

March 27 Adult Spiritual Growth Class Synopsis

Anxious for Nothing: Chapter 8: The Peace of God

Have you ever endured a perfect storm of bad events? How did you spiritually and emotionally face the storm? How did the storm change you? Are you able to see those changes as a form of grace?

What is the peace of God?

Philippians 4:7 speaks about the peace of God being beyond our human understanding. Ephesians 2:14-16 says, "For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 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, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross..." Peace is not just a spiritual gift Jesus Christ is our peace. Breaking down that middle wall of separation, His first mission was to restore relationship back to Father God, and the second mission was to renew relationship between one another. Where there is no way, Jesus is the Way. He made the way by sacrificing Himself. His body *was* the middle wall of separation. It was nailed to the cross in humble adoration for humanity.

Philippians 4:7 speaks of the peace of God that "will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." The Greek meanings of "guard" are: be a watcher in advance, mount guard; hem in, protect, keep. Our hearts and minds are subject to the chaos of the world and the enemy's attacks. Jesus Christ, our peace, positions guards at the gates to protect us from the world's chaos, which damage and lead astray our hearts and minds. The longer we follow Christ, seeking His Word, the more we begin to be like Him—taking on more of His heart and mind. Our peace grows as He grows in us.

The Apostle Paul lived the peace of Christ even in the midst of storms, trials and tribulations. In Acts 27:21-26, being without food at sea and being tossed about in the storm of storms, Paul encouraged all on the ship, which would eventually be lost, to keep their courage for he had been ministered to and given a special measure of God's peace by an angel of God, who ensured him that none would be lost for "Do not be afraid...God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you."

Through King Jehoshaphat's great faith and the peace instilled by the Spirit of the Lord, we are reminded to trust in God for the battle belongs to Him. In turn we are given great hope and peace, believing and taking God at His Word no matter what the reports or circumstances look like. King Jehoshaphat of Judah was known to have "walked in the ways" of his great-great-great-great grandfather, King David. His reign enjoyed a great measure of peace and prosperity, the blessing of God resting on the people "in their basket and their store". During his reign, the Moabites formed a great and powerful confederacy with the surrounding nations, and marched against Judah (2 Chronicles 20). Jehoshaphat turned to pray: "O our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do; but our eyes are upon you." The Spirit of the Lord then came upon Jaaziel the Levite: "This is what the Lord says to you: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's.'" As they set out, Jehoshaphat stood before his people telling them to have faith. He then appointed men to sing to the Lord and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army saying: "Give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures forever." As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the invaders and turned them upon each other such that they were all destroyed. The battle was won - God saved His people.

Daily we are given assurance in remembering to whom we belong from Galatians 4:6-7: *Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.*

We can find rest in God's perfect plan for us in Psalm 139:16-17: *You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered!*

We are given the gift of peace through the very Presence of His Holy Spirit: *"I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid."* (John 14:27) We know that God never promised a life without storms, but He promises to be with us when we face them. Jesus tells us in John 16:33: *"I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth, you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."* In Isaiah 43:2, the great prophet says of God: *"When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you."*

Of significant note are the first words of the resurrected Jesus to his disciples in John 20:19-21: *"Peace be with you...Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you."* A week later He repeated these words when Thomas was with them. Lucado speaks of the Christ vintage of peace, *humbling himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross.* (Philippians 2:8) A peace that calmed his heart when he was accused; steadied his voice when he spoke to Pilate; and kept his thoughts clear and heart pure on the cross. Jesus' peace is founded in His perfect example of how to love God and obey Him completely. He said, *"The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him."* (John 8:29 NIV).

Far more than just a platitude or casual greeting, Jesus' announced *presence* of peace, which no door could keep out, quelled the very real fear that consumed the disciples and allowed them to move beyond and into the purpose that Jesus had for them. This great presence of peace is spoken to in Exodus 33:14 by God after Moses' faithful persistence for His presence in the journey to the Promised Land: *"My presence will go with you and I will give you rest."* The desire of Moses' heart was that God's presence would be with them and that the Lord would be glorified through His people. Our hearts' desire is also to be, to dwell in God's presence for that is where peace resides. *One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.* (Psalm 27:4)

Matthew 28:20: and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Songs to reflect and pray on: [\(490\) PEACE IN CHRIST || LYRICS - YouTube \(491\)](#) [Phil Wickham - Battle Belongs \(Official Lyric Video\) - YouTube](#)

Looking ahead – Sunday April 10

Anxious for Nothing: Finding Calm in a Chaotic World

Section 4: Meditate on good things.

Chapter 9 – Think about what you think about.