

## “Jesus is My Hope and My Peace”

Do you have hope? Do you have true peace and happiness?

From many vantage points, we are a hopeless generation, a hopeless culture, living in a hopeless age.

In recent years, peace symbols have become fashionable again, just as during the peacenik era of the 1970s. Yet, how many people really have peace? How many people have inner peace? If peace was making a difference, then why is there so much strife, racial discord, cursing, and crime in our land?

Some think that religion, and specifically the Christian religion, is the problem. And, yet, the influence of Christianity and the teachings of the Bible have progressively declined in America over the past century. Since the 1950s, Christianity has been progressively banished from the public sphere. At the same time that Christianity has been attacked and denounced, lawlessness has increased; the national debt has skyrocketed; and the middle class has become poorer. Having banished Christian virtue, the content of today's music, movies, and television programming is largely filled with profanity, murder, immorality, and vice of every kind.

The past thirty years have been marked by rising criminal activity, rising economic uncertainty, and the rise of terrorism. Internet hackers and rogue regimes seek to undermine our peace, prosperity, and security. American freedom and civil liberties are likewise under increasing assault. We are a society of broken families, incurable diseases, and massive personal and societal debts. Thus, it is no wonder why hopelessness is so prevalent in our time.

Our societal depression has been articulated by popular musicians such as Layne Staley, the lead singer and guitarist of the Seattle grunge band Alice in Chains, who died under the influence of heroine, as did Nirvana singer and guitarist Kurt Cobain before him. Staley said in an interview with *Rolling Stone* magazine, "At the end of the day or at the end of the party, when everyone goes home, you're stuck with yourself."

When you're all alone, away from the distractions of music, smartphones, and friends, does your life really have any purpose or meaning? Do you really have hope and peace?

Where do you look for hope?

If you are seeking hope, then I have great news for you. There is indeed hope for *you* if you truly desire it, because **there is a God of Hope and a God of Peace, a Prince of Peace, who offers us true hope and peace.**

**The Bible says that all of the Scriptures were written so that we might have HOPE.**

“For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have **hope.**” (**Romans 15:4**, NAS).

In Romans 15:13, the apostle Paul said, “Now may **the God of hope** fill you with all **joy** and **peace** in believing, **that you may abound in hope** by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Believers in Jesus Christ are filled with the Holy Spirit, and by His power they may abound in hope and be filled with joy and peace.

Perhaps the most famous verse in all the Bible is John 3:16, which states, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Jesus offers us an eternal hope, but also a hope for this life. Even now, if you are a Christian, you bear the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Does your life evidence such virtues?

Do you know Christ’s love?

The world embraces love, but not Christian love. What is the difference? Here are a few of the differences expressed in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7:

“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up.”

The false love of our world is prideful and marked by self-love, the love of self. Christian love is humble; it does not parade itself; it is not conceited; it is selfless and giving and self-sacrificing. Jesus exemplified such love in willingly giving His own life for His people on the cross. True love is longsuffering; it is patient; it is kind.

Love “does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil.”

In our post-Christian culture, we see numerous examples of rude behavior, self-seeking behavior, people who are easily provoked to anger and wrath. Television and the media tend to glorify such evil and depravity, thinking evil and carrying out evil acts. Hate is redefined as love, and love as hate. To be rude, ruthless, and evil is the norm.

The Old Testament Scriptures prophesied such a distortion of truth, as Isaiah 5:20 warned, “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”

“Love does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth.”

Our culture rarely rejoices in truth. Rather, so many seek to applaud and affirm that which is false, while they “suppress the truth in unrighteousness” (Romans 1:18).

How rare it is to find *positive* stories in the news, especially regarding Christians or Christianity. The media and our society revel in the gossip, the heartache, and the misfortune of others. They also seem to enjoy denigrating and denouncing the beliefs and practices of the followers of Jesus Christ. Maybe that is why our society is so depressed and hopeless. In rejecting the God of hope, much of our society denies itself the possibility of finding true hope and peace. By rejoicing in iniquity, they deny

themselves the joy and peace that only God can bring. They are left with themselves and a dark, pessimistic outlook on the present life and the future.

In contrast, God exhorts His people to dwell on something better: “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy -- meditate on these things” (Philippians 4:8).

Truth, nobility, justice, purity, loveliness, things of good report, virtue, praiseworthy things—how different our society might be if these were the things exalted in the media, in the universities, and on television.

God calls Christians not to be conformed to this world, but rather to be transformed as they renew their minds by meditating on the word of God (cf. Romans 12:2). Let change begin with us and in our homes, as we turn off the steady stream of negativity (as much as is possible) and fill ourselves with the goodness of God’s truth and meditate on that which is true, beautiful, and virtuous.

Love “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

Christian love goes hand in hand with hope. As Christians, we have been born again to a living **hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Peter 1:3).

### **Jesus is my Hope. Is He yours?**

Psalms 146:5 says, “Happy *is he* who *has* the God of Jacob for his help, Whose **hope** *is* in the LORD his God.”

Jeremiah 17:7 says, “Blessed *is* the man who trusts in the LORD, And whose **hope** *is* the LORD.”

1 Timothy 1:1 says simply, “the Lord Jesus Christ, **our hope**.”

In Christ we have the hope of salvation, of the resurrection of the body, and of everlasting life.

Come to Jesus, believe in Him and in what He has done, and you will have hope!

### **Jesus is my Peace (Rom. 16:20). Is He yours?**

In Romans 5:1 Paul declares, “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have **peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

In this postmodern age of such anxiety, worry, and fear, God exhorts us, “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).

As followers of Jesus Christ, our sufficiency is in Christ. The Great Physician has given us a medicine that is 100% effective to treat our anxiety—it is called prayer with

thanksgiving. We must pray in faith, without doubting (cf. James 1:6). God promises us that if we are faithful in prayer that He will grant us true peace, the peace of God, which unbelievers can neither receive nor find. True peace can only be found through faith in Jesus Christ.

Luke records that the priest Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, prophesied that Jesus would “guide our feet into the way of **peace**” (Luke 1:79).

Paul adds in Ephesians 2:14, 17: “For **He Himself is our peace**, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation . . . . And He came and **preached peace** to you who were afar off and to those who were near.”

Jesus gives us peace with God and peace with one another, peace even with those who were once our enemies, if we trust in Him alone.

Come to Jesus and you will find peace and love like you’ve never known.

The Scriptures declare, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Corinthians 2:9).

What must you do to know Jesus?

To be a Christian, you must be born again.

If you’ve never heard or understood this truth, you are not alone. Not even Nicodemus, a great teacher of Israel, understood this most fundamental truth.

Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (John 3:3, 5-6)

Jesus said, “If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Me will save it.” (Luke 9:23-24)

To be a disciple of Christ, you must be willing to die to yourself and be born again.

**When you are born again, you have a new outlook on life:** “Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Instead of setting your mind on earthly things—desiring to live for yourself, to get rich, to “look out for number one,” to have others adore you—as a Christian you want to seek first, above everything else, the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33).

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.” (Colossians 3:1-4, NIV)

Filling your mind with the negativity of the unbelieving will bring you down and make you feel hopeless. Filling your mind with the hope and joy of God's word will lift you up and give you true hope and peace.

God call us to live by faith, trusting in Christ at all times. Paul declared in Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

To know the hope and peace of Christ you must have faith, but not just *any* faith. The Scriptures teach that we are saved by faith in Christ.

Salvation comes by placing your trust in Jesus Christ, in who He is and what He did:

That He is the Son of God, the Lord,  
 who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
 And born of the virgin Mary.  
 That He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
 Was crucified, died, and was buried;  
 That the third day He rose again from the dead.  
 That He ascended into heaven  
 And is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.  
 That from there He will come to judge the living and the dead.

To believe in Christ is to believe the teachings of God's Word and to place your trust, your confidence, your hope for eternity in Him alone.

To believe in Christ is to repent, to turn from your sins, to deny yourself, and to rest your hope entirely on Christ's work on your behalf.

"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21).

Do you want true, eternal hope and peace?

Then, place your trust in Jesus Christ. Follow Him as your Savior and Lord. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household" (Acts 16:31).

If you have never surrendered your life to Christ, then there has never been a better time than right now to do so.

Never is there a better time to be reconciled to God. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2b).

If that is your desire, then pray to the Lord a prayer such as this:

"Lord Jesus, I confess that I am a sinner. I have been living apart from You and do not deserve eternal life. Yet, I believe that you died and rose again from the grave to purchase a place in heaven for me. Lord, come into my heart. Take control of my life. Forgive my sins. I confess them and place my trust in You alone for salvation. I

embrace Your free gift of eternal life, and thank You for it. From this day forward, I desire to live for You, for You are my hope and my peace! In Jesus' name. Amen.”

If this was the prayer of your heart, then let others know of your new faith in Christ. Begin to pray each day and to read God's Word. God calls His children to meditate on His Word day and night (Psalm 1). Merely repeating the words of this prayer or any prayer will not save you. God says that “if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9).

To be saved, you must truly believe in your mind and soul; God looks at the heart, and He alone knows the sincerity of your faith. If you truly believe in Christ and desire to serve Him, then your life will likely undergo some rather radical changes. We demonstrate the genuineness of our faith by living in accordance with God's law; we seek to become more and more like Jesus, living as He did. We seek to obey God's commandments, to do good works, and to love others sacrificially. We seek to die to ourselves and live for God and others. We seek to be like Christ, to grow in our knowledge and understanding of His written Word, and to obey every word of God (Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4; 2 Peter 3:18).

Wabash Bible Ministries seeks to foster a community of hope and peace, to nurture those whose lives have been transformed by Jesus, the God of Hope and Peace.

Whether you are a “seeker of truth” interested in considering the claims of Christianity or a believer in Jesus who desires to grow in your understanding of God and His Word, we encourage you to make use of the studies provided on this website.

May God grant you peace as You seek to know Him better:

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).

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 15:13).