

Where Is Peace?

John 16:33

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FOCAL Read Together John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

In Charles Colson's newest book called *The Faith*¹ he wrote:

“On a number of occasions I have stopped in the middle of giving talks and asked, “What is Christianity anyway?” At one dinner in the Bible Belt, the group of mature believers hesitated for what seemed like a full minute of painful silence. No one volunteered.”

Colson went on to say, **“If we don't know what we believe – even what Christianity is – how can we live it and defend it? Our ignorance is crippling us.”**

What is “Christianity”? Is it just one religion among many, one way to God among many others?

Here's the simple definition of Christianity: We are all spiritually dead and disconnected from God without Christ. Only in Christ can we have peace with God. Once we come to understand this and surrender to this truth – calling upon the Name of the Lord Jesus – Christ comes into our lives. From that point on the Christian is attached to God, and God will work in that person's life to make us like Christ in how we live our daily lives.

¹ ISBN-10 0-310-27603-9, quote from page 28

The Bible says:

Ephesians 2:13 But **now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.**

You were far off (prior to Christ) but are now **made near to God by the Blood of Christ.** You now – if you are a Christian – belong to God and are part of His family. And everything – EVERYTHING that goes on around you and to you happens because God is forming Christ in you (**Colossians 1:27**). As God forms Christ in the believer the believer becomes a change agent in the world.

We become Christ's hands and feet. We carry on His work of spreading the Gospel and sharing His love with as many as will hear. In the early Church Christians were horribly persecuted. They were thrown to lions, and made bloody impaled spectacles for the jeering pagan crowds. Yet these believers continued to be like Christ, and our faith stood though the Roman Empire fell under the weight of sin.

God cannot change the world with half hearted believers. He needs a people who are willing to be like Jesus. May God touch your hearts as we examine Christ's message.

1. In Christ Is There Peace

Jesus was very specific when He said:

FOCAL John 16:33 ... **IN ME ye might have peace**

People seek peace from many different sources, but Jesus said “**in ME – ME alone is where peace is**”.

Why do we have trials and tribulations? If there really were a loving God, then why would He allow all the suffering that we see in the world today?

This has been a question that people have asked ever since we have been on this planet. People who want to disprove God will often point out trials and tribulations as if to drag God before some non-existent judge to accuse Him. God is not the problem. Man is the problem. The Bible tells us that God made everything perfect and flawless, and in the middle of this perfect flawless creation

Genesis 2:15 ... **the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.**

Adam was in charge of all that God made. Adam was told to **dress** or plow the earth, and to **keep it**. That word we translate "**keep**"² literally means "**to guard, to protect, and oversee it**". God gave Adam control of the earth, so much so that *every animal* the Lord made was brought to him "**to see what he would call them**" (**Genesis 2:19**). Adam was in charge, the earth and all

2 H8104, שָׁמַר, *shâmar, shaw-mar'*, A primitive root; properly to *hedge* about (as with thorns), that is, *guard*; generally to *protect, attend to, etc.*: - beware, be circumspect, take heed (to self), keep (-er, self), mark, look narrowly, observe, preserve, regard, reserve, save (self), sure, (that lay) wait (for), watch (-man).

creation was in his care. What Adam said was the way it was, and Adam had free will to do as he pleased.

Adam did the wrong thing. Rather than **guard** the creation Adam did that which God forbade. His sin against God brought a curse on Adam's children, the animals, and the very ground itself. We read:

Genesis 3:17 ... Because thou hast ... eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: CURSED IS THE GROUND FOR THY SAKE; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

The very **ground was cursed** because of Adam's sin. The Bible tells us that

Romans 8:20-21 ... the CREATURE was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, {21} Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

There is coming a day when Creation itself will be redeemed from the sin that Adam thrust on it, but until that day **creation groans**. Not only is it true that:

Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Nature itself is corrupted with sin. The Apostle John wrote "**the whole world lieth in wickedness**" (**1 John 5:19**). We have tornadoes, hurricanes, and tsunamis because of Adam. Wicked people do wicked things because of Adam. Sin has imbalanced the world – where is balance and peace?

Only in Christ. The Bible tells us

Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

The word "**justified**" means "**to declare innocent that which was guilty**". Adam broke the peace with God and the sin that entered into his life separated him and his children from God. God is absolute in His holiness, and Someone had to pay for Adam's transgression. That Someone was Christ. **Billy Graham** rightly said,

"I'm not going to Heaven because I've preached to great crowds of people. I'm going to Heaven because Christ died on that Cross. None of us are going to Heaven because we're good. And we're not going to Heaven because we've worked. We're going to Heaven because of what He did on the Cross".³

In Jesus we have peace. We are far away from God by our natural birth, but we are brought near to God by the Blood of Jesus Christ. The Scripture says:

Ephesians 2:14-17 For {Jesus} is our peace, who hath

³ The Quotable Billy Graham, page 93

made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; {15} Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; {16} And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: {17} And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

Jesus said "In Me you might have peace".

2. In Christ There Is Overcoming Peace

FOCAL John 16:33 ... In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

The "you" that Jesus was directly addressing at this time was His Apostles.

A lot of people look at the Apostles as if they were some sort of "Super Christians". They really weren't.

These men had some great characteristics. When Jesus said

Matthew 4:19 ... Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

Peter and Andrew left their nets, as did James and John. Matthew walked away from his tax collection

business, and John Mark left a widowed mother to follow the Lord. They had good qualities - but they also had the same sin nature that all humans have.

These men sat at Jesus' feet, heard Jesus' teaching, but Christ was not formed in them.

They argued among themselves as to who would be greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. At one point James and John sent their mother to Jesus, saying:

Matthew 20:21 ... Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

When the little children came to see Jesus the disciples tried to send them away. Jesus said:

Matthew 19:14 {allow the} little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

When the Apostles found Jesus speaking to a Samaritan woman at a well (John 4:27) they were astounded that the Lord talked to such a lowly person. When Jesus began to tell His Apostles that He was going to Jerusalem to be "killed, and raised the third day" Peter rebuked Him:

Matthew 16:22 ... saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

To which Jesus replied,

Matthew 16:23 ... Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

These men – sincere in their faith – just weren't getting it. Why? Because when they walked with Jesus, slept with Jesus, listened to Jesus, **they suffered no true adversity**. Jesus told His Apostles:

FOCAL **John 16:33 ... In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.**

You shall have tribulation. Things will be against you. People will mock you, will falsely imprison you – **but look up! I have overcome the world!** Jesus told His disciples in the Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 5:11-16 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. {12} Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. {13} Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. {14} Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. {15} Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the

house. {16} Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Did you notice the order in which Jesus preached? **“Men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you FOR CHRIST'S SAKE”**. What should your response be? **“Rejoice, for great is your reward”**.

Now notice what comes next: **“You are the salt of the earth”**. You cannot be salt unless you are mined! **“You are the light of the world, a candle”**. You cannot be a candle unless you're willing to be burned! Tribulation is used by God to shape the Christian for service. Tribulation drives the believer into the open arms of the Savior Who has overcome the world!

The Apostles could not truly be the Apostles until Christ was formed in them. Christ could not be formed in them until tribulation cut away their self sufficiency. The Lord says:

Jeremiah 17:5-8 ... Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. {6} For he shall be like the {tumbleweed} in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. {7} Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. {8} For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that

spreadeth out her roots by the river ..

The Apostles had to be tried. Everything that they had learned, every doctrine placed in the hearts by the Faithful Master, must now be tested. Jesus told His Chief Apostle:

Luke 22:31-32 ... Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: {32} But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and WHEN THOU ART CONVERTED, STRENGTHEN THY BRETHREN.

Simon would be converted from his arrogance and self sufficiency by trial. Simon told Jesus:

Luke 22:33-34 ... Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. {34} And {Jesus} said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

The “I” must go in Simon Peter before Christ can be formed in him. He would not be the lead Apostle in the early Church until the fire of trial consumed the chaff of his self confidence.

Following the Resurrection of Christ Simon Peter – along with the other Apostles – would be different men. The fire of trial would prove **Judas Iscariot** to be a false Apostle, and would bind the other eleven together in a tight knit group. These men would see more trials. Just

as Jesus promised they would be persecuted, mocked, imprisoned, beaten, and yet with every trial they would flee to Christ. Simon Peter would later write:

1 Peter 1:3-7 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, {4} To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, {5} Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. {6} Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: {7} That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

The trials of life come – not because God hates us – but because God wants to drive us to Jesus. Oh Beloved of God, your peace is in Christ. You can – and will – overcome the trial if you flee to Christ.

3. Are You In Christ?

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Every trial, every tribulation has a purpose found only in

Christ. Are you in Christ? If you are in Christ the God is in you. He will give you strength as you go through life's storms. Jesus promised His people:

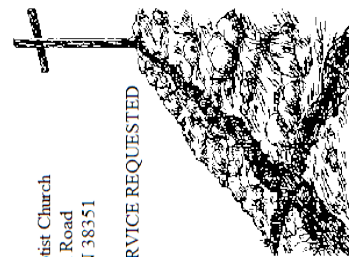
John 14:26-27 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. {27} Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

You can try to live your life without Christ, but you will never experience **the peace of God that passeth understanding**. This can only be found in Christ. The day that you call upon the Name of Jesus to be saved is the day that you cease being a free agent, and become to prized possession of God.

Adrian Rogers "The key to determining how much something is worth is how much someone will pay for it. That makes me want to shout because Jesus thought I was worth so much that He gave His life for me."

Jesus Christ gave His life for you – He wants you to call on Him and be saved. Do not let the trials of life break you or make you bitter towards God. Let the trials of life open your eyes to Him Who **loved you, and gave Himself for you.**

May God touch your hearts with His Word.



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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1. In Christ Is There Peace

Why do we have trials and tribulations? If there really were a loving God, then why would He allow all the suffering that we see in the world today?

John 16:33; Genesis 2:15; Genesis 2:19; Genesis 3:17; Romans 8:20-21; Romans 5:12; Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:14-17

2. In Christ There Is Overcoming Peace

John 16:33; Matthew 4:19; Matthew 20:21; Matthew 19:14; Matthew 16:22; Matthew 16:23; Matthew 5:11-16; Jeremiah 17:5-8; Luke 22:31-32; Luke 22:33-34; 1 Peter 1:3-7 _____

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