



# peace

## A 24-DAY DEVOTIONAL

for the Family of Christ the King Community Church

NOVEMBER 3–26, 2020

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[www.ctk.church](http://www.ctk.church)

COVER PHOTO BY SCOTT SAYERS

# Peace.

We long for it in our souls.  
We long for it in our families.  
We long for it in our country.  
We long for it in our world.

And it's available to all of us as a gift from the Prince of Peace. 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" (John 14:27). What an amazing gift from an amazing God!

Welcome to our 24 day journey toward peace. As a church, we're going to choose peace. We choose peace by first choosing to be rooted in Jesus. It is in him we experience peace. We're going to corporately turn away from the chaos and rhetoric of the world and towards the God of peace.

We're going to seek peace together in our culture, our quiet times, and our pursuit of God. We're going to pray in the opposite spirit of our current reality, asking for God's peace over the world he created. We're going to step out of the noise and into a peaceful moment with God, daily. We're going to immerse ourselves in the peace of God, so that we can carry his peace into a world that so desperately needs that calming voice right now.

I challenge you to create a quiet space where God has your undivided attention. In that space, you'll need to create margin — uninterrupted time — to focus on God. This devotional guide offers you one scripture each day along with a reflection by one of our pastors and a prompt for you to respond. As you begin this daily practice, I'm praying that you'll personally experience the peace of God.

I believe this is a time in history when the church of Jesus must model, speak and pursue the peace of God in a way that'll model this truth to the world: peace is a reality when it comes from God and God alone.

Let's do this together!

Pastor Grant

## NOTE

*We've intentionally created this devotional guide to begin on Election Day and conclude on Thanksgiving Day. However, if you miss a day or start late, the devotionals are short enough to do several in a day. Catch up at your own pace!*



PHOTO BY SCOTT SAYERS

NOVEMBER 3, 2020

# What We Have in Common

*by Wendy Powell, Community Outreach Pastor*

## EPHESIANS 4:2-6

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to **keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace**. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

## REFLECT

Consider all the differences embodied in our church family: different politics, different ethnicities, different church backgrounds, different life experiences, different struggles, different gifting. But what we have in common matters so much more... one God and Father of all who's in charge of this family and lives in each of us through the Holy Spirit.

When you find other Christians and their opinions frustrating or hard to understand, trust that there is one Spirit who is at work in them, just as he is at work in you. Remember, there is one body, one hope, and one faith.

So when differences tempt you to judge or avoid brothers and sisters, instead follow Paul's advice: be humble, gentle, patient, loving, and put all your effort into keeping the unity of the Spirit whom we share. Focus on what we do have in common — Jesus!

## RESPOND

Where do you need God's help in bearing with another Christian in love? Let God show you anywhere you have broken the bonds of peace, whether in word, thought, or deed.

Repent and receive God's forgiveness.



PHOTO BY RANDY BOURLAND

NOVEMBER 4, 2020

# The 2-Minute Differentiator

*by Ryan Ervin, Care Pastor*

## ROMANS 14:17-19

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval. Let us therefore **make every effort to do what leads to peace** and to mutual edification.

### REFLECT

There is so much to be confused and divided about. I don't even need to name current issues, and you know exactly what I'm thinking about too. Paul's day had different issues, but our divisive human nature was the same.

Followers of Jesus are meant to stand out in any culture. When Paul wrote this letter to the church in Rome, Christians were discovering what this new way looked like with the blending of cultures and people groups. "Wait, what are the new rules? What can we eat and drink?"

Paul reminds us, as kingdom citizens, what should differentiate us from earthly cultures: peace, joy, and being pleasant to be around (human approval).

### RESPOND

Serving Christ is the action step from this verse. How can you participate, today, in what Jesus wants to do? A helpful question I ask myself is, "What 2-minute favor I can do for someone today?"



PHOTO BY RANDY BOURLAND



NOVEMBER 5, 2020

# Messengers of Peace

by Angel Finsrud, Adult Ministries Pastor

## ISAIAH 52:7

How beautiful on the mountains  
are the feet of those who bring good news,  
**who proclaim peace,**  
who bring good tidings,  
who proclaim salvation,  
who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"

## REFLECT

Have you ever found yourself in a pinch needing to be rescued? A flat tire, a forgotten lunch, or a bill you can't pay? Can you recall the gratitude you felt as someone showed up with just what you needed?

Our world is desperate for a message of peace. Everywhere we turn, the messages we hear encourage us to worry, fear, or even fight. But, as believers we can have confidence that God is in control. He is faithful and trustworthy. And this knowledge isn't just so we can personally experience peace in troubling times, it's also for the benefit of those around us.

Isaiah 52:7 is an observation, but also an encouragement. You have access to what this world needs: peace that comes from trusting God, despite our circumstances. And when you choose to bring that message to others, you bring something beautiful to the world around you.

## RESPOND

Today, in a time of listening prayer ask yourself, "Do I have enough trust in God to experience peace, even in very difficult times?" If not, you are not alone! Commit to praying the Mark 9:24 prayer, "*I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!*"

If you have found that peace, look for opportunities today to share a message of peace with someone around you.



PHOTO BY MATT DEALY

NOVEMBER 6, 2020

# Inch by Inch, Row by Row

by Brian Steele, Adult Ministries Pastor

## GALATIANS 5:22-25

**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,** patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

### REFLECT

Imagine a beautiful garden. Picture the sights, sounds, and smells. What is the *feel* of that garden? The Bible says that God's peace is like a garden — teeming with flourishing life. Peace is wholeness, wellness, and delight.

Now think of a place of chaos in your life. It could be a relationship gone bad, a train wreck at work, or a trial at home. The Holy Spirit wants to turn *that* place of chaos into a garden thriving with good fruit. He can do that! He will do that!

### RESPOND

Find a seed from a piece of fruit or a seed pack.

Plant the seed in soil, water it, and watch  
it grow on a sunny windowsill.

Every time you see the plant, ask the Spirit to grow peace in that area of chaos in your life. Let that plant be your reminder to keep in step with the Spirit as he turns barren ground into fruitful soil.



PHOTO BY SCOTT SAYERS

NOVEMBER 7, 2020

# The Whole Peace of God

by Brady Rector, CTK Downtown Campus Pastor

## LUKE 1:76-79

“And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,  
to give knowledge of salvation to his people  
in the forgiveness of their sins,  
because of the tender mercy of our God,  
whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high  
to give light to those who sit in darkness  
and in the shadow of death,  
**to guide our feet into the way of peace.”**

## REFLECT

When you look around, it seems we are all in desperate need of peace. Peace in the world. Peace in our hearts. Peace in communities. Peace in our division. The Scriptures have this incredibly beautiful and full picture of peace. It's more than just an absence of conflict—it's wholeness, well-being, fullness. It's the restoration of what sin has stolen and the abundant life Jesus came to bring.

In this passage, Zechariah is prophesying about his son, John the Baptist. It would be easy to read and feel like this scripture has nothing to do with everyday people like us. But we are invited into the same life John had: to give knowledge of salvation, offer the mercy of God, give light to those in darkness and death, and show the way of God's abundant peace. This is in fact Good News!

## RESPOND

It can be easy to feel overwhelmed by our world  
but, like Jesus, we can start small.

Think of one person during this time who could use the peace of Christ. With them in mind, ask God to grant his peace that surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4:7). Then, offer peace in a practical way. Give them a phone call, write them a letter, send them a small gift. Just let them know they are thought of, prayed for, and known.

Be a person that offers peace to others.



PHOTO BY SCOTT SAYERS

NOVEMBER 8, 2020

# Peace Instead of Disorder

*by Julie Burleson, Adult Ministries Pastor*

## 1 CORINTHIANS 14:33

**For God is not a God of disorder but of peace –**  
as in all the congregations of the Lord's people.

### REFLECT

Imagine going to a church, and during the worship service you experience multiple people trying to speak at once, no one listening to each other. No one else's opinion, thoughts, or concerns seeming to matter to anyone else. The disorder would probably drive you away.

While we don't see that happening in most churches, it was happening in the church at Corinth, and Paul was asking them to stop because that doesn't represent God's heart at all!

But outside church walls, we do find that behavior from God's people in other places — on social media and other places where we interact with people who may think, feel, or understand God differently than us. God wants us to be at peace with each other, to live with order; not in total agreement, but with turn-taking, listening, and an inner peace that only he can give.

### RESPOND

Have you been showing God's heart of peace and order in your interactions with other Christians? Is there a place where you need to listen with love and extend peace to others? Ask God for help being a person of peace.



PHOTO BY DREW YOUNG



NOVEMBER 9, 2020

# Sowing Peace

*by Steve Thompson, Communications Pastor*

## JAMES 3:17-18

But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; **then peace-loving**, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

### REFLECT

I often think I've come up with a great idea, thought, or plan as I go about my day. When I filter those through the criteria in these verses, it helps me know if it is truly Christ-like. Many times, after this filtering, I see that I have ulterior motives that are not pure, peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial or sincere.

James tells us that there's a promise associated with sowing peace — we reap righteousness. We become more like Christ when we sow the seeds of peace.

What does it mean to be a peacemaker in today's world? Consider your work and home relationships. Are you consistently a merciful and considerate peacemaker? How about your activity on social media? Would someone who has never met you be able to see the peace of Christ evident in your posts?

### RESPOND

Spend some time reflecting, confessing, and repenting of any sin that comes to mind so that you can experience forgiveness and wholeness once again.

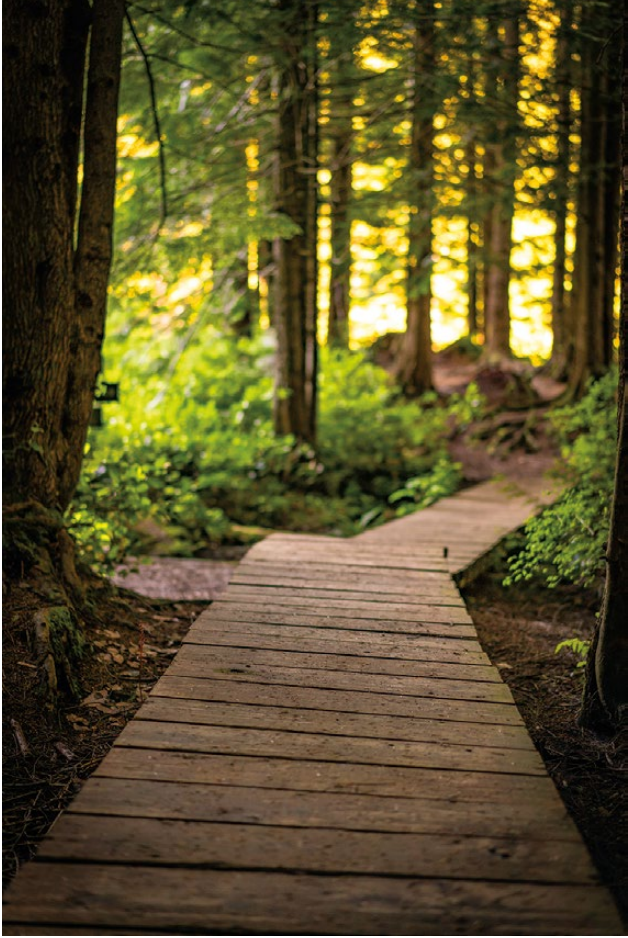


PHOTO BY SCOTT SAYERS

NOVEMBER 10, 2020

# God Connects the Divided

*by Derek Archer, CTK Network Pastor*

## EPHESIANS 2:14-16

**For he himself is our peace**, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

## REFLECT

When Jesus came to earth, there were great divisions between the people groups he lived among. They had competing visions for the future of their land, different spirituality and morality, and both groups arranged the death of Jesus. Both sides did what they thought was right in order to silence someone leading a possible rebellion. But each side, passionate and justified in their convictions, missed seeing the Son of God in their midst.

Does Jesus punish these two groups for their betrayal? No, instead he makes them one. Jesus removes the dividing wall of hostility between God and man—and between these extreme groups. Our differences, as noble as they seem, cannot compare to the unity and peace Jesus achieves.

He invites all to come to his table, all to live according to his kingdom. He invites all to show love to their neighbor. Anyone can love those who love them, but Jesus' love extends to everyone. There are no sides in heaven. His peace is seen in removing the barriers that divide.

## RESPOND

How many of your neighbors can you list?  
Pray for each of them, and ask God to bless them.

Who has been the most difficult for you to love in the past six months? Pray for them and ask God to bless them (and to help you love them more).



PHOTO BY RANDY BOURLAND

NOVEMBER 11, 2020

# The Peace that Comes When He Looks at Us

*by Julie Bureson, Adult Ministries Pastor*

## NUMBERS 6:24-26

The Lord bless you  
and keep you;  
the Lord make his face shine on you  
and be gracious to you;  
**the Lord turn his face toward you  
and give you peace.**

## REFLECT

The Lord told Moses that this prayer is how Aaron and other priests were to bless the Israelites. These verses are what God wanted prayed over his people. He wanted them to receive the best gifts, and he knew what the best gifts were—a relationship with their creator (by keeping his people close), grace (which is so desperately needed), and his perfect peace.

But when would the Israelites receive peace? When God looked at them. When he turned his face toward them, he would give them peace. That's amazing! God's gaze on us brings peace.

We seek peace in so many ways. At times we feel like we've tried everything we can do, and we forget that we get peace from God when he looks at us. Nothing other than the loving look from a faithful father can give us the peace we are longing for.

## RESPOND

Ask God to look at you and give you peace today.  
Ask him for it, and at the end of the day write down  
all the ways you experienced his peace today.



PHOTO BY SCOTT SAYERS

NOVEMBER 12, 2020

# Peace With the Help of Others

*by Kevin Brearley, Adult Ministries Pastor*

## COLOSSIANS 3:15-17

**Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace.** And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

## REFLECT

When my wife's first husband, George, was dying of cancer and in the hospital, her small group from the church rallied to his bedside. They gathered and sang songs of praise and gratitude to God.

In those moments, though they were extremely difficult, Diane felt the peace of God in the room and the love from the body of Christ through their words and service to her family. God's peace is available to you in the most difficult times and often it comes through his body.

## RESPOND

If you were in the hospital, do you have a core group of believers that would rally to you? Can you name them? If yes, count yourself blessed.

If not, you might consider finding a group of church friends to invest in so that when difficult times come, the body of Christ is there for you. If you don't have a group of church friends, consider joining a CTK small group.

Explore that possibility at [groups.ctlk.church](https://groups.ctlk.church).



PHOTO BY MATT DEALY



NOVEMBER 13, 2020

# Divine Daily Exchange

by Melonie Kemp, Network Executive Pastor

## PROVERBS 14:30

**A heart at peace gives life to the body,  
but envy rots the bones.**

## REFLECT

I love it when science simply confirms what we already know from God's Word. The symptoms and side effects of stress and anxiety (opposite of "heart at peace") are well documented. The toll they take is extensive and holistic.

A heart truly at peace has learned to be...  
at peace with God, and can therefore receive from God;  
at peace with themselves, moving through life thankful for who God made them to be with a sense of well-being and purpose;  
and at peace with the world around them, allowing them to be *for* and not *against* others, thriving in relationship.

## RESPOND

Ask God where you struggle the most with being at peace. This often indicates a stuck place in our hearts and is often attached to a distortion of the truth about how we view God, ourselves, or the world around us.

When you identify the distortion, ask God to exchange your lie for his truth. Allow this truth, this new paradigm, to take root in your heart.

As a new habit, ask God daily for his truth to reveal any areas where you struggle to be at peace, and say yes to him.



PHOTO BY RANDY BOURLAND

NOVEMBER 14, 2020

# Choosing Peace

by Brian Behrends, Creative Pastor

## 2 CORINTHIANS 13:11

Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, **live in peace**. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

### REFLECT

I'm always looking for causality in scripture. You know, the kind of verses that say do X, and Y will happen. Maybe I'm just a simpleton, but those verses always resonate with me.

In this passage, Paul gives us one of those promises. He says live in peace and the God of peace (and love) will be with you. It's that simple. Live in peace and the God of peace will be with you. Of course, living in peace is easier said than done. It's not something that happens by accident; it's something we choose.

But how do you choose peace? According to Paul, choosing peace means taking the first step towards restoring damaged relationships. It means using our words to encourage the people around us, and it means striving for unity even when it seems impossible.

### RESPOND

Peace is not the easy choice, but it's the Godly one. Choose peace and the God of peace will be with you today.



PHOTO BY SCOTT SAYERS

NOVEMBER 15, 2020

# Fallen Apart or Flourishing Together?

by Brian Steele, Adult Ministries Pastor

## COLOSSIANS 1:15-20

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by **making peace through his blood**, shed on the cross.

## REFLECT

In the Garden of Eden humanity didn't just fall, we fell apart. Our separations are wider than the Grand Canyon. Marriages, communities, cultures, and even churches are dis-integrated. Even your own soul might seem splintered into competing factions. Try as you might, you can't pull yourself together.

Where can we find hope? Where does our peace come from? Jesus holds all things together. His arms are stronger than the forces that divide. Our wholeness is found in him alone as he gathers the broken pieces, mends them and makes us flourish together.

## RESPOND

Find a puzzle piece and carry it in your pocket for a week.

Everywhere you go, use that piece as a reminder that:

- 1) Jesus himself is our peace, and
- 2) Jesus holds all things together – he fits all the fragmented pieces of our lives together.

Memorize Colossians 1:17: *He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.* Repeat that verse as the puzzle piece prompts you.



PHOTO BY SCOTT SAYERS

NOVEMBER 16, 2020

# What Did I Miss?

by Angel Finsrud, Adult Ministries Pastor

## PHILIPPIANS 4:7

And **the peace of God, which transcends all understanding,** will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

### REFLECT

Is it just me, or can it be a struggle at times to find peace? Philippians 4:7 tells us the peace of God will guard our hearts, but most of us struggle to experience that peace. Fortunately, verses 4-6 in this passage teach us what to do to experience peace, even in troubling circumstances.

Verse 4 says it starts with rejoicing *always*. In other words, find something to praise God for and keep praising him, especially when things are hard. Verse 5 implores us to do our part to get along with others; to be gentle and compassionate. And verse 6 says when life gives you things to worry about, don't fret. Instead, *pray!* Keep a grateful heart. When we do those things, we will experience a confidence in God that calms our soul—a peace that may defy explanation, but anchors us, even in times of trouble.

### RESPOND

What would it look like for you to begin today to rejoice in the Lord *always*?

What is one difficult situation in your life?  
Is there anything that you can find to praise God for, even in the midst of that hardship?

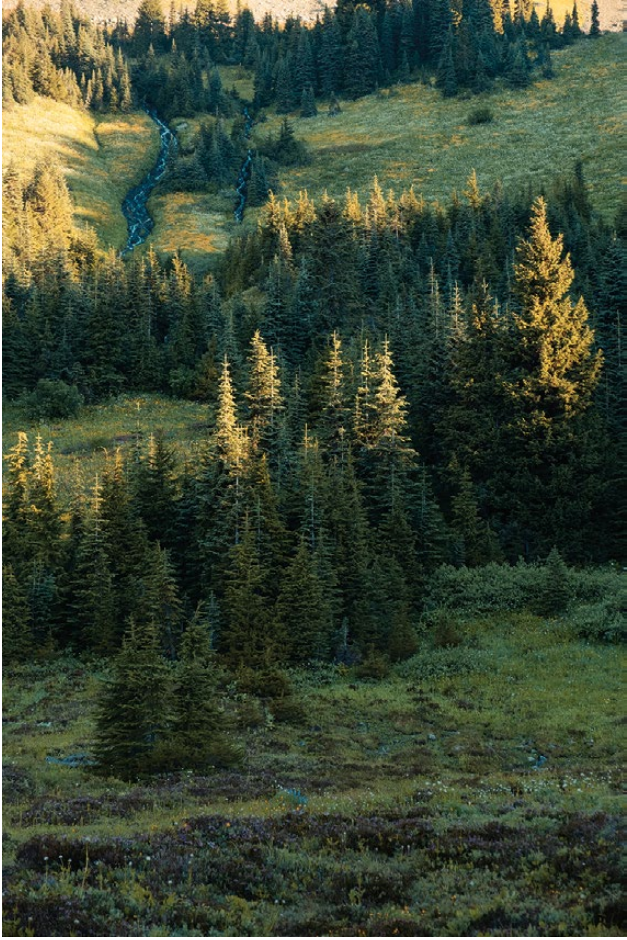


PHOTO BY MATT DEALY



NOVEMBER 17, 2020

# Peace in Chaos

*by Charles Molenkamp, Next Generation Pastor*

## PSALM 29:3, 10–11

The voice of the Lord is over the waters;  
the God of glory thunders,  
the Lord thunders over the mighty waters.  
The Lord sits enthroned over the flood;  
the Lord is enthroned as King forever.  
The Lord gives strength to his people;  
**the Lord blesses his people with peace.**

## REFLECT

Many of you were taught like I was to think of peace as something that happens while sitting quietly in an empty church or watching the sunrise in a mountain meadow. The problem comes when the chaos of life isn't resolved by these idealized images of peace.

Thankfully, the Bible offers us a more complete view of peace. Read all of Psalm 29 and feel the wind, hear the thunder, see the forest stripped bare; still, God is above it all. Read Isaiah 6 or Revelation 4 describing God's throne room—a very busy, noisy, active place. And in Genesis 1 we even see how God's spirit hovers over the chaos of the waters before anything is created.

True peace comes as a gift from a God who is never threatened by chaos, who stands unmoved in unbound waters and whose throne room shakes with the praise of his people.

## RESPOND

If peace is a gift given by our God who is above the troubles and chaos of our lives, are you receiving that gift? If not, what are you focused on that you need to let go of? Make a list of what's dominating your attention, and then spend a few minutes giving that list to God.

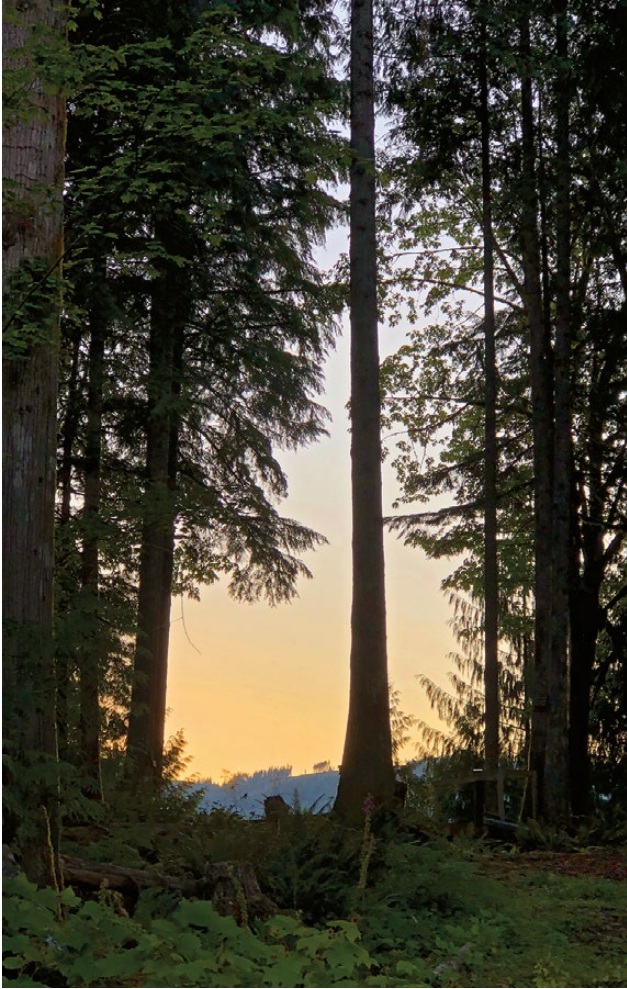


PHOTO BY RANDY BOURLAND

NOVEMBER 18, 2020

# Purpose in Suffering

*by Ryan Ervin, Care Pastor*

## ROMANS 5:1-5

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, **we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ**, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

## REFLECT

These are tough verses, perhaps some of the toughest in all the Bible, but they're at the core of what God has already done, and what he wants to do now. I both love and hate that Paul prefaces a difficult process with peace. You and I have peace with God; Jesus paid for us and gave us divine access. That is done. However, God's not done forming Christ in me, which often gets bloody.

Have you ever "gloried in your sufferings?" Sat there in the full weight of them, thanked God that he's there with you, and acknowledged he may have an active, loving hand in the difficulties of your life?

## RESPOND

Go ahead and do that now. Read the verses again then sit, feel the refining stressors in your life (along with any suffering they're causing), and thank God that these serve the purpose of forming Jesus in you.

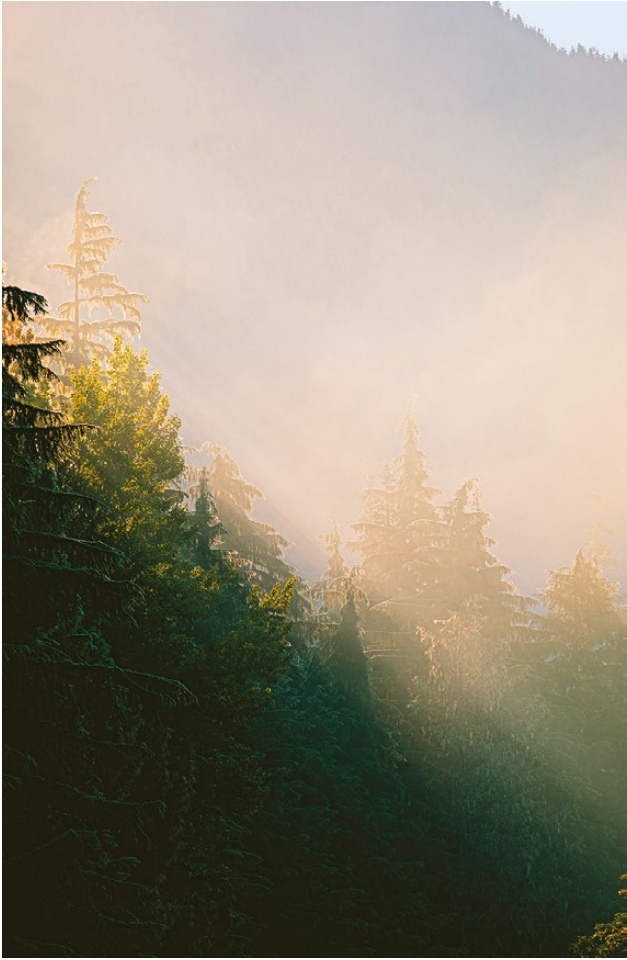


PHOTO BY MATT DEALY

NOVEMBER 19, 2020

# The Gift of Peace

by Steve Thompson, Communications Pastor

## JOHN 14:27

**“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.** I do not give as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

## REFLECT

In biblical times, it was common to greet people or part from them by offering a blessing of peace. “Peace be with you” or “Shalom, Shalom!” were common in the day. When Jesus speaks of the peace he’s giving, it’s an inner peace full of hope and reassurance that goes far beyond what any human, activity or substance can offer.

There are so many challenges we face daily that are literally robbing us of peace. The divisive political climate, COVID-19, and social and economic issues just to name a few.

## RESPOND

Take a few moments to quiet your heart and mind.

Now literally take a deep breath and say,

*“I breathe in the peace of Christ.”*

When you exhale, name out loud what is troubling you.

*“I breathe out my fear over my finances.”*

Do this multiple times and name the specific fear, anger, anxiety, or anything else the Lord brings to mind. Close with a thankful heart to Christ the King who provides perfect peace.



PHOTO BY RANDY BOURLAND

NOVEMBER 20, 2020

# Replacing Fear with Peace

*by Kevin Brearley, Adult Ministries Pastor*

## EPHESIANS 2:14-16

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and **peace as you trust in him**, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

### REFLECT

When I was sixteen, I was still afraid of the dark. So before bed I would search the whole house and then sleep with a knife or my trusty BB gun.

One day, while working at a camp for the disabled, our camp leader and the man that introduced me to Jesus stated to me, out of the blue, that I was afraid of the dark. I thought, wow this is weird, as I had not told anyone out of shame. He asked me to repeat a Bible verse—2 Timothy 1:7: “God has not given us a spirit of fear but a spirit of power, love, and self-discipline.”

After repeating this verse a couple of times, the Holy Spirit came over me in a powerful way and I had incredible joy and peace that gave me hope. From that day on whenever I feel fear, I speak this verse to replace fear with peace.

### RESPOND

Take the time today to memorize 2 Timothy 1:7. It’s a short verse and should not take too long to learn.

Throughout the day, if you should experience fear for any reason, stop, take a few deep breaths and speak this verse (out loud if you can) and trust God to fill you with his Spirit to replace fear with joy and peace.



PHOTO BY SCOTT SAYERS



NOVEMBER 21, 2020

# Good News Bookends

*by Melonie Kemp, Network Executive Pastor*

## JOHN 16:33

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.

## REFLECT

At first glance this verse seems like bad news. Jesus is all but guaranteeing that we will have trouble in our lifetime, so we shouldn't be surprised when it eventually crosses our paths. However, bookending the bad news is the good news "...in me you may have peace... and I have overcome the world."

Jesus doesn't sugarcoat reality. But in the same verse, he claims that we don't need to be defined by our reality, that in him we can overcome our current circumstances and experience a kind of peace that isn't accessible through human coping mechanisms or human effort. This is great news!

## RESPOND

In times of trouble (like heartbreak, pain, loss, confusion, even disillusionment) we often ask God, "Why is this happening?" What if we instead asked, "Lord, in you I find peace. How shall I respond in these difficult circumstances?" This is a response that comes from being rooted in Jesus and leads to a peace-filled life in good times and bad times, in heartbreak and in celebration.

As a new habit, ask God daily, "Lord, in you I find peace. How shall I respond in my current circumstance?"



PHOTO BY SCOTT SAYERS

NOVEMBER 22, 2020

# Peace is a Verb

by Brian Behrends, Creative Pastor

## JAMES 2:14-17

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. **If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?** In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

## REFLECT

I’m convinced that we think about peace too passively. We think peace is merely the absence of conflict when Jesus says it’s so much more. It’s not just something we wish for people, it’s something we can practice and participate in.

We can be bringers of peace. We can be keepers of peace. We can even be makers of peace.

Jesus says, don’t merely tell people to go in peace when you see a need. Instead, create peace by meeting a need. Don’t sit passively by hoping that peace comes your way, love people in such a way that peace is a byproduct of your presence in people’s lives. Don’t merely wish for peace, bring peace wherever you go.

## RESPOND

I want to challenge you today to consider how you can move away from passive waiting and wishing for peace and start actively pursuing, bringing, keeping, and creating peace in your life and in those around you. Write a few ideas here.

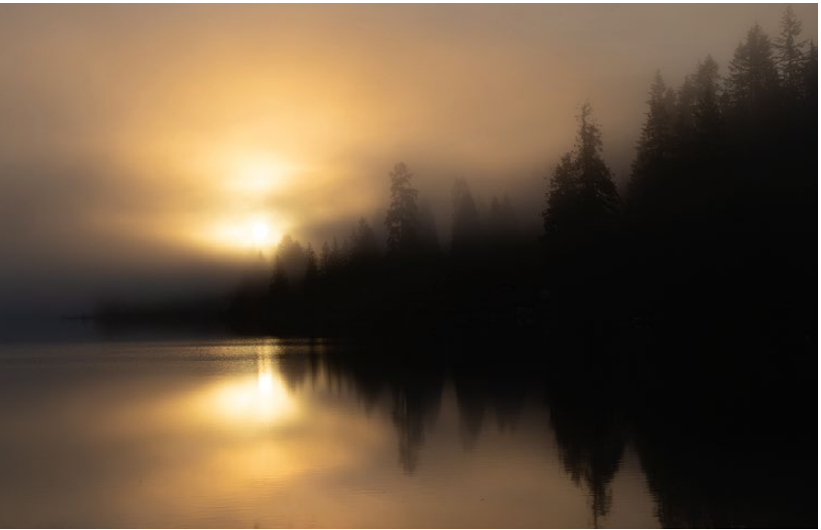


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NOVEMBER 23, 2020

# Are You Worth Your Salt?

*by Ron Walton, Adult Ministries Pastor*

## MARK 9:50

“Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt among yourselves, and **be at peace with each other.**”

## REFLECT

Man has known about the usefulness of salt for many years. At one time, salt was so important that people were actually paid with salt. Since salt is so important, is it any wonder that Jesus told us that we were to be like salt in the world?

Listen to the words of Jesus. “Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.” I think he’s saying that we should flavor our world with his love and peace, and that we should allow him, through the Holy Spirit, to use us in making this world a better place.

Are you worth your salt? We can answer with an unequivocal *yes*, not because of anything we’ve done or will do, but because of Jesus who preserves us, flavors our lives, and makes us thirsty for him and his word.

## RESPOND

How about you? Are you allowing Jesus to use you to be salt to the world? How can you draw closer to God this week in order to receive what he wants to offer the world through you?



PHOTO BY DREW YOUNG

NOVEMBER 24, 2020

# Stubbing Your Toe

*by Jason Manning, CTK Sudden Valley Campus Pastor*

## PSALM 119:165

**Great peace have those who love your law,  
and nothing can make them stumble.**

## REFLECT

Hasn't it felt like we have all been stumbling through the dark this year? Like when you stub your toe only to hop around on one foot and set your foot back down on top of a strategically placed Lego piece. Psalm 119:105 says God's word is a lamp for our feet and a light to our path. Then verse 165 in the same psalm says we will have peace in our love of God's law. In other words, peace can be found in knowing and loving God's Word.

I think we can all agree on one thing (even before we started venturing through this year): life can sometimes be tough, difficult, or flat out hard. What we can be even more confident in is that God is active. It's our knowledge and understanding of God and the truth he has given us in the Bible that help us through the dark places. The more we understand God and how he loves, protects, comforts, and helps direct our path, the more we can walk with confidence each day. Our confidence in God and his Word brings peace to our lives.

## RESPOND

How do you tend to handle troubling times?  
What's your typical first response when you face  
difficulties? With that in mind, read a few verses:

John 16:33 • 2 Thessalonians 3:16  
John 14:27 • 1 Peter 5:7 • Philippians 4:7

The next time you feel troubled or life is becoming more difficult, simply ask God, out loud, to light your path and steady your feet with the promises of his peace found in his Word.



PHOTO BY MATT DEALY



NOVEMBER 25, 2020

# Where is My Mind?

by Tyler Michel, CTK Blaine Campus Pastor

## ROMANS 8:5-8

Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but **the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.** The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

## REFLECT

There's a lot to distract our minds with. The average adult watches more than five hours of TV each day. The average Facebook user (69% of U.S. adults) accesses the site 8 times a day. That's just what fills the "down time" of our day. How much of our thought life is spent on work, family, or school?

Are you keeping your mind on the Spirit or on the flesh and the temporary noise of this world? Sounds difficult, but it's so necessary! Paul is saying that if we devote our minds to the things of God — the Spirit — that's where life and peace are found!

Can I challenge you today? Put social media away for 24 hours. Turn off television too. Fast from those things, and use that downtime to pray or read God's Word. Wherever you are — work, home, the grocery store — let the Spirit have your mind today.

See what God might do. He might change your heart and fill you with life and peace.

## RESPOND

What do you need to put away so that you set your mind on the Spirit? List the distractions that you struggle with. Ask God to invigorate with you with his presence today. Ask God to help you focus on the hope, peace, and life found only in him.



PHOTO BY DREW YOUNG

NOVEMBER 26, 2020

# A Family of Peacemakers

by Wendy Powell, Community Outreach Pastor

## MATTHEW 5:9

**Blessed are the peacemakers,**  
for they will be called children of God.

## REFLECT

It's interesting that Jesus' blessing is not for the *peaceful*, but for the *peacemakers*. Making peace is an active way of being in the world, of seeing other people, of behaving towards them. Peacemakers impact and influence those around them for the good. Much like thermostats, they set the temperature or tone of interactions, rather than simply "reading the room" and following suit. In choosing peacemaking, we emulate Jesus and will be recognized by others as children of God.

Jesus further describes this family resemblance in Luke 6:35-36: "But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."

When peacemaking is the *what*, it seems love, generosity, kindness, and mercy is the *how*.

## RESPOND

In what rooms or with which people in your life do you most need the Holy Spirit's help to choose love, generosity, kindness, and mercy? Ask him for that help now and then take time to listen for specific ways he is leading you to do that.

