

Peace with tribulation

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you"

John 14:27

"In the world you will have tribulation"

John 16:33

Peace and tribulation together, sounds like a contradiction in terms. But our troubles are not the final word.

The wisdom of the world insists that peace is the absence of adversity, and adversity cannot include peace; but God tells us that adversity in tribulation gives us the opportunity for the peace that we can have by faith in Christ Jesus.

Less than 24 hours before Jesus was crucified, the disciples of Jesus were deeply troubled because Jesus was leaving them, so Jesus encouraged His disciples. And while Jesus Himself had been troubled, He spoke words of comfort to His disciples.

"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."

John 14:1-3

I will prepare a place for you where I am going. We will be together again. Your room will be ready in the Father's house. I will come again. Our Future is secured.

Our Father allows for His providential use of tribulation that is naturally in the world to disturb our complacency with the status quo, so that we can harness the peace that is with Christ to our hope that is in heaven.

The Holy Spirit of Jesus will be with us through our trials. Present strength is provided by the indwelling Spirit of Christ.

"that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides

with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you." John 14:17-18

Our relationship with Jesus is the same as His union with the Father; and Jesus said He will reveal Himself to us in our daily reality.

"In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him." John 14:20-21

We will live in the company of God. Our future hope is in Christ who is our present daily companion.

"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him." John 14:23

Jesus again promises to be with us to calm our anxiety. Suffering is not the end. Our future is guaranteed and our presence with Him is a done deal.

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. You heard that I said to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I." John 14:27-28

We may experience difficult and painful trials in the present, (John 16:1-2) but our connection with Jesus and our future in the presence of God is not in doubt.

We are not to let the affairs of the world rob us of our promise of the presence of God in our now, or deny our hope for our future dwelling in the presence of God. The world doesn't get the final say.

Jesus Christ has arranged our present and our future so, *"believe in God, believe also in Me."*

Have you lost someone you love? Has your future been taken from you? Have you been persecuted? Have you been faithful but wrongly accused?

Are you lonely? Do you need encouragement? Are you concerned about your future? Do you feel like you don't belong?

Do you know how to read?

The answer is here. It's all here in the words of Jesus in John's gospel. So don't despair, everything you need has all been arranged beforehand.

Don't let your heart be troubled, struggle is inevitable, the cross cannot be avoided, the narrow way is really very hard, but the presence of God makes it endurable until we join Him at Home.

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."
John 16:33

Tribulation is painful otherwise it is not a real test of our faith. God tests us to improve us, not to destroy us. The way of tribulation is often an eroding relentless pressure, some severe affliction, a heartfelt anguish, a heavy burden, unjust persecution and relentless trouble. But God uses it to make gold.

Therefore, our focus is not to be on how, when or why, or what specific tribulation we are facing, but our faith response is at the time of our tribulation the perseverance that gives a greater harvest of godliness.

The Scripture teaches that in Christ we will respond to trials with the perseverance of the faith, and that tribulation will work godly character in us and lead us to the hope in Christ that will anchor us steadfastly to His cross.

As the Romans 5:3-5 says, we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

From a human perspective, trials and tribulation are the unwelcomed intruder that strikes like a dark unrelenting cloud where many emotions

may overtake us, adding to the pressure. But the two emotions that are usually missing because we are mesmerised by the pressure are cheerful endurance and hope.

In the middle of our trials, we must turn our heart and mind to Jesus, so that we look to Jesus as the author and finisher of our faith. Is there anything in the whole creation, person, animal, thing, or achievement, that is to be more valued and desired than having the presence of God? No.

So, while we may lose something, or even everything that has been created, we cannot be separated from our creator and saviour Jesus Christ. We cannot lose our connection with God because God makes our connection with Him as our eternal reality.

In giving us faith in Jesus, God makes up for our loss in the world by dwelling in us by His Spirit who is our guarantee of eternal life in the presence of Jesus Christ who will come and abide in us until He takes us to be where He is. But only if we live by faith and not by sight.

The important thing is not what we can see in the world, but what we cannot see in the kingdom of God except by faith. Our Lord is in control. *"The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."* Job 1:21

Our concern should not be with what God gives or takes away. Our focus must be on trusting in God who is sovereign over all He does.

"Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Rom 8:35, 37-39

God works all things according to His will, but that does not mean we sit on our hands and do nothing. We have a responsibility to fulfil if we would enjoy the work of the Spirit. *"And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."*
Acts 5:32

Believing faith in Jesus Christ is separation from the demands of the world that insists that nothing else is important but what we see, so that we obey Him in all things. *"For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."*

Rom 8:5, 9-11

"Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory."

Col 3:2-4

Faith in Christ gives us peace in tribulation

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.
Heb 11:1

In the original Greek, the term *assurance* conveys the idea of “a firm foundation,” “the real being,” “the actual existence.” This means the unseen objects of our hope will become real and significant. This is a conviction that has force in the here and now according to what God has promised us in the future.

Right now, amid global catastrophes, wars, financial crisis, and social unrest, our world is gradually falling apart, but we can stand on the rock-solid, unshakeable promises of God’s security, rest, peace, mercy, grace,

and salvation. His Word can be trusted so we can overcome our anxiety by faith. We can have full confidence in the Lord's promises because they are real and a firm foundation for this life we must walk in the darkness until He takes us home.

The faith which is the substance of the things we hope for, is also a strong force that supplies believers with the motivation to endure trials and hardships. True faith results in decisive obedience that anchors us to a living hope in Jesus our Lord. We have been rescued from the darkness and now we dwell in the light of the Lord.

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen."

Gal 1:3-5

"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."

Phil 4:6-7

"The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace."

Rom 8:6

"You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in You."

Isaiah 26:3

When we join our trust in God with the assumption that God will give us whatever we want in the world, we set ourselves up for disappointment. Jesus gives us many examples of difficult times to be endured by His disciples. He told His disciples that in the world they would have tribulation.

Trusting God means we have set our hearts to believe God, not our assumptions. And whatever may happen to us in our life on earth we know it is His will. When we insist on being in control of our life to maintain our comfort, we will sabotage God's desire to let us live in His peace.

When we choose worry about worldly things rather than standing firm in faith, we cannot live in peace. God invites us to cast our cares upon Him and then let go of them. 1 Pet 5:7

Living in peace is living with God by believing in what Jesus has told us. When we trust Him for our daily life, we will experience His continual goodness, knowing nothing can happen to us unless He has decided it is for our good. When we make the Lord our daily refuge, we begin to live in the peace of God. (Psalm 46:1; 62:8) This is the faith in Him that holds the secret to living in the peace of God: *“He that dwells in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust.”* Psalm 91:1-2

Life without intimacy with God is irrelevant

When we choose to live with Him by staying in constant communion with Him, we can remain peaceful, even when circumstances may not be to our liking. When we learn to talk with Him before our times of trouble, we find that His peace really does pass all human understanding when troubles do come, especially when our painful experience tests our faith for refinement. Being prepared is wise in the Lord. Phil 4:7

“Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy.” John 16:20

“Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you.” John 16:22

Peace in the midst of tribulation is available in Jesus Christ for those who love Him. In Him alone can we be satisfied. Faith in Christ gives us peace in adversity. The presence of the Light of God’s love will compensate us for what we lose in the darkness.

Whether our minds are fixed on Christ with us, or we have our minds blinded by the world, THIS will determine the extent to which we can

know the peace of God in the darkness of the world. We can't enjoy the peace of the presence of God if our minds are abiding in the world.

To know His peace we need to fix our eyes on the things above where Christ reigns. We need to seek Him with all our heart and mind.

For the mind set on the flesh is death. But the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace. The greater the light we have in Christ, the more we will be aware of the darkness that is opposing us in Christ in the world.

Peace is the icing on the cake of sorrow. There wouldn't be any need to talk about peace if there weren't difficult trials. The marriage supper of the Lamb was catered for by the cross of His sacrifice. Peace is the cream in the bitter cup of suffering.

For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

Rom 11:36

Nothing happens by accident in the kingdom of God's Shepherd.

'Having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will.'

Eph 1:11

'every decision is from the LORD.'

Prov 16:33

"I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me."

Psalms 23:4

Tribulations are the carefully laid pavement on the narrow way. *"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."* *"Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me."*

Matt 5:10-11

Jesus did not contradict Himself when He said: *"In the world you will have tribulations"* i.e. There will be times of adversity; So, *"My peace I give to you"* that is because, *"I go to prepare a place for you"*

"Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we do not have a lasting city, but

we are seeking the city which is to come. Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name." Hebrews 13:12-15

We don't like to experience tribulation, but since by its perseverance we grow in holiness and truth, it would seem that we should welcome the prospect of more trials so that we are transformed into the image of Christ more quickly.

This being the case 1 Thess 5:18 makes perfect sense. *"in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."*

And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. Rom 5:3-5

Whatever the Christian suffers in this life, God intends it to be for our good.

"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." Rom 8:28

"For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified." Rom 8:29-30

And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it." Luke 9:23-24

The cross is the instrument of personal suffering, and Jesus shows us that suffering is the way to heaven's glory.

Suffering is the sharp knife that effects the circumcision of our flesh from the world. The good we want is life without suffering, but God's ways are not our ways.

We are weak and dependent children, so we pray for healing and recovery from adversity, but we are ready to give thanks to our Father for the exercise of His will in all things, knowing our circumstances are but an opportunity He uses so that we cleave more closely to Him.

Healing is not our greatest need, God is. Don't show me the outpatients' door, show me Jesus. If I just want my body comforted, I may be neglecting my soul. If I can have God, you can have my life in the world. This is "*My peace I give you*"

The purpose of this life is to sort the wheat from the chaff, the sheep from the goats, revealing those who will worship in spirit and truth.

Our Circumstances are only the secondary tool the Spirit uses to dig up the Gold.

"These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."
John 16:33

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful."
John 14:27

This is peace with tribulation. If we are in Christ, our destiny has already determined before the creation of the world.

"just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved."
Eph 1:4-6

No difficult circumstances on earth can change that. Be with peace. Be with Christ

The pruning knife hurts but the fruit is sweet. Holiness requires separation from the world. There is no point hanging on to the temporal because our future is with another, a heavenly realm. We may not understand at this time what is going on, but later we will rejoice with gladness.

For now, we trust in God our Father with all our heart, and we look to Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, because we will be like Him.

Peace + Tribulation = Glory

"The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me." John 17:22-23

The Peace from Christ that He gives for the days of trials is only visible with the spiritual eyes of faith. Stand Firm in the Faith. Man the ramparts. Awaken the sleepers. The King is coming. Praise the Lord in all things.

Trials and tribulations are the medicine that is intended to heal us from our addiction to the earthly realm. So trials will come against our health, our wealth, our faith, our emotions, and more importantly, our minds.

"Put to death therefore what is earthly in you:" Col 3:5 ESV

"put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him." Col 3:10

John Piper wrote:

"In other words, he says, "Christians, join Jesus in His sufferings!" Because Jesus suffered outside the gate, move out from the camp of security and familiarity and ease, and be willing to bear reproach with Him on the Calvary road. And because He died there to sanctify you, do this not in your own strength or virtue as a mere act of imitation; do it in the strength and holiness that Christ purchased for you in His death."

Abide in Him

Living water resources
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