

Dear Friends,

## THE PEACE OF GOD

*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.*

In John's Gospel chapter 14:23-29 we see that Jesus gives his followers a gift. The gift is peace, not the type of peace that the world knows of, but the peace of the Father. This peace is not "the absence of trouble." It is not a peace that comes from escaping or avoiding trouble, or from refusing to face things.

It's not a peace without pain. Followers of Jesus experience a lot of pain, partly because we are becoming more sensitive to those around us who are in pain.

Jesus said that no experience of life can ever take this peace from us. No sorrow, no danger, no suffering. God's gift of peace is independent of outward circumstances and inward realities. It has an existence of its own.

I've noticed that when I read the words "*My Peace I give to you, my Peace I leave with you*" I keep trying to hear this in a way that makes me feel good, protected and secure. William Barclay insightfully comments that Jesus was leaving a peace that could only be arrived at through giving up security for commitment and confrontation.

As I think this through, I'm remembering that Jesus didn't always live a peaceful and secure life on this earth. He had a peace inside himself because he was about his Father's business. That is the highest and finest level of peace there is!

The peace of Christ is our willingness to see the reality of this world and of our lives, and to have the strength and commitment to live within these realities.

Christ's peace is the courage and willingness to see and act on the truth. The path Christ calls us to is worth the risk. This peace is the reality of embracing hope and resurrection. The word "hope" from its Greek origin, means to endure, and that's what we do with the strength of *Christ's gift of peace* in our life.

With love,

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