

Byron Keith - Peace

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Well, our topic this morning is peace, and I don't know about you, but when I talk to people or listen to people and hear about the problems that they're going through, this word peace comes to my mind so often. You know, the Bible talks about peace so much, and so it's something we thought we would consider this morning. Now, perhaps peace is the greatest craving in all of human history, and yet it remains unattainable even today. It seems like peace is only celebrated in fleeting moments of life, but many only see it in its fullness in death.

How many have gone to cemeteries and seen headstones that have this message on it, Rest in peace? You know, every time I see a headstone like this says rest in peace to me, it brings a dilemma to my mind, and that dilemma is, why do we only rest in peace? Why don't we live in peace, too? We'd like to consider today, for a few minutes, man's inability to attain peace in today's world in three areas.

On this definition, we're going to ask, what is peace? And this definition actually gives three elements of peace. The first is freedom from war, which is described as freedom from wars, or the time when a war or conflict ends, and we might say that this is national peace or peace among nations. The second element is mental calm, which is a state of mental calm and serenity with no anxiety.

We might consider this individual peace and individual peace of mind, and the third element of peace we'll be discussing today is a state of harmony, which is described as freedom from conflict or disagreement among people or groups of people. So let's begin by looking at this first element, which is freedom from war.

This is the COVID of a book by Chris Hedges that was published last year, and it's the 16th book that he's written. You know, there's thousands of resources written about war, but when I came across this man's background, it seemed like a perfect blend of journalist, historian, and Christian advocate. Chris Hedges, as an American journalist, was a war correspondent. He's still in Presbyterian Church and author, and he was part of a team of New York Times reporters who won a Pulitzer Prize for their coverage of global terrorism.

He covered conflicts in South America, the first Gulf War and Yugoslav wars through 2000, when he handed his career covering active conflicts. Today he suffers from severe PTSD from witnessing firsthand the atrocities of war. So with that background, I thought he was a good source for us to consider freedom from war. In a 2003 article written for the New York Times, he wrote this about War. War is a conflict that has claimed more than 1,000 lives over the past 3,400 years.

Humans have been entirely at peace for 268 of them, or just 8% of recorded history. So we would ask, why so much war and so many and so little peace? You know, as a Presbyterian minister, Hedges must be familiar with the words of Ecclesiastes 3:8, which reads, A time to love and a time to hate. A time of war and a time of peace. His writings seem to repeatedly ask the question, why so much war and so little peace?

He spent his adult career consumed with war. He's experienced firsthand that wars are evil and leave destruction and suffering in their wake, and yet he's failed to understand why they continue. Even today, as you turn on the news, we see wars around the world. Besides Russia's war against Ukraine, there are at least 14 other countries suffering from civil wars, terrorist insurgencies, drug

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wars, political unrest and ethnic violence.

So obviously, there is no universal peace among nations.

Let's take a look at the second element that we're going to discuss today, and that's mental calm, which is described as a state of mental calm and serenity with no anxiety.

According to reputable sources, which all agree, last year 20% of adults and children experience some sort of mental illness, the most common being anxiety, depression, and PTSD. Proverbs 12:25 tells us anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down, but a good word cheers it up. Why is it that there's so much anxiety and so few words of cheer in today's world? Obviously, there's no universal serenity among people.

And finally, let's take a look at the third element, a state of harmony, which is described as freedom from conflict or disagreement among people or groups of people.

First, let's take a look at worldwide economic disharmony. Last year, more than 12,500 protests were held across 148 countries over food, fuel and cost of living increases, and the largest protests were in Western Europe. You know, the world is really at the point of its richest point in history. So why is there so much conflict about just basic living conditions?

Then we have worldwide social disorder, protests against inequality, government suppression and corruption, ethnic and cultural prejudice, and they dwarf the total economic protests. All of these conspire against any state of harmony among people. Instead, they speak to the disharmony spoken of in Isaiah 59:8, which reads, they don't know how to live in peace with others. What they do isn't fair. They lead twisted lives no one who lives like that will enjoy peace and rest.

It's quite a condemnation of the state of the world right now, isn't it? So again, obviously, there's no universal harmony within suffering societies. So we would ask the question again, where is peace? You know, back in the 1960s, many claimed that God was dead, and with the amount of conflicts and protests in today's world, many might logically claim that peace is dead.

But we know that God promised to bless all the families of the earth. So there must be a logical explanation for the chaos today's world, and fortunately, we do have an explanation for the delay in peace on earth, and that is, it's all in God's timing.

I think we're all familiar with this portion of the chart of the ages showing human history from creation to restoration. Galatians 3:1, 3, and 4 says, Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us from this present evil world to the will of God and our Father.

You know, the Greek word for world in this verse is strong 165. It means, it's the Greek word aeon, meaning ever or age, clearly indicating that this is a period of time, and we'd like to just point out five verses that support this understanding. The first is Hebrews 11:3. By faith we understand that the ages have been framed by a word of God so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear.

Now, Paul emphasizes here God's power and that he created all the universe from nothing that could be seen, and faith tells us also this is the same with the ages. If you just look back at history, these, you know, what we see on the chart of the ages doesn't jump out at us. It's only through a study of the Bible that we can see these ages and what they mean to us. The second scripture that

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we would point out is Matthew 13:38, 40.

And this is Jesus speaking of the parable of the weeds, and in his explanation, he says, the field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so will it be in the end of the age.

So here we have a field, we have evil ones, and we have the enemy who sows them identified as the devil.

Jesus gives us a description here that we are at the end of the age. Based on the signs he told us to watch for, we can identify that we are now in the harvest or the end of this present evil age. So we see where we are in the stream of time. Another scripture we'd refer to is 2nd Corinthians 4:4, which reads, the God of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. Here Paul explains that Satan has blinded the eyes of the world.

And when we take this into consideration, it's no wonder there's no peace found in the world today. Titus 2:11-12 says, for the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.

The grace of God that brings salvation to all was accomplished through the gift of God's Son, Jesus. We know because he told us so in John 3:16 and 17. That grace has been imputed to those running for the prize of the high calling during the gospel age, and this also in this scripture, tells us what sort of lives we are to live in this present evil age, and the last scripture we would reference today is Ephesians 6:12.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in heavenly realms. So brethren, our struggle is against the spiritual enemies because we still are in the this present evil world which is under the dominion of Satan.

But looking at our chart and knowing that we are not in a time of age yet we know that peace will come and it will come in the next age. Here we have the beautiful words that Jesus spoke in the prayer that he taught his disciples, saying, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. But we know that it means in the future. I want to go back to 2nd Corinthians 4:4 for just a minute, and here we have.

You can see the word Satan at the top of the screen, and the Scripture in King James says, the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, and so when we consider this, we know that the world has had their eyes blinded by Satan, blinded to the promises of God, and so most of the advice for living in this age is not for them, but it's for the church. Satan has blinded the eyes of the world, and he's prevented them from their desire for peace.

So the key to this is Jesus sacrifice and the merit of his sacrifice that will result in blessing the families of the earth. We'd like to take just a look at a few scriptures that demonstrate Jesus sacrifice on the cross is the basis for the end of this present age.

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The first scripture we'll Note is Romans 6:20, which says, the God who gives peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. May the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. Well, here's a great promise that Satan will be destroyed. Satan has to be destroyed if there's ever to be peace on earth.

In Acts 26:18, we see that we have this. These words first. You know, at the top it says, now the earth is Satan's dominion. But this verse speaks to a time when that dominion will be taken from him. It says to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith.

Me, what a beautiful thought that God's promised to take this dominion back from Satan and turn it over in the kingdom to his Son and his Son's bride. The world doesn't know this, but we have been blessed to know this now in a time of chaos.

Next scripture starts some advice given to the church of how we can live and what we should be doing in this present evil age. Psalm 34:14 says, Turn away from evil and do good. Seek peace and pursue it. We'd like to suggest that the psalmist here is really making two points. The first is for our own selves that we might seek peace.

But when we do that, we are an example to those in the world.

Another scripture In Romans, Romans 5:1. Since then it is by faith that we are justified. Let us grasp the fact that we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Here and in other places in the New Testament, we find that our peace comes through justification by faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the key.

Isaiah 9:6 makes this point with a familiar verse around Christmas time and on Christmas cards. But we want to point out the last phrase when we get to it. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting peace, Everlasting Father, Prince of peace.

Jesus is to be the prince of peace when the kingdom comes.

Another scripture in a similar vein comes from Luke 2:14, which reads, May glory be given to God in the highest heaven, and may peace be given to those he is pleased with on earth. Well, who is God pleased with on earth right now? He's not dealing with those on earth. He's not really pleased with them. He is pleased with those who have consecrated their lives and are following in Jesus footsteps.

But he will be pleased with those the kingdom who come to him and live under his righteous laws. So when we read a scripture like this, it's another evidence to us of the power of God and the assurance that he will indeed bless all the families of the earth. Taking into account the ages of his plan.

John, in verse 1633, quotes the words of Jesus. Jesus says this. I have told you these things so that you can have peace because of me in this world. You will have trouble, but be encouraged. I have won the battle over the world.

Think of what was going on in the minds of Jesus disciples when he spoke these words to them. This was just before he was about to be crucified on the cross, and he wanted them to remember after his death that he had told them these things and that he had told them that they would have

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peace because of him, because of his death and resurrection. He also tells them that while they're in the world in this present evil age, they're going to have trouble. But the words to give he gives them is be encouraged.

I have won the battle over the world. In his peace they can rest, and then finally we have the words he gave just before he left them at his first advent in John 14:27. I leave behind with you peace. I give you my own peace.

And my gift is nothing like the peace of this world. You must not be distressed and you must not be daunted. What a beautiful statement. Jesus left his own love for us when he finished his earthly ministry. Not the love of the world, but the Son, but the love of the Son of God.

And I love the way he ends this. The Phillips translation says, you must not be distressed, you must not be daunted. He wanted his disciples, including us, to have the peace that he left for them. The reason being we need his peace to make our calling and election. Sure.

So let's take a look at how peace will eventually come.

First, we're going to look at peace in the world in according to war. The kingdom will bring freedom from war. You know my good friend Dave Christensen, who just went to his reward on December 4th of last year. This was maybe his favorite verse. He used to quote this quite frequently in class.

And we can see why, because it shows, you know, the future and what's coming to mankind. It's Micah 4:1, and we're familiar with it, but we like to read, shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and it shall be lifted up above the hills, and peoples shall flow to it, and many nations shall come and say, come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways, and that we may walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem he shall judge between many peoples, and shall decide disputes for strong nations far away, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it Won't it be wonderful when there's a time when, if there is news broadcast in the next age, no one will turn it on to see the terrible sights we see going on in Ukraine right now with destruction of one nation, taking war against another one and basically trying to just destroy it. So God's kingdom will bring freedom from war. Let's go to the next element which we identified before. That's the element of mental calm and serenity with no anxiety. The kingdom will bring that also.

Philippians 4:6 says, don't be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and pleading, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your minds and hearts in Christ Jesus.

What a beautiful instruction. Don't be anxious about anything, and then the recipe for that is by prayer and pleading with thanksgiving to God, and I love the fact that he says, take your request to God. Ask God for help.

Tell him what's going on in your life. Tell him why you're anxious, if you are, and the Scripture says that the peace of God will guard our hearts and minds against this in Christ Jesus.

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Isaiah 26:3 give another angle on this, says, lord, you will give perfect peace to those who commit themselves to be faithful to you. That's because they trust in you. So brethren, that's us in this lifetime. We have perfect peace because we trust in God.

Matthew 11:28 30 are beautiful words that Jesus spoke to his disciples and to all those down through this gospel age when he gave this invitation. Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, my burden is light. Now, the word peace doesn't appear in these verses, but it's all about individual peace.

It's all about bringing this mental calm and serenity to us, and it comes to us because we give everything. We put all our burdens onto our Lord, and He invites us to because he says his yoke is easy, his burden is light, and he wants to take our burden and help carry it.

And then Matthew 6, 6 chapter verses 25, and then 31 to 34 is another example of how we get mental calm and serenity and have that without anxiety. Again, this is Jesus speaking. That is why I say to you, don't worry about living, wondering what you are going to eat or drink or what you are going to wear. So don't worry and don't keep saying, what shall we eat, what shall we drink, or what shall we wear? That is what pagans are always looking for.

Your Heavenly Father knows that you need them all. Set your heart on the kingdom and his goodness, and all these things will come to you as a matter of course. Don't worry at all then about tomorrow. Tomorrow can take care of itself. One day's trouble is enough for one day.

You know, that last little section, there really is an important principle that we should apply to our lives, and that's to try to seek peace day to day. As you said, one day's trouble is enough. Tomorrow can take care of itself. So today let's ask for peace. Let's seek peace today.

Now, here's just four verses that we quoted, and there are so many others. But if you're anxious, if you're feeling distressed, think about these scriptures. Look them up, read them. I'd even suggest reading them aloud, and they will help bring peace back into your lives.

So the third element that we spoke of before we go to that all those scriptures about calm and serenity are for us. But we do have this beautiful scripture that applies to the world, Revelation 21:2 4, and this is the kingdom picture, and this is a beautiful picture of the peace that mankind will enjoy when the kingdom is established. We read from the nlt.

I saw the Holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, look, God's home is now among his people. He will live with them, and they will be his people. God Himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes.

And there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever. Again, the word peace itself is not found in these scriptures. But the mental calm, the serenity, the absence of anxiety and pain and suffering is there, and that's what peace means to the world of mankind.

They don't have it today, but what a wonderful promise the Revelator gives us for the peace that is coming to the world of mankind and the kingdom.

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And finally, the third element that we mentioned in our definition of peace is a state of harmony with others, and the kingdom will bring this also. We'd like to read the first two verses in tandem. Romans 12:18 says, do all that you can to live in peace with everyone, and Hebrews 12:14 says, pursue peace with everyone as well as holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.

Do you ever struggle with these words? I mean, these are instructions to us. Do you live in peace with everyone? Do you pursue peace with everyone? You know, it can be difficult at times, and especially in crisis situations.

It's a scientific fact that the brain is actually wired in such a way as to influence us to act before we can properly consider the consequences of our actions, and so it's good to try to keep ourselves always in a patient attitude as much as possible.

You know, in our class, we are going through a study of Colossians right now in the third chapter, and there's, if you remember, Paul talks about putting things off and putting things on, and one of the things he says to put off, to get rid of is anger, because anger interferes with our peace.

We spent quite a while speaking on discussing this word anger and the motion it comes with, and a few of the brethren mentioned how driving can bring out anger in us when we don't want it to do, and they mentioned that, you know, road rage is so. So commonplace that people just go crazy and losing the peace they have and have anger just because they're driving an automobile. Well, I made a comment during that discussion that I didn't have that much trouble with people who would exhibit road rage to me, because I decided long ago that when I get in my car to go anywhere, I just assume that there are people getting in their cars, coming out to look for me.

They're going to pull in front of me, they're going to honk at me, they're going to give me profane signs, and so when that happens and event it always, not every time I drive, but probably as many of you have, you know, it happens frequently, and when it does, because I have set my mind to the fact that it's going to happen, I don't really get angry when I'm driving on the road when it happens, and I thought to myself afterwards, you know what, that's pretty good. I'm doing good on at least one area of this that we're supposed to work on.

But then after one of our meetings a couple weeks ago, the following week, brother Tim Krupa was leading our study at the time. He asked if anyone had had any experiences with, you know, the words we had been speaking of the prior week, and I had to hold my hand up and speak about anger in the car because I had an incident where I was coming home from taking Sister Margie to work at night, and I went through a drive through to, to get something to eat, and as I was pulling up to the drive through lane, there was a car backing out of the lane.

And I stopped to let him back out. I couldn't understand why he would be backing out of the drive through lane. But I pulled up to the order window and a voice said, I'm sorry, we've had problems in the kitchen and we're not able to serve anyone anymore tonight. I looked ahead and there was two cars sitting at the one car at the window and another car behind the first car, and so I asked the person who was speaking on the intercom about the two cars there.

I said, are they waiting for food? Did they get their orders and are they going to go through or what's going on with them? And I was told that they were just, they were not waiting for food, but they were just talking to them, and the first car left, he drove through, and so I pulled up behind the second car and I could tell by the conversation that the driver was really complaining loudly and yelling at this young man who was working the window.

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He couldn't have been, you know, he's a teenager, he wasn't the CEO of the company, and so he certainly had no control over whatever it was that had to shut down their line. But the driver kept yelling at him to the point where the boy, this young man's manager came over. An older woman came over and she started talking to the driver. He was still yelling at her.

And after my words. The week before, when I said I was, I didn't get upset with road rage because I was ready for it. I was not ready for this, and I could feel the anger welling up with me, within me, listening to this person yell at these people who were trying to do their job but couldn't because of conditions beyond their point. I got to the point where I was almost ready to get out of the car and walk up and ask this man, why don't you stop yelling at these people and just move on?

Luckily for me, I was on the phone with my younger son, Aaron, and I told him what was going on. He said, dad, remember you're a pacifist, and I needed that. Needed that. So I ended up backing out of the drive through lane myself while this car ahead of me still kept going.

But I saw that even when I, after the event happened, I thought about what I had said the week before, you know, and it was kind of a humbling experience because it was almost like, well, yeah, I don't get road rage because I expect it, but I didn't expect it in a drive through lane at a, at a fast food place, and so anger came over me. My peace left me, and so that was a good example for me, and so when we read these two verses, to live in peace with everyone and to pursue peace with everyone, it's not always an easy thing to do.

The mind fires off real quickly before the brain can kick into action and we can have this reflexive attitude of anger. So living with peace is something we need to practice. Pursuing peace is something we need to practice. These are words for us. It's advice for us.

And the third scripture we have here is from Ephesians 4:3. It says, make every effort to keep yourselves united in the spirit, binding yourselves together with peace, and this scripture we know is talking about the peace that we have in the unity of the body of Christ. Make every effort to keep yourselves in the unity of the body of Christ. Is that different than pursuing peace in the world and living with peace with everyone?

Do you ever find yourself losing your temper or losing your peace when you're among your brethren? This is a really important question to ask ourselves and it's a really important part of our Christian makeup to look at daily to see if we hold any grudges against any in our fellowship. What can we do to get rid of any grudges we might have? Really important that we do this.

So as we've gone through this description of what the word peace means and how it affects nations, individuals, and living in society. We see that in this age, the world cannot attain peace, but they will attain peace in the kingdom. So with that in mind, we'd like to just look at a couple of stories in the New Testament in which peace is a central theme.

The first is the story of Paul and Silas in prison, and this is recorded in the 16th chapter of Acts, and we like to read just a point. It says, one day, as we were going down to the place of prayer, we met a slave girl who had a spirit that enabled her to tell the future. She earned a lot of money for her masters by telling fortunes. She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, these men are servants of the most high God, and they have come to tell you how to be saved.

This went on day after day until Paul got so exasperated that he turned and said to the demon within her, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her, and instantly he left her.

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Her master's hopes of wealth were now shattered. So they grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them before the authorities at the marketplace. The whole city is in an uproar because of these Jews.

They shouted to the city officials. They are teaching customs that are illegal for us Romans to practice. A mob quickly formed against Paul and Silas, and the city officials ordered them stripped and beaten with wooden rods. They were severely beaten, and then they were thrown into prison. The jailer was ordered to make sure they didn't escape.

So the jailer put them in the inner dungeon and clamped their feet in the stocks, and then we find what transpired later. It says, around midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God. The other prisoners were listening.

Can you imagine this scene? I think we. We can just kind of see what's going on here. You can see Paul. He's being hounded by this woman.

She's telling fortunes, and she's making money for her masters, and as this occurs, day after day, Paul seems to grow increasingly bothered by the treatment that they're receiving, and this translation says, Paul got so exasperated that he turned on her and commanded the demon in her to come out. Other translations use words like grieved, sore, troubled, greatly disturbed, upset, distressed, bothered, fed up, and that he had a burst of irritation. So this is an event that even Paul struggled with in this moment, you know, to keep the peace that he exhibited daily in his ministry.

And what made it even worse, if Paul and Silas were convicted on false accusations, they weren't causing an uproar, and they weren't teaching anything that was unlawful, and as a matter of fact, they were both also Roman citizens. This never should have happened to them. Their mental calm and state of harmony were both absent momentarily, and yet when midnight rolled around, they had composed themselves, seen their situation, and we find them praying and singing hymns to God.

What an example to those who were listening and an example to us.

When we go through any problems, anything related to what Paul and Silas went through here, do we stop and do we pray? Do we sing a hymn to ourselves?

What happened to Paul and Silas when they did that is, they were at peace. They had personal peace and serenity even during this awful experience.

And there's one more story we'd like to look at, and that's the story of Jesus calming the sea, and this is recorded in Matthew 8, 23:27. The Phillips translation says, then he went aboard the boat and his disciples followed him. Before long a terrific storm sprang up and the boat was awash with the waves. Jesus was sleeping soundly and the disciples went forward and woke him.

Lord save us. They cried. We are drowning.

What are you so afraid about, you little Fates you. He replied. Then he got to his feet and rebuked the wind and the waters and there was a great calm. The men were filled with astonishment and kept saying whatever sort of man is this? Why even the wind and the waves do what he tells them.

What a contrast of peace and distress we find in this story. Jesus was a total rest and in total peace during this storm. As a matter of fact, it didn't even wake him up. The disciples on the other hand,

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seeing this storm surrounding them and fearing for them for their lives, were totally distressed and ran to the Master crying to them, lord save us, we're drowning. Well they weren't drowning yet, but there's a great lesson here.

You know, it's maybe easy to look at the disciples reaction in that boat and say they should have had more faith because they were with Jesus at the time. But the fact is that we can all fail in moments of trials if we take our eyes off of the Master. When Jesus said ye of little faith in this scripture, it was true in that moment of them. But after receiving the peace of Christ and the Holy Spirit, these same men became ambassadors for Christ, accepted and lived with the peace of Christ the rest of their lives.

So should it be for us. Don't let the failings of a moment define you.

If you lose your anger, if you lose your peace of mind. Don't let that moment, in a time of crisis, define who you are. Instead, pray to the Heavenly Father and sing hymns of praise. Ask for peace and it will be given to you.

There's a scripture says, ask and it will be given you. Search and you will find. Knock and the door will be open for you. The one who asks will always receive. The one who is searching will always find.

The door is opened to the man who knocks. Dear brethren, we don't live in a world where there's peace. But through Jesus Christ we have access to the peace that he left us. All we have to do is ask for it. That means focusing our mind on the Master, focusing our mind on the example of his life and the words he gave us to live our lives.

And so as Jesus calmed the seas, he also calmed the disciples from the beautiful hymn. Master, the tempest is raging. We read these words, and this is after they heard the words of Jesus, after he had sort of softly rebuked them, saying, ye of little faith, as he calmed the sea. The words of the hymn say, master, the terror is over. The elements sweetly rest.

Earth's sun and the calm lake is mirrored and heavens within my breast linger. O blessed Redeemer, leave me alone no more, and with joy I shall make the blessed harbor and rest on on the blissful shore. The winds and the waves shall obey Thy will. Peace, be still.

Whether the wrath of the storm tossed sea, or demons or men, or whatever it be, no waters can swallow the ship. Where lies the master of ocean and earth and skies, and shall all sweetly obey Thy will. Peace, be still, Peace be still, and shall all sweetly obey thy will.

Peace, peace, be still.

And so, dear brethren, as we come to a conclusion of our thoughts, we reference these beautiful words in Philippians 4, 7, and the peace of God which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus, and we appreciate this especially knowing where we live in God's plan. When the world is under the dominion of Satan, we have the peace of God and the peace of Christ which passes all understanding, and so, dear brethren, may the Lord bless you and protect you.

May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you, and may the Lord show you favor and give you peace. Amen.