# The Missing Peace

Andrew Phillips 24 October 2017



Christians love praying for peace. But do we even know what we're praying for?

According to Philippians 4:7, probably not. Because the peace of God 'surpasses all understanding'. There are aspects of God's peace that are beyond our comprehension. Even in Scripture, we seem to get conflicting definitions of peace, as Jesus promises to bring peace, but with a sword.

The biblical concept of peace rests heavily on the Hebrew root 'shalom', which means 'to be complete' or 'to be sound'. But what does that look like?

## Two Characteristics of Peace

I've learned (in brief), we can find two defining characteristics of peace:

**a) An inner calm and equilibrium.**

Paul says in Philippians 4:12 that he has learned the secret of being content in every situation. It's interesting that it was something he learned. It didn't come naturally but by supernatural instruction.

**b) A sense of being protected.**

The peace of God will guard your hearts and minds. If you're planted on the rock, waves can crash over you and you will not be moved. What are you building your life on? On the Rock, or job security? Your alarm system? The question is: where do you find your sense of security? If

you look for ultimate protection in anything but Jesus, you'll only have peace until those things are taken away.

Of course, it's great knowing what it is, but how do we **access** peace?

> Though we might associate peace with rest and tranquillity, the Bible often shows that peace requires action.

## How Do We Access Peace?

Through Jesus, right? Yes, Jesus gives us peace. 'Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way'. We see that Jesus Himself is our peace!

However, there's still an extent to which we need to take action in order to access more peace. Though we might associate peace with rest and tranquillity, the Bible often shows that peace requires action.

- **Plan** – Proverbs 12:20 tells us we need to **plan peace**.
- **Seek** – 1 Peter 3:11 tells us to **seek peace and pursue it**.
- **Cast** – 1 Peter 5:6-7 tells us to **cast all our anxieties on Him**.
- **Practice** – Philippians 4:9 tells us to **practice** these things, and the God of peace will be with us.

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## How Can Jesus Bring Both Peace and a Sword?

If we read the rest of John 14:27, we see that Jesus gives peace not as the world gives it. His peace isn't superficially agreeable. It doesn't favour compromise over truth, and it doesn't only last for as long as it's mutually convenient. The peace of Jesus, the peace that is Jesus, remains unshakably true. God's peace on earth divides because it demands absolute truth and freedom over shallow unity. If Christians seek the peace of the world, a peace without God, that peace is merely a façade – masking our lack of integrity, our lack of wholeness and shalom, as we act in discord with our true belief.

God's peace is beyond our understanding because His peace is not the opposite of war; it is the

opposite of chaos. The peace of God comes when we order things rightly. Like a sword, His love separates us from everything we hold dearer than Him. And then, when His peace has been established, when proper order has been restored, when we seek first His kingdom, He lovingly restores all those other things we love – only now, they're in their proper place.

God's peace may not be fully understood, but it can be accessed through a revelation of Jesus, who is peace Himself.

> The peace of Jesus, the peace that is Jesus, remains unshakably true.

## A Testimony about Peace

Here is a real-life testimony of what this 'beyond comprehension peace' has looked like in the life of my wife, Callie:

'I had been struggling with fear, specifically the spirit of intimidation. But God told me (through an experience I had of seeing an angel in the spirit) that our home was a dwelling place for His Spirit and that His covering was over it. Ironically, this was just before our home was broken into.

When I got home from our weekend away and saw that we had been broken into (and our car had been stolen out of our garage), I was shocked but not scared, intimidated or worried about the future! Everyone kept saying, 'Ah, it must feel horrible to have someone invade your personal space,' but I didn't experience that at all, because God had shown me that our home was His and no one was going to take that truth away from us; that perfect peace that comes from the knowledge of who God is and how He cares for us.'

**Side note:** God totally provided, as our car was covered by insurance and we have even been lent extra cars now – so we have more than we need!

God offers us another way to live, with the reassurance of these words: '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)