

God's Presence and Comfort

The current challenge is within the reach of God's presence, comfort and love.

Psalm 27:1-5:

The LORD is my light and my salvation—
whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life—
of whom shall I be afraid?

2 When the wicked advance against me
to devour[a] me,

it is my enemies and my foes
who will stumble and fall.

3 Though an army besiege me,
my heart will not fear;

though war break out against me,
even then I will be confident.

4 One thing I ask from the LORD,
this only do I seek:

that I may dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the LORD
and to seek him in his temple.

5 For in the day of trouble

he will keep me safe in his dwelling;
he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent
and set me high upon a rock

Spiritual Encouragement During This Hard Time

Many of us live lives of relative ease and comfort compared to so much of the world. Even our worst times don't include the famine, war, lack of water, or significant absence of security that much of the world regularly experiences. As we often remark, what we suffer are "first world problems." We have little experience with true hardship. So, there is panic over not having sufficient toilet paper (hardly a life changing deprivation), and then the panic is over a problem that does not even exist. It is true that many could get sick and that some vulnerable ones could even die from Covid-19; this is a real threat and should be taken seriously. We should not ignore the dangers or foolishly contribute to the spreading of the virus. We need to act responsibly. But in the end, it is likely that most of us will only have been inconvenienced for a time, not traumatized, and our present main concerns should be for those truly at risk. And, of course, as Christians we need always to be comforted by God's presence in our lives and in our world, especially when those around us are void of His peace.

As part of our Lent readings, this morning I was reading The Gospel of Mark. It struck me how often Mark states, demonstrates, and alludes to the authority of Jesus over evil in all its forms—whether demonic forces or the structures of religion dominated by human priorities rather than God's. Personally, I believe God in His wisdom allows many things freely to operate in our world, even events that bring hardship. But this does not mean that our world is not ultimately under His supervision and authority. This I find comforting, encouraging, and fostering of a profound hope about the present and the future.

Kelly Carter
Saturday, March 14, 2020

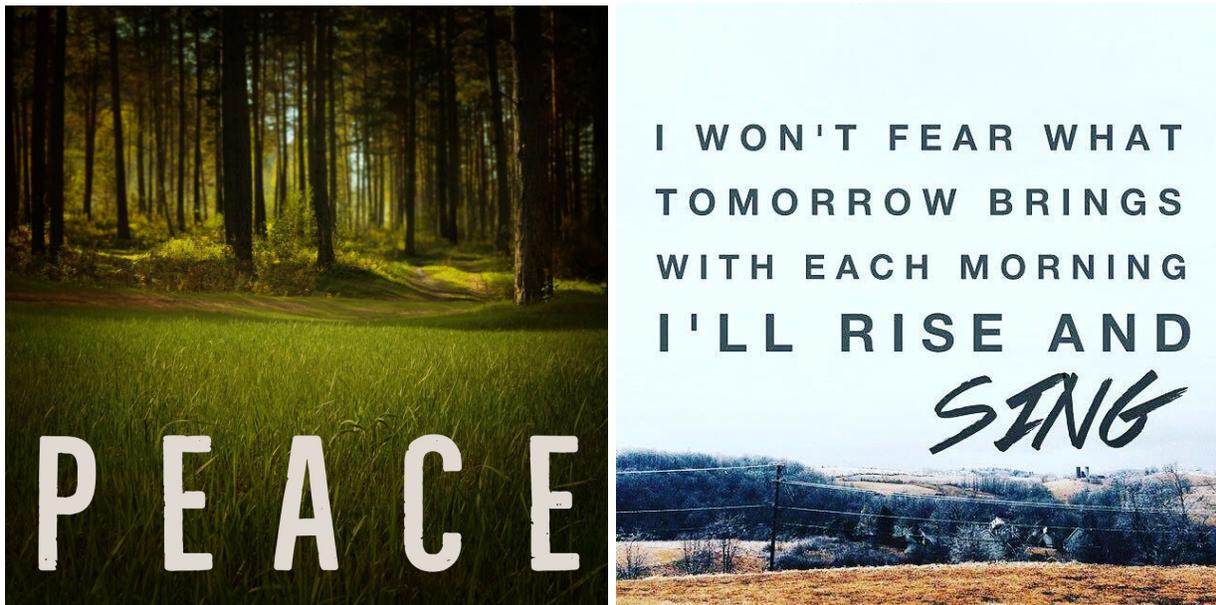
Church,

It is easy to understand the concern we all have about the current pandemic. Some reflections and a call for making the most of the Covid-19 challenge:

1. Our trust in the Father, Son, and Spirit even during the most difficult times is justified, needed, and will be encouraging to others. I pray God will fill you with His peace about all that is taking place. If you have anxious moments, prayer, a few moments of reflection in the quietness of the Spirit, or a few moments in Scripture will be helpful. We should be looking to the Lord, from whom comes our help.
2. If and when the virus more directly touches our lives and those around us, there will be opportunities for us to serve others, both by calming their fears and in actual acts of kindness. How can you bless others?
3. It is likely that some of us will find ourselves needing to self-quarantine for a period of time over the weeks and, likely, months ahead. If this is the case for you, let me encourage you to use some of your time for spiritual reflection and growth. There are many resources online that offer Scripture reading plans, podcasts, and informative, educational, Christ-centred literature that will be of encouragement and a source of spiritual formation and enrichment. Maybe this can be a time for resting in the Lord, for separating ourselves from busyness and frenzy, and for a turning to Christ through some classic spiritual disciplines that typically get set aside because of the hectic pace of life we typically have to endure.
4. Although this is all new to us and much about the days ahead are unknown, this will eventually pass and things will move toward normalcy. In the meantime, I encourage you to reflect upon and be blessed by your relationship with Christ and His Spirit, which can be of immense help to us when we look around and see what looks quite chaotic.

Kelly
Friday, March 13, 2020

Encouragement found on Facebook via Kevin Vance and his friend, Richard Alan Duncan



In a world filled with anxiety about the coronavirus, we who follow Jesus can have a supernatural peace.

Here are 10 passages about God's peace... and how to access it.

1. God gives us His peace as we live to please Him. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased" (Luke 2:14). What needs to happen in your life for you to make pleasing God a higher priority?
2. God gives us a deeper, fuller, richer peace than the world gives. "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid" (John 14:27). How can your definition of peace align better with the Lord's definition of peace?
3. God gives us His peace not in the absence of trouble, but in a world that is filled with troubles. "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). What will "taking heart" because Jesus has "overcome the world" look like for you?

4. God gives us His peace so we can live on mission. "Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you'" (John 20:21). How can you live on mission more intentionally?

5. God gives us His peace when we set our minds on the things of the Spirit. "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace" (Romans 8:5-6). What needs to change in your life so that you are setting your mind more and more on the things of the Spirit?

6. God gives us His peace when we are filled with and bear the fruit of the Spirit. "Be filled with the Spirit... But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace..." (Ephesians 5:18b, Galatians 5:22a). How will you increasingly seek to be filled with the Spirit of God?

7. God gives us His peace as we learn to pray about everything with thanksgiving. "Do not be anxious about anything, 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 your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7). How will you increase your ability to pray with thanksgiving?

8. God gives us His peace when our minds stay focused on Him. "You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in You" (Isaiah 26:3). What will you do to increase your focus on the Lord?

9. God gives us His peace through the rule and reign of Jesus. "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end..." (Isaiah 9:6-7a). How will you more and more make Jesus your Wonderful Counselor? Your Mighty God? Your Everlasting Father?

10. God gives us His peace as we love His law. "Great peace have those who love Your law; nothing can make them stumble" (Psalm 119:165). What will you do to grow your love for the Word of God?

In light of all these truths, here's my prayer for you who are reading this...

May the LORD bless you and keep you; may the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; may the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace (Numbers 6:24-26). May you lie down and sleep in peace; may the LORD make you dwell in safety (Psalm 4:8). May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope" (Romans 15:13).

Posted on Facebook on Thursday, March 12, 2020

Right Image: [Rend Collective, My Lighthouse \(song\)](#)