

Seeking the Peace of Christ

Our world is anything but peaceful. One look at the nightly news is in stark contrast to a sense of peace we desire. Even in our personal lives, it is a struggle to find peace. Sickness, stress, and daily problems threaten our sense of peace. The busyness of the Christmas season adds to our uneasiness. Yet, Jesus came into our world to bring us peace.

Sometimes, we would like to escape to a little cabin in the woods and avoid all outside influences and pressures. The problem is that it doesn't solve the problem of finding peace. ***Peace is not the absence of problems; peace is the presence of Jesus in our lives.*** Unless we bring Jesus to the cabin in the woods, we won't experience peace. God's peace comes to us because of His presence in our lives, no matter where we are or what is happening around us.



Jesus is the solution to your quest for peace. As the events of your world create stress for you, turn your life over to Jesus. Make Jesus the focal point of your life and cast your worries onto Him. Keep Him constantly in your thoughts. Much of our stress is self-inflicted. Ask Jesus to forgive your sins and shortcomings, and He will. Then, let them go. Also, let God take away the external stresses of your life. The Bible says, *Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6-7).* In your prayers, be thankful for how you have been blessed instead of focusing on what you don't have. Doing this will change your focus from your situation to how God is already working through you.

In this world, we are taught to be self-sufficient. The busier, the better. We try to do it all ourselves. In effect, we put our faith in ourselves instead of trusting God. How is that going? We read in Isaiah, *You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you (Isaiah 26:3).* When we ignore God and try to do things ourselves, we face our human limitations, and we put stress on ourselves.

There will always be trouble in this earthly world. *I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world (John 16:33).*

The baby's birth we are about to celebrate highlights that Jesus came to earth to bring us peace. Let us place our lives in His hands. God's peace is the forgiveness of our sins, living our lives knowing that we are loved, and the promise of an eternal home when our earthly lives are done. We can be at peace because God's Grace is sufficient for us and He is with us, always.

Question: What keeps you from turning your life over to Jesus Christ and casting your worries and stresses onto Him?

Prayer: it is difficult to look beyond ourselves and seek Your peace. We are easily distracted and become self-centered as we try to solve the world's and our own problems. Let us focus our attention on you. Amen.

This is part of a devotional series designed for Advent. The Advent candle we light on December 10 is one of peace.