face of mockery, scorn, hostility, hatred, betrayal, and death (cf. 1 Peter 2:23). Christ's peace provides believers with a serenity and freedom from worry and anxiety that is unaffected by and triumphs over even the most difficult of circumstances. In the midst of the trials and temptations of life, believers do well to fix their "eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2). It is only in looking to Christ that anyone can find peace and settled confidence in the midst of any hardship.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12-21](#) (p. 125). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

I. Its Significance

II. Its Source

III. Its Supernatural

John 14:27 (NKJV)

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.

ου καθως ο κοσμος διδωσιν εγω διδωμι υμιν

In the truest sense, no real peace is to be found in the **world**. Godless people in a godless world are by nature enemies of God and in a state of resultant turmoil.

The **world** only offers an experience of a momentary, fleeting tranquility through self-indulgence, materialism, love, romance, substance abuse, false religion, psychotherapy, or a host of other placebos.

But the world's pseudopeace is in reality the bliss of ignorance. If unbelievers understood the wrath of God, and the agonizing, unrelieved, eternal torment awaiting them in hell, they would never enjoy a moment's peace in this life.

The Bible repeatedly emphasizes that the world's peace is inadequate. “ ‘There is no peace for the wicked,’ says the Lord” in Isaiah 48:22.

In Isaiah 57:21 the prophet echoed the Lord's words: “ ‘There is no peace,’ says my God, ‘for the

wicked.’ ” In Jeremiah 6:14 God excoriated the false prophets who had “healed the brokenness of [His] people superficially, saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ but there is no peace” (cf. 8:11; Ezek. 13:10, 16). “If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace!”

Jesus lamented over Jerusalem, “But now they have been hidden from your eyes” (Luke 19:42). The apostle Paul wrote of unbelievers that “the path of peace they have not known” (Rom. 3:17). In the end times, “while [unbelievers] are saying, ‘Peace and safety!’ then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape” (1 Thess. 5:3). Like wayward Israel finally admitted, “We waited for peace, but no good came; for a time of healing, but behold, terror!” (Jer. 8:15). The world’s peace is only an illusion.

A peace based on temporarily positive circumstances or ignorant escapism is not genuine peace at all. The reason people lack peace is not emotional, psychological, or circumstantial, but theological. As noted earlier in this chapter, only those who know Jesus Christ can have peace with God and, subsequently, experience true peace in this life.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12–21](#) (p. 126). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

- I. Its Significance
- II. Its Source
- III. Its Supernatural

IV. Its Solution

John 14:27 (NKJV)

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.

μη ταρασσεσθω υμων η καρδια
μηδε δειλιατω

troubled P MP Imperative

ταρασσεσθω

tarassó: to stir up, to trouble

Original Word: τaráσσω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: tarassó

Phonetic Spelling: (tar-as'-so)

Definition: to stir up, to trouble

Usage: I disturb, agitate, stir up, trouble.

5015 tarássō – properly, put in motion (to agitate back-and-forth, shake to-and-fro); (figuratively) to set in motion what needs to remain still (at ease); to "trouble" ("agitate"), causing inner perplexity (emotional agitation) from getting too stirred up inside ("upset").
 [5015 (tarássō) translates 46 Hebrew words in the LXX (Abbott-Smith), showing the enormous connotation power of OT Hebrew vocabulary.]

μηδε

neither

méde: but not, and not

Original Word: μηδέ

Part of Speech: Conjunction, Negative

Transliteration: méde

Phonetic Spelling: (may-deh')

Definition: but not, and not

Usage: and not, not even, neither...nor.

3366 mēdé (a conjunction, derived from 3361 /mé, "subjectively not" and 1161 /dé, "moreover, next") – properly, not even, nor moreover, neither.

afraid. P.A. Imperative

δειλιατω one time in NT

deiliaó: to be cowardly

Original Word: δειλιάω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: deiliaó

Phonetic Spelling: (di-lee-ah'-o)

Definition: to be cowardly

Usage: I shrink, am fearful, timid, cowardly.

HELPS Word-studies

Cognate: 1168 deiliáō – to be timid (fearful), living in dread (paralyzing fear of consequences). [1168](#) /deiliáō ("living in fearful dread") is used only in Jn 14:27. [See 1169](#) (deilós).

Its related to the word

deilos: cowardly, fearful

Original Word: δειλός, ή, όν

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: deilos

Phonetic Spelling: (di-los')

Definition: cowardly, fearful

Usage: cowardly, timid, fearful.

HELPS Word-studies

1169 deilós (an adjective derived from deidō, "fear-driven") – properly, dreadful, describing a person who loses their "moral gumption (fortitude)" that is needed to follow the Lord. [1169](#) /deilós ("fearful of losses") refers to an excessive fear (dread) of "losing," causing

someone to be fainthearted (cowardly) – hence, to fall short in following Christ as Lord.

[1169 /deilós is always used negatively in the NT and stands in contrast to the positive fear which can be expressed by 5401 /phóbos ("fear," see Phil 2:12).]

Matthew 8:23–26 (NKJV)

²³ Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him. ²⁴ And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. ²⁵ Then His disciples came to *Him* and awoke Him, saying, “Lord, save us! We are perishing!”

²⁶ But He said to them, “**Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?**” Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.

Mark 4:37–40 (NKJV)

³⁷ And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. ³⁸ But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?”

³⁹ Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “**Peace, be still!**” And the wind ceased and

there was a great calm. ⁴⁰ But He said to them, “**Why are you so fearful? (δειλός)** **How is it that you have no faith?”** ⁴¹ And they feared (phobia) exceedingly, and said to one another, “Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!”

After promising to give His disciples peace, Jesus repeated His command that they **not let their heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful**. There is no inconsistency between Christ’s promise and His command, however. The Bible teaches that Christians are responsible to appropriate God’s promises.

The Holy Spirit indwells and empowers believers, but they in turn are to be filled with (Eph. 5:18) and walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 25). Christians have been given eternal life; in response they are to “consider [themselves] to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 6:11) and “present [themselves] to God as those alive from the dead” (v. 13).

The Holy Spirit is their supernatural teacher (1 John 2:20, 27), yet that does not negate believers’ responsibility to study the Scriptures diligently (2 Tim. 2:15). The same apostle Paul who wrote “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I

who live, but Christ lives in me” (Gal. 2:20) also wrote “Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified” (1 Cor. 9:26–27).

As is the case with all of God’s promises, then, believers are responsible to appropriate Christ’s promise of peace.

Psalm 34:14 commands God’s people to “seek peace and pursue it” (cf. 1 Peter 3:11),

Psalm 119:165 declares that “those who love Your law have great peace, and nothing causes them to stumble.”

Isaiah 26:3 reveals that it is those who steadfastly trust Him that God keeps in perfect peace,

Isaiah 32:17 links experiencing peace with living a righteous life.

Paul instructed Timothy to pursue peace (2 Tim. 2:22), and Peter exhorted his readers, “Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless” (2 Peter 3:14).

James also connected peace with godly living when he wrote, “But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable ... And the seed whose fruit is righteousness

is sown in peace by those who make peace” (James 3:17–18).

In fact, one way God produces peace in our lives is by chastening us: “All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness” (Heb. 12:11).

When we trust in His goodness, faithfulness, and provision, God fills us “with all joy and peace in believing” (Rom. 15:13). To live in anguish over the past, anxiety concerning the present, or apprehension about the future is to fail to appropriate that peace.

As noted earlier, believers are to be “anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let [their] requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard [their] hearts and [their] minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6–7).

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus pointed out the sinful folly of allowing fear and worry to corrode the believer’s experience of divine peace:

For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more

than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life? And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith! Do not worry then, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear for clothing?” For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matt. 6:25–34)

God has forgiven the past, provided for the present, and guaranteed the future, leaving nothing to legitimately disrupt the believer’s peace. Applying that principle to his most difficult circumstances, the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians,

(2 Cor. 4:8–9, 17–18)

We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed ... For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. **(2 Cor. 4:8–9, 17–18)**

The good news of the gospel is that the war between the sinner and God can end, since the treaty ending that war was purchased by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The resulting experiential peace becomes a guiding and controlling principle in every believer's life. In **Colossians 3:15** Paul exhorted Christians, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful." *Brabeuō* ("rule") was used to describe the work of an umpire in deciding the outcome of an athletic event.

Brabeuō – properly, "act as an umpire" (this is also the meaning of this term in classical Greek, as with Isocrates and Demosthenes, etc.); (figuratively) the

peace (wholeness) from Christ that He uses to assure (confirm) a believer they are living in His preferred-will (cf. [2307](#) /thélēma). [See 1017](#) (brabeion).

How to have the Peace of God in your life

1. Be Saved

1. Must have Peace with God before you can have the Peace of God

2. Be Sanctified

A second consideration concerns how the choice will affect the peace of mind that comes with a clear conscience (cf. Rom. 14:22–23; 1 Cor. 8:12). Thoughts, words, and deeds consistent with the peace of Christ will result in a clear, good, and blameless conscience (Acts 23:1; 24:16; 2 Cor. 1:12; 1 Tim. 1:5, 19; 3:9; 2 Tim. 1:3; Heb. 13:18; 1 Peter 3:16); those that are not will result in a troubled, accusing conscience (1 Sam. 24:5). Christians who live in unrepentant sin forfeit the experience of peace and assurance that is Christ's legacy to His people. Remembering his sin with Bathseba, David declared to God:

When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted
away
Through my groaning all day long;
For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;
My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of
summer.
I acknowledged my sin to You,
And my iniquity I did not hide
I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord”;
And You forgave the guilt of my sin. (Ps. 32:3–5)

The unsettled, guilt-ridden conscience is made whole when the believer confesses his sin to God and repents (cf. 2 Cor. 7:10; 1 John 1:9). Knowing that his sin has been forgiven (through the cross) and that his relational fellowship with God has been restored (through confession and repentance), the believer can once again experience the profound peace that God offers to all of His children.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [*John 12–21*](#) (p. 129). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

3. Be Subservient -- believe and trust in the Sovereignty of God.

Life is full of trouble and uncertainty. We all face times of great despair. We lack faith, and full of anxiety. Sometime fear is all we can know and see.

The light seems to diminish and for a time it looks as if darkness will overtake us.

“spiritual stability and Peace demands resting on a confident faith in the Lord. It demands resting on a confident faith in the Lord.

Philippians 4:5–7 (NKJV)

⁵ Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord *is* at hand.

⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Verse 5 says, “The Lord is near;” verse 6 says, “be anxious for nothing.”

We’re talking about here “near,” eggus, in the sense of space, if we can use that as a designation, as opposed to time.

eggus: near (in place or time)

Original Word: ἐγγύς

Part of Speech: Adverb

Transliteration: eggus

Phonetic Spelling: (eng-goos')

Definition: near (in place or time)

Usage: near.

It is true that the Lord is near in the sense of His second coming, but that's not really the priority here. The Lord is near in terms of His presence. And because the Lord is near, we're not anxious for anything. So spiritual stability, then, is predicated on a confident faith in the Lord. That's the bottom line. The way you handle problems, temptations, trials, difficulties, is a reflection of your view of God. If you understand the Lord and who He is and all His power and all His promise and all His resources and purposes and plans toward you and you also understand that He's always near, then where's the cause for anxiety? What are you going to be anxious about?

Psalm 4:8 (NKJV)

⁸ I will both lie down in peace, and sleep;
For You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.

Proverbs 3:19–26 (NKJV)

¹⁹ The Lord by wisdom founded the earth;
By understanding He established the heavens;
²⁰ By His knowledge the depths were broken up,
And clouds drop down the dew.

- 21 My son, let them not depart from your eyes—
Keep sound wisdom and discretion;
- 22 So they will be life to your soul
And grace to your neck.
- 23 Then you will walk safely in your way,
And your foot will not stumble.
- 24 When you lie down, you will not be afraid;
Yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet.
- 25 Do not be afraid of sudden terror,
Nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes;
- 26 For the Lord will be your confidence,
And will keep your foot from being caught.

If you understand that God is sovereign, God is loving, if you understand that God is in control of everything in your life for His glory and your good, if you understand that nothing is beyond the purview of God's control, if you understand that He's orchestrating everything for eternal purpose and you can rest in that confident faith, then you're going to be stable in the most serious times.

When people have difficulties that they can't solve, when they get into problems that debilitate them and raise their anxiety level and cause all kinds of personal trauma, the right answer isn't "You need to go to someone who can talk about your problem." That is not the right answer. The right answer is "You need to better understand the God who is sovereign over your problem." That is the answer. It is a fallacy to assume that some kind of careful human analysis of the problem is going to provide the solution. The solution is to understand "I am a fallen person, I live in a fallen world, it is cursed and I bear the mark of that curse in my own fallen flesh. This is what is to be expected. I will rest in the confident faith that my God is sovereign over all this fallenness to effect His own eternal purposes." That's the solution to the problem, that perspective. An adequate knowledge of God is essential in the matter of spiritual stability. The Scripture, for example, is the revelation of God so that in knowing Scripture, we know God. In knowing God, we can predict how He is acting, we can predict what His purposes are and thus be content. In fact, in Ephesians 6, when the believer gets into intense spiritual combat with the forces of the enemy, spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies,

principalities, and powers, when we're in hand-to-hand battle with demons, it says that our feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. The feet of a Roman soldier had to be prepared with something and they wore a hobnail boot.

This boot was leather and nails were driven through from the inside. Those nails would grip the ground like a football or a baseball or a track shoe would grip the ground in athletics, only in that particular situation, you were in hand-to-hand combat for life and death. It wasn't a game; it was real. And so they had these boots that they were able to anchor in the soil and not slip and slide and thus cause a great amount of vulnerability.

Now, what Paul says is that what makes you stand firm, what anchors your feet, is the gospel of peace. "What do you mean by that, Paul?" "What I mean is that you are a participant in the good news that you are at peace with God." Another way to say that, "God's on your side." What anchors you in battle is the confidence that God is on your side. He's not your enemy; He's your friend, He's your resource, He's your power. So I am anchored in spiritual battle by the confidence that I am at peace with God; therefore, God is at peace with me; therefore, God is on my side to be my defender, as the Psalmist said, my rock, my strong defender. That's stability. You

can be stable in any situation if you understand your God and you understand His sovereign control and His sovereign purposes and His great omnipotence that can overpower anything.

One of the curses on this culture, this Christian culture in which we live in America today, is really the reflection of traditional Arminian theology.

Traditionally, through the years, the Arminian theology and the Calvinistic theology have sort of been at opposite poles. Arminian theology is distinct from Calvinistic theology in terms of principle. For example, traditional Reformed theology that we call Calvinism says God is sovereign. Arminian theology, in effect, says man is sovereign. That's the primary difference.

Now, Arminian theology is pervasive in our culture today. It's pervasive in the church, and even in some churches that wouldn't say they believe in it, it's still pervasive. More subtly so, but it's there.

Arminian theology says that man is sovereign. God is hopeful and God is helpful, but man is sovereign. You've got to find it in yourself to come to Christ, you've got to find it in yourself to stay with Christ, you've got to find it in yourself to accomplish your spiritual goals, to win your spiritual victories, with the knowledge that God is hopeful that you will because He'd like to see you in heaven if you could work it

out and He's also helpful. Given the right conditions on your part, He'll come along and give you some assistance.

So what happens in this kind of theology? Well, the first thing that happens is that a man may profess Christ, think himself to be a Christian, and never experience the shattering of his own confidence in himself.

a typical Arminian person, a person who believes that salvation is something he chooses to do on his own,

But, you see, this particular kind of person who believes that they choose to be saved on their own and it's sort of all up to them to stay saved and to fight their spiritual battles has never experienced the shattering of confidence in himself. Therefore, he does not understand what it means to totally trust God.

Furthermore, because he knows God in reality only as hopeful and helpful rather than sovereign, he does not totally trust God. Consequently, he lives with tremendous anxiety. He doesn't understand a sovereign God; therefore, he doesn't understand sovereign grace. He doesn't understand the total divine working power of the eternal God on his behalf. He doesn't understand that he was chosen

by God, that he was redeemed by God, that he is kept by God, that he'll be glorified by God, and that every trial of his life is under the total control of God. If his trouble is a result of his sin, then it's chastening to make him perfect. If his trouble is not the result of his sin, it still fits the purpose of God for his own good and God's glory in some way that he may at that moment not understand. But it's all in God's plan.

But see, if you don't ever understand the shattering of your own confidence in yourself, which then abandons you to God, then you're not going to totally trust God. And that's why I say what I've been saying all along: If you are going to be stable in the tough times of life, it is born out of an absolute distrust of yourself and a total trust in the sovereign God of grace and power. And if you trust that God, you stand stable.

So believers who really know their God can say, "My God is in this; my God has His purposes." Spurgeon once said, "If you believe that everything turns on the free will of man, you will naturally have man as the principle figure in your landscape," end quote. Now, you're really stuck with a dilemma because you know how weak man is and you know how fickle man is, so you have every reason to be full of

anxiety. People with right theology shouldn't have anxiety problems. People who believe the truth – I really believe that this pervasive sort of Arminian theology that exists in the church today is the precursor to all this anxiety of people who still believe they've got to orchestrate their life and it's sort of on their own. They've got to try to do it with the help of some well-meaning people who've got some formulas that might work. This is foolishness.” JM

Spiritual Stability, Part 4: Thankful Prayer

- *Sermons Philippians 4:6b-7 50-40 Sep 24, 1989*

Charles Wesley, the famous hymn writer, summed up the God-focused nature of the Christian's peace with these fitting words:

I rest beneath the Almighty's shade,
 My griefs expire, my troubles cease;
 Thou, Lord, on whom my soul is stayed,
 Wilt keep me still in perfect peace.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12-21](#) (pp. 126-129). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

The story has occasionally been told of a contest in which artists were to submit paintings and sculptures portraying their understanding of peace. Some showed beautiful sunsets, others pastoral scenery. But the prize went to an artist who had painted a bird in its nest, attached to a branch protruding from the edge of a thundering waterfall. This is the idea involved in Christ's Peace . In times of outward peace anyone can be at peace, or at least many can. But it takes an exceptional peace, a supernatural peace, to prevail in the midst of great outward trouble and inner distress. Christ's peace is just that, exceptional and supernatural..

Boice, J. M. (2005). [*The Gospel of John: an expositional commentary*](#) (p. 1154). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

John 16:33 (NKJV)

33 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.”

