

Peace





## Core Truth: God gives PEACE!

Scripture: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33

Let's talk about what peace means:

Peace means a calmness from within. Peace means you don't have to worry or be scared. You can feel

calm- inside and out. Our peace comes from God.



This verse tells us that we will have trouble in this world. Let's name some things that can be hard for us: learning new skills, change, being told no, having to do things someone else's way- these are all hard.

But the verse tells us that we get to have peace! Why? Because Jesus has overcome the world. How did He overcome the world? By dying on the cross for our sins and coming back to life 3 days later- defeating death. Because of this- we get to have peace in the midst of hard things. God gives us peace through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will provide you with peace when you need it.

# God gives PEACE!

## Let's Talk About It!

How can we ask God to give us peace?

- By praying.
- By worshipping Him.
- By relying on Him even when it is hard.

## Apply It!

How can we show peace to other people?

- Pray for people.
- Help them in times of need.
- Point them to Scripture for guidance.

## Prayer

Dear God,

We thank You for peace. We thank You that because You have conquered the world, we get to have peace. Help us to rely on You for peace this week and allow us to show others the peace that You provide. We love You, Lord.

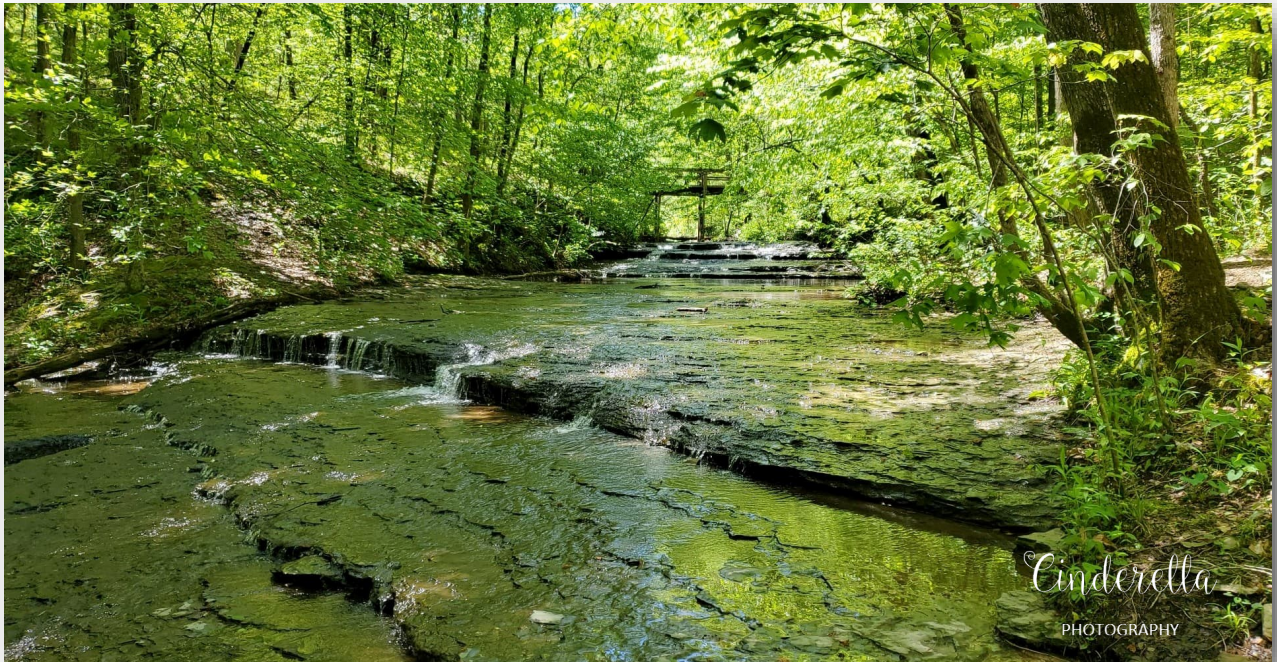
In Jesus' name,

Amen

~ Rebecca Robertson Holloway

*The Lord bless you and protect you;  
the Lord make His face shine on you,  
and be gracious to you;  
the Lord look with favor on you  
and give you peace.*

*Numbers 6:24-26*



Beaman Park  
Near Joelton, TN

*Don't worry about anything,  
but in everything,  
through prayer and petition  
with thanksgiving,  
let your requests be made known to God.  
And the peace of God,  
which surpasses every thought,  
will guard your hearts and your minds  
in Christ Jesus.*

*Philippians 4:6-7*



*Cinderella*  
PHOTOGRAPHY

Dunbar Cave

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,  
 When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
 Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,  
 It is well, it is well with my soul.

Refrain: It is well with my soul,  
 It is well, it is well with my soul.

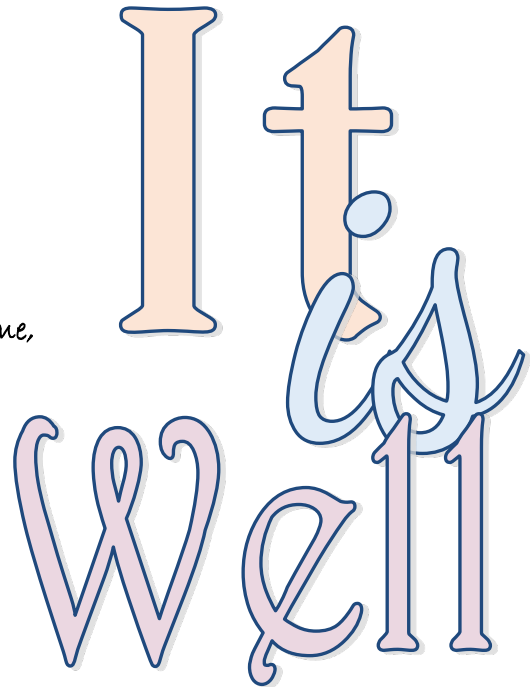
Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,  
 Let this blest assurance control,  
 That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,  
 And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

My sin —oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!—  
 My sin, not in part but the whole,  
 Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,  
 Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

For me, be it Christ, be it Christ hence to live:  
 If Jordan above me shall roll,  
 No pang shall be mine, for in death as in life  
 Thou wilt whisper Thy peace to my soul.

But, Lord, 'tis for Thee, for Thy coming we wait,  
 The sky, not the grave, is our goal;  
 Oh, trump of the angel! Oh, voice of the Lord!  
 Blessed hope, blessed rest of my soul!

And Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight,  
 The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;  
 The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,  
 Even so, it is well with my soul.



~ Horatio G. Spafford, 1873

Music by ~ Philip P. Bliss

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*"Peace I leave with you.  
My peace I give to you.  
I do not give to you as the world gives.  
Your heart must not be troubled or fearful.  
John 14:27*



*Kristi Huang Photography*

Sebago Lake, Maine

## Finding Peace by Way of Spilled Milk

I had military experience. Three university degrees. A great job. A wonderful husband with whom I'd travelled the globe.

According to the world's standards, I'd "arrived." But what hadn't arrived was peace.

Weren't my achievements, experiences, and paychecks supposed to bring closure to all those years of hard work? That's what I'd been led to believe. Except "peaceful" was not on the list of adjectives I'd use to describe my heart, my soul.

I kept my job after becoming a first-time mom at age 33. Between working, taking care of a newborn, and keeping house, peace was more elusive than ever.

I quit my job. I raised my son. We adopted a special needs orphan, Coen, from China.

Within 18 months of bringing Coen home, he had over 100 medical appointments and 3 surgeries. He was diagnosed with tuberculosis and autism. Meanwhile, my biological son, Findlay, was diagnosed with ADHD and a speech disorder. Peace wasn't just elusive; it fled from me like a taunting fugitive with its thumbs in its ears, fingers wiggling, tongue sticking out.

I spent long days homeschooling the boys; cleaning spills and messes; threatening harsh punishment for errant behavior; driving the boys to their speech, occupational, physical, and feeding therapies; cooking; shopping; crying.

"Look how low these kids have brought me," I thought one day as I cleaned up yet another cup of spilled milk on the floor, hurrying so we wouldn't be late for autism therapy again. "I once had my own office with my name on the door. I had prestige and an income. Now I spend my days – and nights – as a maid to two ingrates."

Suddenly that still, small voice – the one to which I'd unwittingly become deaf in recent months and years – whispered gently in my ear. "*This*



*is what I created you to do.”*

What? I was created to be a milk-cleaner-upper? A teacher, chauffer, cook, parole officer, cleaning lady, and night watchman? No, that’s not right. I was created to be educated, work, travel, do what I want with my time, money, energy.

That gentle voice again. *“This is what I created you to do. No matter the plans you made, my good and acceptable and perfect will for you was always this.”*

And that was my epiphany. I had grand plans for my life, and I carried them out. They led to some happiness and satisfaction. But they did not lead to the deep, lasting peace that every soul on earth hungers for. “Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.” I finally understood the meaning of Matthew 10:39.

I prayed for help shifting my perspective from the world’s view of success to God’s. I began following the commands in Philippians 4:6-8 to be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let my requests be made known to God, so that the peace of God – which passes ALL understanding – would guard my heart and mind in Christ Jesus. Slowly, God has answered, and continues to answer, those prayers.

These days, I might still feel frustration welling up while I’m cleaning the umpteenth mess of the day, but God speaks to my heart amidst the slop and noise, reminding me that whatever it is I think I’m missing – watching TV, relaxing with a book, pursuing a career – in order to do this thing for my kid, it isn’t worth a second thought. It’s for THIS very thing He created me. He created me to be a Mama to two boys, one of whom will likely grow up and move out, the other, always need me. He created me to do all the things necessary to raise two boys who know that they are loved with a love that exceeds our human understanding – loved by me and their dad, and, most importantly, loved by God. So when I am finished cleaning up one kid’s spilled cereal only to find that the other kid drew on the wall, God gently reminds me that it is at this very moment that I am fulfilling the very purpose for which He created me. And in realizing this truth I have found the sincerest sense of purpose I have ever known.

It doesn't make sense by the world's standards, but the less I live for me, and the more I live for God, my kids, my husband, and others whom God has put in my life to help, the deeper peace takes root in my soul. And who wouldn't want that?

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*Pray and ask God to reveal to you where you might be seeking the world's way to peace, and ask him to lead you instead toward his methods for finding peace.*

*Bible passages on peace:*

*Galatians 5:22-23*

*John 14:27*

*Philippians 4:4-8*

*Colossians 3:12-17*

*Hebrews 12:14*

*1 Peter 3:11*

*John 16:33*

*Psalms 4:8*

*Psalms 29:1*

~ Kelly O'Sullivan

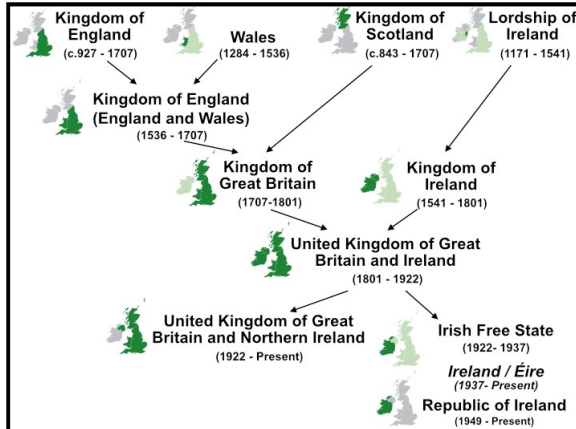


*You will keep in perfect peace  
the mind [that is]  
dependent [on You],  
for it is trusting in You.*

*Isaiah 26:3*

## He Himself Is Our Peace—Race Relations

Our human nature works against us. Not only before, but even after we know and follow Christ Jesus we still don't get along with others. We are selfish and unkind and clannish. We've seen it most recently in the



news, but it has always been part of our fleshly nature. I hope I don't insult anyone with my example, but look at the "United" Kingdom. I won't even try to explain this graphic. Just know that the people living in less than 94,000 square miles (about twice the land area of Tennessee) have divided themselves

up into several countries. Or rather—they never came together as one country. They are all Caucasian, but many still speak Welsh, Gaelic or Cornish instead of English. They live only miles apart but they often don't get along—and I don't think they really want to....

I'm not telling you this to disparage our friends across the ocean, I'm just pointing out that people will divide themselves up into clans even if, on the outside, they seem very much alike.

The early church was made up of people from all across the Mediterranean, Northern Africa, Western Asia.... And it was made up of people from countries that really didn't like each other. In fact, they were often at war with each other. It

*For He Himself is our  
peace, who made both  
groups into one, and broke  
down the barrier of the  
dividing wall*

*Ephesians 2:14 NASB*

was only the *Pax Romano* that kept them from attacking each other and trying to steal each others lands and carry off captives as slaves.

It was in this context that the Apostle Paul wrote Ephesians. The first

*There is one  
body and  
one Spirit...  
one hope  
one Lord  
one faith  
one baptism  
one God and  
Father of all*

Christians were Jews, but soon the Good News of Jesus found Gentile followers. This should have been a big problem in the church. The Jews knew that they were close to God because of the Covenant with Abraham. The Gentiles were far away, “strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12)

Because of the work of Jesus, those who were “far off” were brought near (Eph. 2:13), He (Jesus) made the two groups into one—establishing peace (Eph. 2:15), reconciled them both into one body to God through His death on the cross (Eph. 2:16), and, quoting Isaiah 57:19, Paul explains that Jesus came and preached peace to those who were far away and to those who were near.

There will always be division among people, nations, communities—even next door neighbors. How can these groups get along? It is possible when we all follow Jesus. We find unity in the Holy Spirit. Later in Ephesians (chapter 4) Paul instructs us to be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Rather than me doing a somewhat OK description of the beginning of Ephesians 4, I’ll just print it here.

Ephesians 4:1-6 “I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to walk worthy of the calling you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, accepting one another in love, diligently keeping the unity of the Spirit with the peace that binds [us]. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope at your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.”

*walk worthy of the calling  
you have received*

This “oneness” that we seek as a nation can’t happen without the peace of Christ. Then we, as followers of Christ must diligently keep the unity of the Spirit.

Only the Holy Spirit can make “one” out of those far and near.

Only the Holy Spirit can empower us to walk worthy of our calling and to accept one another in love.

Only the Holy Spirit can give us the love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness and self-control that is needed for race relations to be healed. Peace between races, nations, political parties, (any other groups at odds with each other) is not possible apart from Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit.

This is how God’s people can bring peace to our world:

“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you.” Ephesians 5:1-2

~ R. Lyndel Littleton

## Peace

Philippians 4:7-8 tells us that the peace of God will guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus. And that we should think on whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy. I think that our thoughts are key to having peace. The following is a song I wrote several years ago about keeping our thoughts on Jesus. The prose, following the song, is my way of expressing the song in a different format.

*Jesus oh Jesus, I think of you whene'er I see a sky of blue.  
And when raindrops fall upon my brow,  
I know the sun shines above the clouds.  
Bright days or clouded view... Jesus I think of you.*

*Morning light gently slips o'er my bed.  
Thoughts of you Jesus fill my head.  
And when shadows fall and sleep is near,  
I know tomorrow you'll still be here.  
Night shades or morning dew... Jesus I think of you.*

*Jesus, oh Jesus, I think of you when all is well and troubles few.  
And when battles rage within my soul, I know my Savior is in control.  
Trials and blessings too... Jesus I think of you.*



North Shore, Oahu, Hawaii

When I look out and see a beautiful sky of blue, I think of Jesus... the One who made the sky. But when it's cloudy and raining I know that God created this for our benefit, and I think of Jesus... and that brings peace to my mind. Whether the days are bright and sunny or cloudy and gloomy, I think of Jesus... the One who made it all and controls it all. These thoughts bring peace.

In the morning, as I rise, the light of day slips over my bed and thoughts of Jesus fill my head. Later, when night shades fall and I am about to go off into dreamland, I don't fear, because I know tomorrow he'll still be here. Night shades or morning dew, I will think of Jesus... the one who watches over me day and night.

I think of Jesus when all is well and troubles are few, but when battles rage within my soul I know my Savior is in control... and I think of Jesus. When we are experiencing blessings, trials, temptations, when life is good or life is hard...we need to focus our thoughts on Jesus... the One who really, truly, loves and cares for us.

~ Don McElroy





Andy Milam Photography

Rio Cávado, Portugal

## Lean In

“May the Lord of peace himself give you peace always in every way.  
The Lord be with all of you.” 2 Thessalonians 3:16

Tears stream down my face, soaking my shirt, as I make the thirty-minute commute to work. As I attempt to reign in my emotions, my mind replays the struggles of the morning.

The memory of my youngest daughter’s little arms clinging to my waist as she begged me not to leave haunts me.

My concerns associated with our son as he struggles to obey classroom rules fills me with worry. Because it’s been a hard transition.

The argument with my husband over who-knows-what makes me wonder if we will survive. I know we will, but it won’t be easy.

Returning to work after seven years of raising babies has been more stressful than I imagined.

I’m being pulled into a hundred different directions, much like many of you.

*Mommy guilt is real.*

I feel guilty that I’m missing the baby’s first day of kindergarten.

I feel guilty that I missed our son’s first bus ride.

I feel guilty that I can’t pick our teen up from school.

I feel guilty that my husband packs the kids’ lunches instead of me.

*Let me say it again: Mommy guilt is real.*

But instead of fretting, allowing my emotions to overtake me, I pray. I lift my concerns to Jesus and He calms my heart.

I pray and He provides peace.

It's a process, this casting of my worries on the Lord. One I find myself doing over and over.

Because I'm in a hard season. On so many fronts. Maybe you're in a hard season too.

I feel assaulted by the enemy. On so many levels. Maybe you feel assaulted too.

I recently heard Chrystal Evans Hurst say that God wastes nothing. Even the hard things. And I know He isn't wasting our family's current struggles.

We may not understand what He's up to, but whatever it is, our situation won't be wasted. We can learn and grow. We can minister to others who are also struggling. And we can remind ourselves that it's just a season.

But most importantly, we can lean into Jesus, trusting Him. That's what I want to do today. Because otherwise, I will sink into my fears and worries. Into despair.

I want to lean into Jesus.

I *need* to lean into Jesus. Because He is peace.

*"Help me lean into you today, Jesus. I want to trust in your peace, knowing that this season will not be wasted. You are a good Father. Thank you for your love."*

~ Adrienne Terrabonne

