

**Russell Kelfer**

# **Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled**

**551-A**

**Series: The Beatitudes**



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Note: Russell wrote each of these lessons in a manner that would enable him to clearly communicate them to his weekly class. The grammar or punctuation you encounter may not be technically perfect, but you will certainly “hear” his unique gift for making the message applicable to the common man in everyday situations.

It’s been said of him that he was really a writer who read his stuff. And that’s a very accurate statement!

May you be richly blessed as you “hear” as you read.

# Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled

## THE ENTRANCE OF INNER PEACE

We will continue our lessons on Matthew 5:9,

Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God. (Matthew 5:9)

We have spent time looking at how to have peace with God and live in harmony with man. But, what do we do when the storms of life blow in and the gale winds leave our lives in turmoil? How does the peace of God calm our fears, restore our faith, and leave us anchored to the Rock?

Jesus, as He talked to His disciples about leaving them, reassured them that He would leave them with the same peace they had seen manifested in His own life. In John 14:27 Jesus said,

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (John 14:27 NKJV)

The Amplified Bible says this,

“Peace I leave with you, My own peace I now give and bequeath to you: Not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Stop allowing yourselves to be agitated and disturbed. Do not permit yourselves to be fearful, intimidated, cowardly or unsettled.” (John 14:27 Amplified Bible)

The Living Bible paraphrases it like this,

“I am leaving you with a gift, peace of mind and heart. The peace I give isn’t fragile like the peace the world gives. So don’t be troubled and don’t be afraid. Peace, inner peace, is a gift from God. It is that tranquility of soul that finds itself unshaken by the storms of life from without and by the pressures of life from within. Peace.” (John 14:27 TLB)

Would you say that you have that kind of peace? Have you had it from time to time? Do you want it? If you don’t have it regularly, do you want it more consistently? Jesus says that it is yours, present tense possession. It is His desire that you and I

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experience that peace minute by minute, day by day, through all of the storms of life He deems to send us through.

Peace, heart peace, inner peace, what is it? What is peace?

- It is the heart of man in a reclining position.
- It is Jesus asleep in a boat while the storm rages and the disciples panic.
- Peace is Paul, thankful for the privilege to be a witness in chains.
- It is total surrender to the sovereignty of God and then total enjoyment of the life of God.
- Peace is a quiet prayer when the phone rings late at night.
- Peace is grace when your authority has been challenged.
- Peace is a relaxed spirit when the baby is sick, the car won't start, and your husband has to work late.
- Peace is rest when there is no visible fruit to your ministry.
- It is a gentle response to a harsh accusation.
- It is a soft, "Thank you Lord," when the check doesn't come in the morning mail.
- It is the absence of panic in a crisis.
- It is a river that flows through a Christian's heart watering his garden of hope while choking out the weeds of fear.
- It is Jesus with the steering wheel of your life.

Every Christian is called to be at peace. Every Christian is called to be a peacemaker. You may remember that we have studied that being a peacemaker has several connotations. The first is to lead others into peace with God. It is to that issue that we have addressed these lessons for the past two to three weeks. The second is to experience personally the peace of God in your heart. This is the peace that defies, as Scripture teaches, human understanding. We are to lead others to live in God's peace as well.

In this lesson we will look at that inner peace in four ways:

1- We will look at the entrance of inner peace. These are the terms of our treaty with God. What did we give up when we came to Christ, and what did we receive in return?

2- Next is the expression of peace. What is it? Where does it

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come from? What affects it in a positive way?

3- We will discuss is the enemies of peace. What spirits affect your peace in a negative way?

4- We will look at the experience of peace. We will look at Jesus and us in the storms of life.

### THE ENTRANCE OF INNER PEACE

Let's look at the entrance of inner peace. To fully understand where the peace of God comes from and how it is maintained, I believe we need to look at what really happens when man makes his peace with God. You will recall that man, because of sin, was in conflict with God. But, God's position has never changed. He was and He is 100% right. He never sinned. Man, apart from Him, was and is 100% wrong. We read in Scripture

There is none who does good, no, not one.

(Psalm 14:3b NKJV)

It is essential that we understand that, because He alone has the authority to dictate and regulate the terms of the peace treaty. It is not a no win compromise. The righteous won. Sin was defeated. We, as sin's slaves, surrendered to the Righteous One on His terms. He is 100% right. Yet, He died to make it possible for us to experience peace.

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

(John 15:13 NKJV)

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

(Romans 8:5 NKJV)

So God and God alone is qualified to set the terms of the treaty for peace.

Here is how it works. Jesus is speaking in Luke 14:31-33. I will read from the Amplified Translation,

“What king, going to engage in conflict with another king, will not first sit down and consider and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him that comes to him with twenty thousand?

“If he cannot do so, when the other king is still a great way off, he sends an envoy and asks the terms of peace.

“So then, whoever of you does not forsake, renounce,

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surrender claim to, give up, say good-bye to, all that he has,  
cannot be My disciple.” (Luke 14:31-33 Amplified Bible)

So God sets the terms, not us. Here are His terms: You relinquish the title to everything in this life, and He will give you the title to everything in the life to come. Those are His terms. It requires absolute surrender. You give up all rights to your life, to run your show, to guide your ship, to do your own thing. You surrender. You've lost the battle, but you have won the war. Here are some of the terms. Here is what we give up and what He gives us. As you signed the peace negotiation at Calvary, when you yielded your heart to Christ, this is, in essence, what you and I said to God.

### 1- We yielded our rights to acceptance. John 1:11 says,

He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

(John 1:11 NKJV)

Jesus goes on to say in John 15

The servant is not greater than his master.

If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.

If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

(John 15:16, 18,19 NKJV)

Jesus did not have the acceptance of the world, of the religious leaders, or of His own nation. You will be accepted in the beloved and accepted in the body. But the acceptance you always thought was needed from the world may never be yours. You gave up the title to it when you made your peace with God.

### 2- We gave up recognition. In Philipians 3 we see,

though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so:

7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.

Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ

and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in

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Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;  
that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection,  
and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His  
death,  
(Philippians 3:4, 7-10 NKJV)

I have a new identity. The old is worthless, now submerged in Christ, you rise in newness of life. But don't demand this world's recognition. You gave up title to that when you made your peace with God.

3- We gave up the right to prosperity when we made our peace with God. Now God may give it to you. Praise Him for that. He may take it back. Praise Him for that. He does not guarantee the Christian prosperity.

Now godliness with contentment is great gain.

For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.  
(I Timothy 6:6-8 NKJV)

And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."  
(Matthew 8:20 NKJV)

Food to eat and clothes to wear are guaranteed by God. But, you gave God the title to your house. If it burns, it was His house. Praise Him for it. You gave God the title to your car. If it breaks down, praise Him for it. It is His car. You gave God the title to your jewelry. If it is stolen, praise God. It is His jewelry. You gave God the title to your investments. If they go sour, praise God. They are His investments. You gave God the title to your insurance. If it doesn't pay, praise God for it is His insurance. He owns it all. Our problems are His problems, for we have no right of expectation. This is such a tough thing for us as Christians to realize. Not that we don't labor diligently. Not that we don't live in this world. Not that we don't strive to accumulate the things that we need. But, God has told us that the Scriptures have promised us all of the treasures of heaven, not all of the treasures of earth.

4- We have given up ambition. In Luke 14, Jesus says,

So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.  
(Luke 14:33 NKJV)

Philippians 2 says,

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Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. (Philippians 2:3-8 NKJV)

Ambition. Your goal in life may have been to be an artist or a musician, or a bookkeeper or an athlete or a businessman or a teacher. Now your goal ought to be to glorify God. You can do this as an artist or a musician or a bookkeeper or an athlete or businessman or a teacher or maybe not. There are no guarantees. You gave up the title to your ambitions when you made your peace with God. Now you become what He needs you to be. The key is that the title to all that the world holds dear, all that Satan offered to Jesus in Matthew 4, all that Satan offered to Eve in Genesis 3, all that Satan through God's permissive will took from Job in Job 1 and 2 is signed over to God. That is why Job's position should be ours. He lost his family, his friends, his possessions, his prestige, his business, his wealth and his health. Otherwise, he was in good shape. He said,

The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1:21 NKJV)

God often gives back for His glory possessions, children, loved ones, achievements and talents, but they are all gifts. They are free from the King who seeks first to further the kingdom and then all of these things are added unto us. What a bargain! He takes the title to the temporary and gives to us all that lasts. Surely to be surrendered to Him is ten thousand times ten thousands better than to be free under the reign of Satan.

So we signed over our temporal rights, but now we own the clear title to everything that matters. We have eternal life. We see in John 10,



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And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.  
(John 10:28,29 NKJV)

We read in John 17:2-3,

as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him

And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.  
(John 17:2,3 NKJV)

He gave us the title to His life.

He gave us forgiveness.

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace  
(Ephesians 1:7 NKJV)

In I John 1:9 we read,

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.  
(I John 1:9 NKJV)

He gave us the title to continuous cleansing.

He gave us the title to heaven. We see this in John 14,

In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

And 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 14:2,3 NKJV)

In Revelation 21 we read,

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."  
(Revelation 21:2-4 NKJV)

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He gave us the title to His home. He gave us the keys to the door. He gave us a guarantee. He gave us the title to His generator that makes the power go that makes the earth go. In Ephesians 1 we read,

...that you may know...

what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power

which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,  
(Ephesians 1:18-20 NKJV)

He has given us transformation of character. He has given us not only a new identity, but also a new nature. In II Corinthians 5:17 we read,

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, a whole new person. Old things are passed away, all things are become new.  
(II Corinthians 5:17 NKJV)

We read in Colossians 3:10,

And put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.  
(Colossians 3:10 paraphrased)

He gave us the title to His very nature, the very essence of His being.

He gave us His Holy Spirit to teach us, to guide us, to comfort us, to correct us. We see in John 14,

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—

the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

(John 14:16,17 NKJV)

He gave us a new family that we can read about in John 17:21-23. He gave us a birth certificate into the most beautiful family in the world's history. Look around you this morning and try to visualize that this whole group is part of your family. It is just a small part at that. We are from diverse situations, diverse circumstances, diverse parts of the world, various ages and various backgrounds yet all one in Christ Jesus. When we attend a Sunday School class or a church service, and begin to

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sing with unity, there is harmony and a joy that is unexplainable in human terms. Why? Because God has brought us into his family. It is a gift.

He has given us the Living Word.

For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them (John 17:8a NKJV)

The Word that God speaks is,

...living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12 NKJV)

The Word is alive and He has given us a lifetime subscription to the Book of Eternity Club.

He has given us food and clothing as we see in Matthew 6,

Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

(Matthew 6:25, 30 NKJV)

In Psalm 37:25 we read,

I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his descendants begging bread.

(Psalm 37:25 NKJV)

He gave us the title to God's Continental Dinner Club. All we will ever need, He will supply.

But, He has also guaranteed us tribulation. In John 16:33 Jesus says,

In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33 NKJV)

In I Peter 4 we read,

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;

but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be

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glad with exceeding joy. (I Peter 4:12,13 NKJV)

In Hebrews 5:8 we read,

though He (Jesus) was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. (Hebrews 5:8 NKJV)

In Philippians 1:29 we read,

For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,  
(Philippians 1:29 NKJV)

He has given us the title to share in His sufferings so that we can share in His glory.

He has given us perfect peace.

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (John 14:27 NKJV)

He has given us the title to rest when the rest are in conflict.

Finally, we wrap it up as He has given us all the treasures of the kingdom as we see in Ephesians 1:3,

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, (Ephesians 1:3 NKJV)

He gives us a blank check on the bank of the Spirit. Do you see the picture?

You and I live in occupied territory. The King is Jesus Christ. The kingdom is spiritual. Now you are not your own, because you have been bought with a price. You can live in the land as a bond slave of Jesus Christ, and you will experience perfect peace. But, every time and in every way that you and I scramble for control of our lives, the peace of God will leave. You and I must learn to live in occupied territory. We can learn to live in peace.

To enjoy peace, we must learn a few basic facts about it.

### THE EXPRESSION OF INNER PEACE.

Inner peace is the nature of God, so you can't get it anywhere else. You can't get it in some mystical communion with unnamed spirits. You can't get it through theories or books or counselors.

Now may the God of peace [Who is the Author and the Giver of peace]...

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...make you what you ought to be...

(Hebrew 13:20a, 21b Amplified Bible)

I Thessalonians 5:23 says,

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely;  
(I Thessalonians 5:23a NKJV)

He is the origin of peace. There is no peace apart from Him. The word has a counterfeit, but it is not real peace.

Peace is a gift from God. We see this in II Thessalonians,

Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. (II Thessalonians 3:16 NKJV)

In Galatians 5:22 we read,

The fruit of the spirit, the natural expression of God is peace.

(Galatians 5:22 paraphrased)

Inner peace is reserved for God's children so that no one else can have it. We read in Isaiah,

"There is no peace," says the Lord, "for the wicked."  
(Isaiah 48:22 NKJV)

Peace is the goal of God for every Christian, so He isn't pleased unless you are living in His peace. We see this in Romans,

For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,  
(Romans 8:6 NASB)

Inner peace must be developed in the Christian's life and maintained. Inner peace in the Christian's life is developed and maintained in these ways:

1- Peace comes from the Word of God. We see this in Psalm 119,

Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble.  
(Psalm 119:165 NKJV)

Have you ever had the experience that when your life began to be in a turmoil and the pressures poured in upon you and the circumstances ahead of you seemed to have no way out; as you sat down to open the Word of God, the Spirit of God through the Word of God spoke to you a Word of peace? That is where it comes from.

2- Inner peace is maintained by prayer. Philippians 4:6,7 is probably the clearest assessment of the contrast between peace and its counterfeit written in Scripture.

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Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

(Philippians 4:6,7 NKJV)

In other words, God takes from the Christian the right to worry in exchange for the right to pray.

3- Inner peace is maintained by meditation. Isaiah 26 says,

You (God) will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. (Isaiah 26:3 NKJV)

The word “keep” in this verse means to garrison about. This speaks to the person whose heart is focused, meditating in the Word and pouring himself back to God through the Word. His eyes are focused. His heart is fixed upon God.

4- Inner peace is maintained through tribulation, believe it or not. We see this in Hebrews 12,

No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

(Hebrews 12:11 NIV)

Isaiah 38:17 says,

Behold, my bitterness led me to peace. (Isaiah 38:17)

5- Inner peace is maintained by an act of the will. We see this in Colossians 3:15 paraphrased,

And let the peace (soul harmony which comes) from Christ rule (act as umpire continually) in your hearts

(Colossians 3:15 Amplified Bible)

These are the expressions of peace.

### ENEMIES OF PEACE

What are the enemies of peace? There are many. They are the gods of this world. They are the spirits of Satan whose goal it is to wrestle the reins of our lives from the hands of a sovereign God and put us emotionally at odds with God. Some of them are as follows:

1- Jealousy. This says that God is not sovereign or else God is not fair. So we desire to annul the assets and trade in our liabilities. We thus jerk away the control of our destiny from the

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One who makes no mistakes. But the Scripture says ,

But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, “Why have you made me like this?”  
(Romans 9:20 NKJV)

Do you possess a jealous spirit? It will crush your ability to experience the peace of God.

2- Fear. Fear says that God is not adequate to protect you. God says that fear is the antithesis of peace. If you have one, you lose the other. But the Scripture says in II Timothy 1:7,

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.  
(II Timothy 1:7 NKJV)

3- Worry. Worry says that God is not adequate to provide. Worry says, “What if...”, “What if...”, “What if...”. The Scripture asks, Are you a worrier? Philippians 4:6-7 again tells us that we are to stop worrying and start praying and praising, and we will have peace. This passage in the Living Bible says,

Don't worry about anything, instead pray about everything. Tell God your needs, but don't forget to thank Him for the answers.

If you do this, you will experience God's peace which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. This peace will keep your hearts and minds quiet and at rest as you trust in Christ Jesus.  
(Philippians 4:6,7 TLB)

Start praying. Start praising. You will have peace. Stop praising. Start worrying and the peace goes out the door.

4- Bitter spirit. A bitter spirit says that God is not adequate to work all things together for good. But Proverbs 14:18 says,

The spirit of a man will sustain him in sickness, but who can bear a broken spirit?  
(Proverbs 18:14 NKJV)

Are you still clinging to a root of bitterness? Are you not reconciled to your children? To your parents? To your enemies? To your competitors? To your accusers? Are you angry with God for the way your life has turned out? If so, I bet that you aren't enjoying the peace of God.

5- Guilt. Guilt says that God is not adequate to forgive. Guilt says that I John 1:9 is not big enough for your sins. Can you not believe that God has cast your sins as far from Himself as the east is from the west to be remembered against you no more? If

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not, you cannot enjoy the peace of God.

6- Discontentment. Discontentment says that God is not sensitive to our wants or omniscient where our needs are concerned. Philippians 4:11-12 says,

Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:

I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

(Philippians 4:11,12 NKJV)

7- Rebellion to another's authority. This says that God is not sovereign to use nations and men to maintain order and peace. Romans 13 says that the powers that be are ordained of God. Resist that authority and lose the peace.

### EXPERIENCING GOD'S PEACE

We have looked at our entrance, expression and enemies of peace. But the real key to the peace of God is experiencing it. As with so much of Christian doctrine, the end result is not to know more but to be changed more into the image of Christ. Many of you have been or will be caught up this week in the midst of one of the storms of life.

Perhaps a serious business problem affects you. Maybe the auditor will come in, scratch his head and say, "We misfigured, and we have lost a lot of money. We may not be able to go on." Perhaps there is a crisis in your family. Maybe your child does something you thought that no child of yours would ever do. Maybe a loved one develops a serious problem and you are crushed and your heart is broken.

Will you still have peace? Perhaps there is a call from the doctor. He says, "I have studied the X-rays. We have reconstructed your tests. You may have a serious problem. Can you come to the office tomorrow?" Your heart sinks. Will you still have peace? Perhaps you will get a call from your boss. He says, "Things are not going too well at the plant. We are going to have to have some personnel reductions. Will you stop by my office in the morning?" Your heart stops. Will you still have peace?

Jesus says in John 16:32-33 in the Amplified Translation,

Take notice, the hour is coming and has arrived when you



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will all be dispersed and scattered, every man to his own home leaving Me alone. Yet, I am not alone because the Father is with Me. I have told you these things so that in Me you might have perfect peace and perfect confidence. In the world you have tribulation, trials, distress and frustration. But be of good cheer and take courage, be confident, certain and undaunted for I have overcome the world. I have deprived it of power to harm. I have conquered it for you.

(John 16:32,33 Amplified Bible)

The world has some promises for us. They are in this passage. The world will send you spiritual warfare. We will have inner battles against the prince of darkness, but in the midst of it, God can give us peace.

The world promises you that it will send us persecution. We will be falsely accused, misunderstood and ridiculed. But in the midst of it, God can give us peace.

The world promises to send us uncertainty. We have inflation, terrorism, shortages, wars and rumors of wars. All that the world bases its security on will crumble, but, God can give us peace.

Amidst adverse circumstances physically, God can give us peace. We can be suffering from pain, disease or even a fatal illness. But, God can give us peace.

We may be having financial problems. Maybe a recession, a financial depression or a personal setback is happening in our lives. God can give us peace.

We may be in emotional turmoil. We may be depressed, discouraged or confused, but God can give us peace.

The portrait of God's peace amidst life's storms can best be seen in Mark 4:34-41. Let's read it from the Amplified Version.

He did not tell them anything without a parable; but privately to His disciples (those who were peculiarly His own) He explained everything fully.

On the same day when evening had come, He said to them, "Let's go over to the other side of the lake."

And leaving the throng, they took Him with them, just as He was, in the boat in which He was sitting. And other boats were with Him.

And a furious storm of wind, of hurricane proportions arose, and the waves kept beating into the boat, so that it

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was already becoming filled.

But He Himself was in the stern of the boat, asleep on the leather cushion; and they awoke Him and said to Him, “Master, do You not care that we are perishing?”

And He arose and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Hush now! Be still!” And the wind ceased and sank to rest as if exhausted by its beating and there was immediately a great calm, a perfect peacefulness.

He said to them, “Why are you so timid and fearful? How is it that you have no faith, no firmly relying trust?”

And they were filled with great awe and feared exceedingly and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?” (Mark 4:34-41 Amplified Bible)

There are some interesting facts in that passage of Scripture:

1- The move across the lake was His idea. Jesus knowingly took His children straight into the storm.

2- They were leaving the throng. The throng couldn't handle the storm. As it turned out, for the most part, neither could the twelve.

3- This was a maximum storm. This meant maximum grace. Have you ever learned to gauge the blessings of God on the intensity of the storm? The greater the storm is, the greater the grace. The greater the tribulation is, the more beautiful the deliverance. The greater the test is, the greater the power to deliver. The Christian, who walks in the Spirit, should see tribulation and the storms of life in that the greater they are, the more opportunity there is for the King to be exalted on His throne. The Scripture tells us that the storm was of hurricane proportion. The water was beating on the boat and filling it up so that it was about to sink. Then we see the Master. The Scripture says that He was in the back of the boat sound asleep. He was not unconcerned, but at rest. He was confident that nothing was without purpose and that nothing was out of control.

The disciples had our response. They came to Jesus and said, “Jesus, don't you care? Why did you let us get into a situation like this? How could you sleep through a storm like this? Jesus, there is something wrong! You don't love us like You say.” Does that sound familiar? We wouldn't say it in public, but how many times do we feel this way when those storms come. We control

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our emotions when we want to cry out, “God, that is not fair! If You cared, this would never happen to me! My children would not have this problem! My family would not have that problem! My finances would not be in that shape! Lord, I have done it all right and look what You have done!”

The interesting thing here is that Jesus had two choices as God always has. He could calm the storm, or He could calm the heart and let the storm run its course. If He calmed the storm, He performed a physical miracle. The world wants physical miracles. When they see them, all they want is more physical miracles. Or, God could calm the heart and perform a spiritual miracle. But that required the faith of His children. That would have born lasting fruit.

The world, instead of seeking more miracles would have sought the Spirit. But you see, the disciples were not ready for real peace. So first, Jesus rebuked the storm. That was no problem. Your problem is no problem for Jesus either. He rebuked the storm, then He rebuked the disciples. He said, “What is wrong with you? Why are you afraid? What is the basis for your fear? You do not believe that I am God.” They marveled that He could calm the storm. They never even knew that it was them He wanted to calm. They said, “Wow! What kind of God is this? Do it again.”

In the midst of a storm, bitterness says, “God, You could have prevented the storm.” Presumption says, “God, stop the storm.” Faith says, “My God sent the storm. My God can calm the storm. My God can see me through the storm. Oh, how I praise my God for the storm.”

You may be trapped right now in some kind of personal hurricane. May I remind you that God is strong enough to change the circumstances in a breath. He can speak a word to your storm and say, “Peace, be still.” He can give you back your marriage. He can give you back your job. He can give you back your health. He can do with that child of yours just what you ask. He can take away the pressure. He can stop the persecution. Like the disciples, you and I can cry out, “What kind of man is this that even the wind and the sea obey Him?” But, oh, the deeper truth, the deeper way that He has. He can speak a word of peace to our hearts and as the storm rages and the world looks on in amazement, we can crawl up inside of Jesus at the back of the boat and rest in perfect peace with no fear. We can do this,

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because the God of the heavens has control of the storm, control of the ship and control of each one of His saints.

When you finish this lesson, maybe some of you need to get alone with God to re-evaluate the terms of your treaty with Him. If need be, you can enter into the peace of total surrender for the first time. You can drive a stake in the ground. You can write a note in your book of remembrance that says, "On this date, I acknowledge that I am living in occupied territory. The responsibilities of the wars of life are no longer mine. Mine is but to stay in the eye of the storm, open the umbrella and have God's perfect peace."

When the storms come as they will, try this exercise of faith. Stop and pray this simple prayer, "Dear God, Here is another storm. Please put your arm about me and give me peace. Thank You, Lord, I have it. Oh, and about the storm, Lord, Thy will be done."

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