

Peace is something we all want. But very few have. As we watch the evening news what do we hear most about? Governments at war against their own people. Killing thousands and destroying their towns and homes as bombs and bullets rain down upon the INNOCENT. Many are left not only without homes but also without hope.

We are struck with horror as senseless drive by shootings and kidnappings bring tears of grief and outcries for justice in our cities.

Closer to home there is the parade of children and young people's faces on milk cartons. Those taken from their homes and playgrounds as they innocently walk or ride bicycles unaware of the evil around them.

Then there are the daily stories of abuse; to a wife, babies, children, the elderly and handicapped. The innocent and VULNERABLE taken ADVANTAGE of by those with power over them. The ones who are suppose to protect and care for them.

Our world, our countries and even our neighborhoods and homes are often filled with TURMOIL, injustice and hopelessness as jobs and homes continue to be lost. The world is most certainly a place without much peace. Job tells us what a life without peace is like.

Job 3:25-26 " What I feared has come upon me;
what I dreaded has happened to me.
I have no peace, no quietness;
I have no rest but only turmoil."

Not having peace may be having sleepless nights with tossing and turning or perhaps fear that leaves a hard knot in the middle of your stomach. A mind with memories that will not go away, constant struggle or sense of your life being out of control.

Certainly peace doesn't come with being really smart or very talented or successful by the world's standards. We've seen wonderfully talented stars lose their lives to alcohol and drugs. Name some of them. They seem to "have it all". But they have no peace.

Satan rejoices in this. He loves stealing our peace, keeping our lives in turmoil.

What circumstance in your life CHALLENGES your peace? Is it a certain relationship? Fear of what the future holds for you or your loved ones? Share this if you would like.

Where are we to find this peace we so desire? We cannot experience peace apart from God. A man cannot create peace in his own soul. Let's take a look at God's way of peace.

Colossians 1:19 "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him(Jesus) and through him (Jesus) to RECONCILE all things." What is God's "fullness"? It is His power and qualities all living in and through Jesus. So that Jesus might bring all believers to saving grace, to reconcile them with God. This is done by Jesus giving His life on the cross for our sins. What does it mean "all things"? Whether things on earth or things in heaven, peace is made through Jesus' blood shed on the cross. We are reconciled. Made peace with God.

Christ made peace possible between God and man. Because we are saved by our faith in Christ, He will present us to God in heaven. How will He present us?

v22 "But now he (God) has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation."

There will be no blame nor charges of sin against us when we come before God because of Jesus paying the price for all our sins by His death on the cross. Our faith brings forgiveness.

Ephesians 2:14 "For he himself is our peace." Yes He is! We can read about our peace as believers as it comes from Scripture: John 14:26-27 "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

We are to have total well being and inner rest of our spirit in fellowship with God. All true peace is God's gift to us as believers. The world can only express a longing or wish for such peace. But the peace of Jesus is real and present.

We cannot have the peace *of* God until we have peace *with* God. Christ's death was the price paid for our peace with God. What is the peace of God? Let's turn to Scripture to find out.

Philippians 4:7 "And the peace of God which TRANSCENDS all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." This peace is so great that it is beyond our human understanding. But God gives it to us to guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

We can have peace even when we are in a time of need. How do we do that?

- * Matthew 6:8 "your Father knows what you need before you ask him"
- * Matthew 6:25-32 "Seek first His kingdom...all these things will be given to you"
- * Romans 8:32 God "graciously gives us all things"
- * Philippians 4:19 "..put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you."

How do you feel about God's promise to "graciously give us all things?" Let's read: Matt 14:13-21 Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand.

We can bring it all together with this Scripture: Ephesians 3:20 "Now to him (God) who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his (God's) power that is at work within us".

Is there a need that you have placed before your PROVIDER?: Have you given Him *all* you have to offer, even if it's only a few loaves and fishes? Are you "sitting down" trusting and waiting PATIENTLY to receive it? Get your baskets ready ! He provides for our needs.

After the feeding of the five thousand Jesus asked the disciples to get into the boat and head to the other side of the lake. Let's read Matthew 14:22-33. This event shows us how to be fearless when our focus is on Jesus and not our circumstances.

When Peter changed his focus from looking straight "toward Jesus" he began to sink. He began to focus on his circumstances but Christ remained focused on Peter. When the waves began to threaten Peter's life, Christ was there--instantly. Christ didn't change Peter's circumstances to make them so Peter could bear them. Christ mastered them at the point they became impossible. Christ created perfect peace in the storm. Not Peter trying to save himself but Christ saving him. We can trust Jesus in all our _____.

Let's read Romans 15:13 aloud. "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Not the peace of the world for Isaiah 59:8 says "The way of peace they do not know".

Memory Verse: Romans 15:13 "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

IS THERE AN ACTIVITY TO AVOID? Avoid focusing on your circumstances. Not trusting God with our needs, fears, losses, and aloneness creates turmoil in our life. Trust Him.

WHAT DID GOD SHOW US TODAY?

- 1) There is peace that transcends all human understanding (Philippians 4:7)
- 2) The world does not know and cannot give this kind of peace (Isaiah 59:8), (John 14:27)
- 3) This kind of peace guards the heart and the mind (Philippians 4:7)
- 4) This peace belongs to Christ and is His to give. He offers it to us. (John 14:27)

What is the most important thing God has taught you about peace? How will you apply it?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

Prayer Request: _____

Word Study:

- 1) advantage: to benefit, gain or profit over others. The bully had an advantage in size.
- 2) challenges: special effort, demands more effort to get done. The challenges to peace is continuous arguing and not working together.
- 3) innocently; innocent: without moral wrong, to be pure in heart and thought. The innocent children were a target for the evil around them.
- 4) provider: someone who supports a person or family's needs. God provides for our needs.
- 5) reconcile: to be restored to favor with God and one another. God delivered us from sin and death through faith in Christ to a peaceful relationship with Himself. Also with one another.
- 6) transcends: to rise above, go beyond, exceed. God's love for us transcends all understanding
- 7) turmoil: confusion, to create a disturbance, disorder, disrupt. Satan loves turmoil in our life
- 8) vulnerable: open to being attacked, difficult to defend oneself. The children were vulnerable to abuse because of their innocence and trust.