

## Wonderful Peace - Psalm 29:11

Far away in the depths of my spirit tonight rolls a melody sweeter than psalm;  
In celestial strains it unceasingly falls o'er my soul like an infinite calm.

What a treasure I have in this wonderful peace, Buried deep in the heart of my soul,  
So secure that no power can mine it away, While the years of eternity roll!

I am resting tonight in this wonderful peace, Resting sweetly in Jesus' control;  
For I'm kept from all danger by night and by day, And His glory is flooding my soul!

**Refrain:** Peace, peace, wonderful peace, Coming down from the Father above!  
Sweep over my spirit forever, I pray in fathomless billows of love!

**Introduction:** Peace – what a wonderful concept. William Gladstone once said, “*We look forward to the time when the Power of Love will replace the Love of Power. Then will our world know the blessings of peace.*” But in the meantime, about all we see around us is not very peaceful. Tune in to any newscast any night of the week and you will see that we are living in the midst of a world full of turmoil.

Things are going wrong. People are fighting all over the world. People are becoming more and more violent. This generation has never known real peace, and to many, wonderful peace is just pie in the sky.

The reason we live in such turmoil is because people's lives are in turmoil. Most of the time, outward conflict is an evidence of the inward turmoil that people have going on. The lack of peace among nations is a reflection of a lack of peace in people. And there is a serious misunderstanding as to just what peace is.

That is what I want to talk about tonight – how to have this wonderful peace that Warren Cornell and George Cooper wrote about in their hymn. First, let's look at:

### 1. The Perversion of Peace

There have always been those who cry out for peace. Yet we do not have peace. I believe the reason is because we are looking for the wrong kind of peace first. Now don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that we shouldn't pursue peace. I'm just saying that we're prioritizing the wrong peace.

The peace we should be pursuing is what Jesus talked about in **John 14:27 (NIV)**. He said, “*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.*”

Jesus clearly distinguishes the kind of peace He is giving with the kind of peace that the world offers.

When we speak of peace we must be careful to understand what true peace really is. If we don't understand the true definition of peace, we can think we have peace when we really don't.

One of the definitions the world uses for peace is that peace is the absence of conflict – a cease fire. I remember in the last episode of MASH, as the Korean War was coming to an end, the medical staff was in the O.R. when over the loudspeaker came the voice of the reporter out in the battle zone. He said, “*Within the next minute the guns will go silent as the cease fire takes affect.*” Then you heard the shooting and the bombing suddenly stop. Then the reporter said, “*There you have it, that's the sound of peace.*” The next sound you heard was the whirr of the respirators and the moaning of wounded soldiers as the doctors continued cutting. Peace is not merely an absence of conflict.

The real need is more than an absence of conflict in the world. The real need is for true inner peace. And until people can find that inner peace, we'll continue to experience outward conflict. We desperately need true inner peace.

And the good news is that this inner peace is attainable.

## **2. The Provision of Peace**

The key to having it is trusting in God, because He's the source of peace. **Is. 26:3 (NIV)** says, “*You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.*”

Now this kind of peace has three aspects. First, there is:

**A. Peace From God.** As we trust in God, we experience the peace from God. Our trust puts us in the position where the basis for peace is shifted from ourselves and our ever-changing circumstances to the steadfast faithfulness of God.

If our peace depends on our circumstances then we will not have peace. But if our peace depends on the unchangeable God, then things can be breaking loose all around us with conflict on every side and even though we might feel the effects of the conflict, we will experience an inner peace. This is not the worldly kind of peace defined as an absence of conflict, but an inner peace in the midst of conflict because we trust in God. It is a peace which comes from Him.

Psalm 4:8 was written by a man who knew what it was to experience conflict. For most of David's life he

experienced conflict and hostility. He was pursued and hounded by King Saul and his enemies were many. Yet he writes in **Psalms 4:8 (NIV)** *“I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.”*

David understood that it is the Lord who gives strength. He recognized his inability and God's all-sufficiency. David knew that God was able to take care of him. I'm not sure when and where he learned this. Perhaps he learned it when he fought with that bear. Maybe he learned it when he wrestled with the lion. Perhaps he learned it when he went head to head with Goliath. Or maybe he learned it as he was chased all over the country by Saul. Somewhere he had learned that the Lord was his peace. David had experienced the peace which comes from God. But there's another aspect of this peace:

**B. Peace with God.** Rom. 5:1 reads, *“Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* The source of peace is God but it comes through a relationship with Christ Jesus. The result of accepting what Jesus did on the cross is that we can have peace in that our personal war with God is over.

Before we began to trust in God, our inner conflict caused us to be in conflict with God Himself. There was an alienation, and a separation between us and God. When we surrendered to Christ, the war was over. Now we have peace with God through Christ.

But there is more. We not only have peace from God and peace with God, but also:

**C. Peace of God.** **Philippians 4:7 (NIV)** reads, *“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”* Now, there's something special about the peace of God. According to this passage, we can't understand it with our human minds. I can't understand how Christians can have peace when all hell is breaking loose around them. It's the kind of thing that surprises us because it's there and yet shouldn't be. But then we remember who we belong to, and then we understand why we have that peace. It is this kind of peace, which passes understanding, that we must allow to rule our hearts, according to Col. 3:15.

You see, with the peace of God ruling our hearts, we can then face whatever problems may come. And then will come! Jesus told us in **John 16:33 (NIV)** *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace.”*

*In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."* Finally, there is:

### **3. The Process of Peace**

If peace is a possibility for us, then how do we go about obtaining it? Well, it starts with our relationship with Christ. This kind of peace that is from God and Christ Jesus is simply an outflow of our relationship with Christ. In Gal 5:22-23, peace is listed as part of the fruit of the Spirit. In other words, it is a fruit of our relationship with Christ by the Spirit of God, and it comes to us through several important ways.

**A. Trust.** The first and most important way it comes is by trusting God. We have already seen in Isaiah 26:3 that *"You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you."*

One of the results of keeping your mind steadfastly focused on Christ and developing an ongoing relationship with Him is that by experience, you learn to trust Him. In other words, we don't get this peace just by saying the name of Jesus when we're in trouble, or by thinking happy thoughts about Jesus. It comes by actually learning to trust in the Lord. He has all things under control. We know that if we focus on Him, He'll give us peace. But there's another aspect of the process of peace. Implied in our trusting Him is the aspect of.

**B Communion.** If we are in communion with Him, we are praying to Him, listening to Him, seeking to discern His will. Out of this kind of communion will come His peace.

Both prayer and praise are aspects of this communion with God. Both are linked directly to God's peace. **Phil. 4:4-7 (NIV)** says *"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, 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."*

Do you see the process here? There is a link between the peace of God, which guards our hearts and minds, and the prayer and thanksgiving which precedes it. The bottom line is this: if we are really going to have peace, we must have a relationship with Him, and praying to God and praising God helps us tap us into that relationship.

If you'd like to be free from anxiety or fear, then pursue this peace from God. When we're living in a trusting relationship with God, knowing that He can and will take care of our needs, then we can experience a

freedom from anxiety even while we are in the midst of adversity. This is true peace.

Remember, Jesus said, "*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.*" What the world claims is peace is merely the absence of outward conflict. And until the inner conflict is dealt with there will be no real peace.

I hope you have this wonderful inner peace tonight. You are if you're trusting in the only one who can give it to you, and communing with Him in an ongoing and ever-growing relationship that's characterized by prayer and praise.