

# The Gift of Peace Transcription

## The Gift of Peace - John 14:27 - Skip Heitzig

[UPBEAT MUSIC PLAYING]

(SINGING) All we are saying--

(SPEAKING) Peace. Celebrities demand it.

(SINGING) --is give peace a chance.

(SPEAKING) Pop culture makes it a catchy tune. Activists protest for it.

(SINGING) All we are--

(SPEAKING) Still--

(SINGING) --saying--

(SPEAKING) --peace seems out of reach.

(SINGING) --is give peace--

(SPEAKING) True peace can't--

(SINGING) --a chance.

(SPEAKING) --be found in or understood by this world.

(SINGING) All we are saying is give it a chance. All we are saying is give peace a chance.

(SPEAKING) Give peace a chance.

[MUSIC ENDS]

[CLAPPING]

Good morning.

Good morning.

Great to see y'all. Great to have you in church and we're looking forward to this new series, Give Peace A Chance. Shout out to the team in doing such a great job with the graphics, very Yellow Submarine I love that whole vibe there. And in your bulletin, by the way, we have given you a little pamphlet. It's called the "Peace Pamphlet." And what it does is it gives you Monday, all the way down to-- Sunday to Saturday, a whole week's worth of things to apply to make you a more peaceful person. And to make the message something that is a real part of your life, so take advantage to that.

Turn in your Bibles, please, to the book of John, chapter 14, please. John, chapter 14. Back in the 1990s, there was a very popular bumper sticker. Do you remember this one? Remember that on cars, visualize world peace? So I remember when people started putting that on their car, and I was thinking like, really? That's all you got to do. Just think about it? Kind of picture it? Visualize it? That's going to bring world peace?

And of course, that was the standard response that most people had. They kind of mocked that and they did alternate bumper stickers, like this one, visualize world peas. You've probably saw that as well. I think my favorite one is, visualize using your turn signal.

[LAUGHING]

That's a very important one, especially for Albuquerque drivers. People have been talking about peace, and singing about peace, and protesting for peace, and giving out peace prizes to one another for generations. We've been talking about it, and singing about it, and marching for it, but we haven't been experiencing much of it.

So there was a journalist that was assigned to the Jerusalem Bureau for her news outlet. And there she was living in Jerusalem. And she got an apartment overlooking the Western Wall complex. So the Wailing Wall, or the Western Wall, is the most iconic part of old Jerusalem. It's the remnant, the remains, of the old temple complex. So it's like the best view in the city. So she has an apartment looking over the place where Jews still come to pray, a very sacred spot.

And so she would notice that every day this same man, an older gentleman with a beard, and the hat, and the side curls, an orthodox man would come to the wall every day and pray. And she thought, wow, he would be a great interview. I want to find out who that is and talk to him.

So she went down to the wall, to the Western Wall, the Wailing Wall, and she found him after he was done praying. And she introduced herself as a journalist and could I have an interview with you? And he said, sure. So she said, well, how long have you been doing this? And what is it you pray for? He said, I've been doing this every day for 25 years. I come every day.

And when these guys pray at the wall, they just don't stand there and pray. They move when they pray. They pray with such intensity and they shake and rock back-and-forth. So he said, I've been doing this every day for 25 years and I pray for world peace. I pray for the brotherhood of all mankind. And I pray for, especially, peace in the Middle East.

She was greatly impressed by his answer. And she said, so, how does it make you feel to come here every day for 25 years and pray? And he threw up his arms and he said, like talking to a wall.

[LAUGHING]

When it comes to peace, I think a lot of people feel just like that. It's like talking to a wall. We talk about it, we sing about it, we march for it, but we just don't have it. Where do we get it?

So I did a search this week in Google, it something I like to do from time-to-time just to see what kind of results. And I typed in the word, "peace." And it came back with one billion, 390 million results. You think it's on people's minds? Then I typed in the two words, "world peace." Got a similar number, one billion, 70 million hits. Then I typed in, "personal peace." And got one billion, 60 million hits. Then I typed in the words, "inner peace" and "spiritual peace." And both of those got a similar amount, 215 million results.

I found a group of researchers and they call this the Global Peace Index. The Global Peace-- I didn't even know such a thing existed. So it's a group of people who research this topic and they come up with an index called the Global Peace Index. And their statement on their website was, the world is less peaceful today than at any time in the last decade.

Now, it's been a bad decade, but right now, they're saying it's the worst in the last decade. Now, that doesn't surprise us. We've been through a pandemic. We have been through a lot of loss, a lot of death, a lot of bad times in our economy, so it doesn't surprise us when the Global Peace Index says the world is

less peaceful today than at any time in the past decade.

There's another metric though that you probably have heard of, it's an economic number, an index called the misery index. It's even been made into a popular television series, The Misery Index. It is an economic measuring tool. It came out in the 1960s by an economist named Arthur Okin, he was an advisor to President Lyndon Johnson. And he came up with this idea of the misery index. And he calculates it this way. It is the unemployment rate added to the inflation rate. So it's a combination of rising inflation and people out of work.

The best time for the misery index was 2019, it was at its lowest. Our misery was at its lowest, economically. So September of 2019, which seems like a long time ago, but it was, if you can think back, a really good time for our country and the world economically. A lot of economic prosperity and it was getting better and better. So September of 2019, the misery index was at 5%. It peaked at its worst, guess when? 2020. The year of the pandemic. Up from 5% to 15%, its been the highest.

So our misery index is high our Peace Index is low. This is another reason why church is essential, because you're not going to get any good news anywhere except here. You're not going to get good news in the newspapers. You're not going to get good news on social media. If you want to be robbed of peace, go there. If you want good news go to a place where you hear the truths and the promises of God's word.

So we just felt that after a year of all this, and it's still not over, we needed to be refreshed with a series on peace and be reminded of the promises of God's peace. And we're going to look at John, chapter 14, and one particular verse, verse 27. It's a great promise.

Years ago, there was a school teacher from Canada. He read through the Bible 27 times. And he decided he wanted to find out how many promises God made to us, so he spent a year and 1/2 after reading through the Bible 27 times, he decided now I'm going to go through it and tally up all of the promises. Took him a year and 1/2. And the number he came up with was there are 7,487 promises that God has made to us.

Peter calls them great and precious promises, but of all the promises God has given to us, perhaps the most elusive of them is this promise of peace. So the next few weeks we're going to look at peace with God, peace with each other, peace within ourselves. And I want to take you to this verse, verse 27 of John 14. I'm going to begin a couple of verses in advance, look back at verse 25.

Jesus speaking, "These things I have spoken to you while being present with you." Now let me remind you what he is referring to, these things, is chapter 13, 14, 15 and 16. It's called the Upper Room Discourse, it is the last meeting Jesus has with his disciples before he is arrested and crucified. He knows what's coming. He has announced to them what is coming.

But with those announcements come all of these promises in these chapters. It's filled with incredible promises, the power of the Holy Spirit, the promise of peace, and many others. So, "These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."

Now our verse, verse 27, "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." That's the verse we're going to camp on. It is such a monumental promise that I want to give you out of that single verse, a four-fold description of the peace that Jesus promised his followers. Four aspects of this peace.

The first aspect is that this peace is needful. I don't think anybody would disagree with that. We need God's peace. And I think everybody here would vote for that, say, yep, I agree with that. We need it. But if anyone really needed peace that night that Jesus spoke these words it would have been his disciples.

Here's what you have to understand at this point in the Last Supper meal, the disciples are stressed out.

They had given up their careers. They'd been following Jesus for 3 and 1/2 years. They anticipated he's going to come and build a kingdom on Earth, that clearly is not going to happen. All their hopes during this meal come crashing down. Why? Because Jesus announces to them his expiration and his exit. He says to them, I'm going to die and I'm going to leave. I'm going to depart. And where I'm coming, you can't follow.

So in the midst of that, when their turmoil might even have been out of control. He says, peace. "Peace I leave with you." I'm going to just venture a guess that when he said these words a few of the disciples may have rolled their eyes at him. He just said he's leaving, he's dying, you can't come where I'm going, I'm not building the kingdom you thought. Peace. Like, peace it out. See you. And they roll their eyes like, oh really? Like, whatever.

It might be sort of like this, somebody comes up to you and says, hey, I just want you to know that your son or your daughter just got in a traffic accident, but don't worry. You go, don't worry? You just laid that news on me and then you say, don't worry.

I'll just tell you a personal story. Years ago, I was in junior high school, I was on vacation with my parents. I was in the back seat, my dad was driving, mom was in the passenger seat. We are going from our home in Southern California up to Oregon. We're going out of Reno, Nevada, early in the morning. We're on a highway. And we didn't know that there was a driver who had been drinking, and had fallen asleep at the wheel, and was in our lane coming around a curve on a mountain highway.

It was a head on collision. It was a 120 mile an hour impact of two vehicles. It instantly killed that man. And it put my mom and dad in the hospital. I guess, they didn't know what to do with me. I was in the hospital for a little bit getting checked out. Then they stuck me in a hotel room alone. I'm a junior high school kid.

So I turn on the TV that evening and the evening news talks about the collision. It shows our vehicle that had been in the collision, and the news anchor announced that my father and mother had died. Now it wasn't true, but I didn't know that at the time. So all of the wind gets sucked out of the room. I'm freaking out.

And so I started getting calls from my brothers and other people in town saying, don't worry, it's going to be OK. I'm going, it's going to be OK? And then, oh, no, they didn't really die, but how do you know? And I mean, it's like you're at a moment of heightened emotion and you're processing through the information. And the midst of that Jesus says, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you." I just want you to get that impact for a moment.

Now let's look at the word. The word that he uses here for peace is the Greek word, "eirēni," which is where we get the feminine name Irene. Irene means peaceful one or peace. It is defined as an internal state of tranquility. It is when you are quiet and you have a restful mind. That's the idea of this word, "eirēni." It became a greeting, a common greeting to say to somebody. To say, peace to you, eirēni. Paul uses that in his letters. He says, grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now that practice of extending peace actually goes farther back than the Greeks, it goes back to the Hebrews. The Hebrews to this day use the ancient greeting when they meet one another on the street. And they say-- What do they say?

Shalom.

Shalom! You go to Israel and they say, shalom. And "shalom" is to extend peace to somebody or to wish them well. So here's Jesus saying, peace, shalom, eirēni I leave with you. "My peace I give to you."

Now notice what he says, "Peace I leave with you." It's a deposit. It's a gift. You don't work your way into a feeling of peace, I'm just laying it on you. In fact, the New Living Translation says, "I am leaving you with a

gift, peace of mind and heart.

Let those words sink in. If you're a businessman or a businesswoman and maybe you're losing your business because of all these lock-downs, and regulations, and restrictions, Jesus Christ is promising you his peace. If you're a worker and you don't know if you're going to have a job this coming week or next month, he is promising you peace. If you're a student and you are struggling with Zoom classes and you don't know if you're going to be able to graduate because of this crazy system, he is telling you peace. If you are a parent and you have to work, and have your children at home and homeschool them because of this not being able to go to school, hear these words, Jesus is promising you peace in the midst of that.

OK. That's good, Jesus. Thank you for that nice sentiment. Thank you for saying peace. But it's nice to talk about peace and it's great to promise peace, but the question still remains where is peace to be found? Because the truth of the matter is, world history shows that there's never been a time of peace. There's never been a time where we haven't, as a human race, experienced war.

I read an article in the New York Times that was quoting Will Durant, the famous historian, who said in 3,400 years of recorded history, the world has only been at peace about 8% of the time. So out of 3,400 years of recorded history, the world, according to the article, has been at peace 268 years.

And people say, well you know how many peace treaties have been broken in that time? All of them. All of them. So somebody said, peace is actually that brief moment in history where everyone stands around reloading.

[LAUGHING]

All right, getting ready for the next conflict. According to the Daily Mail-- the Daily Mail is a news outlet in London. The Daily Mail said, there are more than 40 active conflicts around the world at this moment. This is today. This is now. Some of the countries currently at war, Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, Mexico, Turkey, Somalia, Iraq, Libya. And it goes on to say the number of people affected by humanitarian crises has almost doubled over the past decade.

So you've got war, you've got humanitarian problems, add to that COVID-19. Add to that worldwide recession. And you have the absence of peace. You have national peace, you have international peace, and because of that you have-- or excuse me, the absence. You have conflict, you don't have international peace, and you don't have, because of that, inner-personal peace.

Anxiety levels are at an all time high. Here's something I found from Mental health America, that's a group of mental health experts the study this. They said, "As the pandemic relentlessly persists we are seeing the highest levels of anxiety and depression reported since the pandemic hit the US in March of 2020." So it's been about a year almost. In this whole year right now depression and anxiety are at their highest.

The article says, "This troubling trend is fueled by loneliness and isolation." So once again, it's great to have a promise, great to sing about it, great to talk about it, but where is it? Ah. That's why we have to keep reading. Because it says, "Peace I leave with you." But here it is, "My peace I give to you." The peace that Jesus is speaking of is tied to him personally.

The promise of peace is linked to the Prince of Peace. So that's a title that is given to Jesus by Isaiah The Prophet. He's the one that wrote about the Prince of Peace. You know the text well, we talk about it just about every Christmas. Isaiah 9:6, for unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name will be called wonderful, counselor, mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of peace.

It's a very interesting title. He's not called the prince of love. He's not called the prince of hope. He's not called the prince of joy, though he could be called all those things. But he is first and foremost to be regarded as the Prince of Peace, because you really don't have joy until you have peace, you really don't

experience true love without that peace, you really don't have hope until you have peace. So he goes by that title, the Prince of Peace.

Now he says, my peace. I need you to understand what this means. It's literally, my personal peace. The peace that I own. The peace that governs my internal life, that peace is what I give to you. So he is the manufacturer of this peace and he is the distributor of it. So it could be translated this way. He is saying, I am going to cause you to be restful, and quiet, and peaceful inside your hearts with the same kind of rest, and quietude, and peace that I have inside my heart.

Now you think about that for a moment. So think about the peace that Jesus had. When you read the Gospels, do you ever see, or read, or think of, do you ever imagine Jesus to be worried? Is that who you picture? Do you picture Jesus biting his fingernails? Going, man, stressful! It's out of control! Ever? He is the most calm, peaceful, unruffled personality ever.

He even stands before Pontius Pilate. And when he he's before Pilate, and Pilate asked him a question Jesus doesn't answer and a Pilate gets all up in his grill and says, what? You're not answering me? Don't you know that I have the power to put you to death or set you free? Remember what Jesus said to him? You would have no power at all unless it were given to you from above. In other words, the only thing you're going to do to me is what God the Father wants you to do to me. That's peace. That's rest. That's calm.

Now when Jesus says, "My peace I leave with you." Keep in mind, he knew what he was about to encounter because he predicted it. He said, they're going to arrest me. They're going to beat me up and they're going to kill me.

So he knew in a few hours he would be betrayed, arrested, he would be beaten, he knew that he would have a crown of thorns pushed in his scalp, and he knew that he was going to a cross. And he is peaceful. So he says, that's the peace. The peace that I have, the peace that I enjoy, the peace that governs my internal processing is what I am giving to you.

So I want you to just think about this that the effect that Jesus Christ should have on a person's life is this. It's this peace. It is the stamp we bear. It's called the Fruit of the Spirit. Fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5, is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness.

I love what J Oswald Sanders said. He said, peace is not the absence of trouble, it's the presence of God. Sure, you're going to have trouble. It's going to be all around you. It's going to be around you nationally, internationally. Even in your neighborhood, among your family. But he promises you his presence. He promises you peace.

I don't know how you picture God, but I've been around enough Christians who picture God with a frown. Not a smile, they don't think of God like this at them. But he's just miffed at me a little bit. He's never really pleased with me. He's sort of like folding his arms over his celestial robe, kind of looking at me like this. If you picture God that way, you need a new picture. You got the wrong picture.

Because God said even to his sinning people, the children of Israel, about to go into captivity, he said, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." You know that verse, Jeremiah 29:11.

Now at this point, it's good to divide peace up into two different categories. We enjoy two kinds of peace. We enjoy the peace that comes with God. I'll explain that. And then we enjoy subsequent to that, the peace of God. The first kind of peace, peace with God, is objective. The second peace, the peace of God, is subjective.

In other words, the first, objective, means it's outside of us. You may feel it, you might not feel it.

Irregardless, it's there. It's a transactional peace. Whereas the peace of God is something that is subjective, you feeling, it's experiential.

So peace with God comes when you come to Christ. You come to Jesus Christ, you ask him into your heart into your life as Lord and Savior, your sins are forgiven. In effect, you raise the white flag of surrender and you say, I give up. I give up.

And when you do that the hostility is turned into peace, you have peace with God. That's Romans chapter 5. It begins like this, therefore, being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

You come to God on his terms. His terms are the cross. You come and receive what Jesus did for you on your behalf, and God says good, we are at peace you and I. You're right before me. You are righteous before me. You are justified before me. So now you have peace with God. That's what Isaiah meant when he said, he was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him and by his stripes we are healed. That's the first, peace with God.

After you have peace with God comes the experience part. That's the peace of God. That's the feeling of well-being. That's the feeling of tranquility. That's experiencing what Jesus promises here in this chapter. It's what Paul meant when he said, and here's a verse you know, I know you know it because watch this. Paul said, in Philippians 4, "Be anxious for--"

Nothing.

"--nothing." See I knew you knew it. "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by 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 your minds."

So now you are feeling it, now you're experiencing it. You're feeling tranquil and peaceful. That's why I love the song that we just sang, "It is Well With My Soul." That's being in the midst of turmoil still having the feeling of tranquility.

If it helps I'm going to boil it down even further and say this, Jesus Christ as Savior gives you peace with God, Jesus Christ as Lord gives you the peace of God. You make Jesus your Savior, you're at peace with God whether you feel like it or not. But when you walk with him, and trust him, and apply what you know to be true, you experience the peace of God. Either way, both of the kinds of peace that I just describe come through the person and the personality of Jesus Christ.

If you've never read this book, you should, it's called Peace Child by Don Richardson. It came out in the '70s. Don Richardson was a missionary to the Sawi tribe, down in Indonesia in Irian Jaya. And he felt called by God, he and his wife went there. He wanted to preach the Gospel. He lived there for months and then years. He even developed a language, a written language for them, so he could translate some of the Gospel in their language. And he just loved them.

Well, the problem with loving them is that the Sawi tribes were cannibals. How do you love your next door neighborhood cannibal? Headhunters. And so he was there trying to share the Gospel with them without any success at all. He was about ready to give up, because he discovered that the Sawi villages, the tribes, were always warring with each other. They had no peace.

And they extolled things like revenge and murder. Those were noble traits in those cultures. If you murder somebody, if you exact revenge, that's good. Whereas acts of kindness were seen with suspicion. So good luck trying to love on them and be kind to them, because they don't respect kindness, but give me a head on a plate, you're a good guy. So that's tough.

So he didn't quite know how he's going to share the Gospel with them until he discovered the key. Though they viewed acts of kindness with suspicion, there was only one act of kindness that they really respected. And that is when one village, one tribe, gave a baby boy of theirs to the other village. When they gave that baby boy to the other village, as long as that child was alive, there was peace between the tribes. It was called the Peace Child. He goes that's it, that's my key.

So he told them about God's peace child. How God gave his son to our tribe, and that he is still alive because he rose from the dead, and that transformed their understanding. And to this day, there are vibrant, vibrant Christians and churches in that area. The point is, God makes peace through his peace child, the Lord Jesus Christ.

So this peace is needful and this peace is relational. Let me give you a third aspect of this promise. This peace is incomparable. For, notice verse 27, when Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you." The next phrase is, "Not as the world gives do I give to you." In other words, this is an other worldly peace. You'll never find this kind of peace in the world. Or you might say, the peace that I promise is out of this world.

And in the truest sense, there is no real peace to be found in this world. The Bible says, that we in our natural state are at enmity with God. That there is hostility from the moment we are born with God. You may not feel that, that's irrelevant. It is a fact. There is a hostility, we're at enmity with God.

Now people might try to play that down like the false prophets in the Old Testament, who came along during Jeremiah's time and said, peace, peace! Jeremiah shot back at them and said, you are healing the hurt of my people slightly by saying peace, peace, when there is no peace. Jeremiah said, there's no peace. God's going to judge this nation or bring them into captivity. But these false prophets are saying, oh, no, it's peace.

Now the world may offer a momentary experience of a peaceful feeling. You, apart from Christ, might have fleeting feelings of tranquility. You might find it in a romantic relationship. You might find it on a good vacation. You might find it in a new purchase of a car or something you've saved up for. Hey, you might find it in a good cup of coffee. I find a lot of peace and a really well roasted cup of brew. But it is momentary.

And all of those things are substitutes, it's a pseudo-peace. It's what one author calls, the bliss of ignorance. That's worldly peace, the bliss of ignorance. Because if an unbeliever understood what awaits them they would not enjoy a single moment of peace. All that they have to offer is something momentary and transitory, Jesus offers something that is long-lasting, that is everlasting.

Many years ago, over a century ago, you've heard me talk about D.L. Moody, Dwight Lyman Moody, the evangelist and pastor from Chicago. He was on a evangelistic tour. He was preaching with another evangelist in a town. People from the town were coming to hear them speak and hear the Gospel.

One man was coming every night, but he was under the conviction of the Holy Spirit and he was so angry and wrestling with what he heard. He finally wrote one of the evangelists who was with Moody this letter. Look at it.

He said, "I wish you and Moody had never come to this city. Before you came, I wasn't troubled about my sins. You talk of peace and joy, but you have turned my soul into a living hell. I can't stay away from the meetings, and to come to them only makes me worse. You promised salvation, but all I find is torment. I wish you'd leave, then I'd get back my old peace."

Listen to that, I want my old peace. I want that dumb, little, substitute feeling that I had before you guys came to town and told me about your Savior. Give me my old peace. Sir, you don't need your old peace, you need his peace. And his peace comes from receiving the Savior, who promises you his own personal sense of calm and peace. So this peace is incomparable, you won't get it anywhere else.



And finally the fourth aspect, this piece is responsible. Now this is interesting, because look at verse 27 again. It says, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Now I want you to really get this, because you have one verse, but there's two sentences in one verse.

The first sentence is a promise. The second sentence is a command. So he says, peace I leave. "My peace I give to you." Then he gives us a command. He says, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." You're saying, well, wait a minute. What is this about? It's called responsibility.

What do you mean responsibility? I thought you said it was a deposit? I thought you said he gives it to you, it's free, he's leaving it with us? Well, sure but any promise you have to appropriate. I mean, that's the way it is in all of life.

You could have a million dollars in the bank, but if you don't take money out of the bank it does you no good. You have to use what you have. If you have a cabinet full of tools and you need to get something done, well, you've got to go get those tools. You might have all the equipment you need, but you have to appropriate that. Same with this. Same with peace.

So he gives a promise, then he gives a command. Now listen to the command. It is an imperative, and it is a present passive imperative, which means he is saying stop an action that you're already doing. Stop an ongoing action. So it's like saying, you guys are stressed out. You are feeling anything but peaceful. You're filled with turmoil and so much worry, stop it. I know it's going on, stop it.

Literally it's, let not your heart continue to be agitated. You say, no, wait a minute. Here's Jesus giving his beautiful promise to a bunch of worried disciples and he tells them who are worried, stop it. That's like saying, your kid's got in an accident, don't worry. No.

Here's the difference. Whenever Jesus gives you a command, he gives you the ability to obey the command. He gives you the power to do it. So with a command always comes capacity. When Jesus gives a command, he also gives capacity, capability to fulfill the command.

So what this shows us is that you and I have the power to stop freaking out. Yeah, but the world is a pandemic. Stop freaking out. Yeah, but the economy. Stop freaking out. Stop the ongoing action of being overwhelmed by it. "Let not your heart be troubled."

As Christians we have a responsibility to enact the promise that he gives. So Jesus gives them a promise of peace, they have to appropriate the promise. That's the responsibility. How do you do that? 2 Corinthians 10, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

So your thoughts are taking you in a direction, lasso them, chain them, bring them to Christ, drop them off there. And if you have to do it 10 times a day, 20 times a day, do it. Romans chapter 12, do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Renew your mind with God's promises. Refresh your mind with what you know to be true.

1 Peter chapter 1, gird up the loins of your mind. That's an old-fashioned way of saying, think clearly and exercise self-control. So it has a lot to do with what you allow your mind to do.

So the peace promise has to be guarded. You might say, we have to keep the peace. I've discovered it's better to keep the peace than to make peace every time you lose it. Just keep it. Just guard it. Just maintain it. Now, how do you do that? Well, I'm going to be showing you how to do that in the next few weeks.

But I want to leave with you, as we close, two basics. Two basics. Here's our responsibility. These two things, if you do them, will help you stay peaceful as a believer. Number one, stay connected vertically. Number

two, stay connected horizontally. It's pretty basic, right? Life is like two planes, vertical, horizontal. So stay connected vertically, that's your relationship with God.

Jesus said, in John 15, abide in me. Abide means stick close to me, just like a branch sticks close to the vine to get all the nutrition flowing in. Stick close to me, abide in me. Maintain a constant living communion with me.

Go over to John 16 for just a moment, look at one verse, John 16:33. Just flip a couple of pages to the right. It's the same evening, it's the same talk, it's the same place. He's closing out his Upper Room Discourse. Chapter 16 verse 33, "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you might have peace. In the world, you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." You stick close to me, "I have overcome the world." You maintain a constant living communion with me and you're going to experience, in the midst of tribulation and turmoil, a very peaceful tranquil feeling. Wouldn't we all love that?

Sailors talk about this place in the ocean called the Cushion of the Sea. And the Cushion of the Sea is a place below the surface of the ocean so deep that it's undisturbed. Doesn't matter what's going on atop the ocean. You could have a typhoon, you could have a storm event going on, but underneath you go down to a place where it's so calm it's cushioned. So God wants to place you in his little Cushion of the Sea.

In the world you're going to have tribulation. The storms are out there. "But be of good cheer, I've overcome the world." That's the cushion. So stay connected vertically.

Second, stay connected horizontally. That's right. You need people. And people need you. And one thing we have looked at in the last year when everybody said, lock yourself away and stay put. We found the truth of what it says in Genesis. What did God say, one of the first things? It is not good that man should be, what?

Alone.

Alone. And yet, we're told be alone. And the anxiety, and the suicide, and the depression is off the chart. You need people. And you can do that safely, but you still need connections horizontally. So do me a favor, if you know anybody in the church, anybody in the community, who is locked away, has pre-existing conditions, is feeling isolated and lonely, if you can get to them and encourage them, give them food, give them love, pray with them, please do that. Help them stay connected horizontally.

If you ever go to San Francisco, California, there's one major icon of architecture that everybody sees and it's called the-- Yeah, I heard a bridge. Golden Gate Bridge. So if you've never seen it, it's worth a trip just to check it out.

So when they built the Golden Gate Bridge, the architects basically designed it based on three criteria. One is called dead load. Two is live load. And three is wind load. So the dead load is just the weight of the bridge itself. It's a suspension bridge, so they take the weight of the unit itself, that's dead load.

Live load is the traffic that travels across it, so think peak traffic, truck's going back-and-forth, that adds weight and stress. Third is wind load. It's on the coast, so you get prevailing winds and you get storms. So they take all of those into consideration and to keep it strong they built special bracing for that.

All of that to say you and I need special bracing. We have God's promises and we should stay connected this way, but we need special bracings this way to stand the storms of life. You need friends. You need mentors. You need family members. You need the church. That's staying connected horizontally.

Every year at Christmas we celebrate peace. And we celebrate peace and we sing about peace, it's most of the Christmas songs, because the angels who spoke to the shepherds outside Bethlehem-- Remember what they said? They said, glory to God in the highest and on Earth peace, goodwill toward men. It's one of

the best promises ever.

But, now just think about it, based on where you're at, and what you've seen, and what you know. So you're standing around right now and an angel says, hey, peace on Earth. Goodwill toward men. You're thinking, Mr. Angel, have you not read the stats? Do you not know that only 8% of world history has seen peace? Do you not realize that there are conflicts right now going on everywhere? Where do you come off saying peace on Earth? Are you mocking us? Are you some hippie angel, like, peace dude?

What's all that about? Well, that's an unfortunate translation, peace on Earth, goodwill toward men. A more literal translation sounds like this, glory to God in the highest and on Earth peace to men on whom God's favor rests. That's a very different meaning, isn't it? Or, glory to God in the highest. Peace on Earth to those that God is well-pleased with.

So you want peace? You can have it. It can be yours. It can be a real experience. Will there be world peace? Someday, not now. Not anytime soon. It will never happen until Jesus comes back. So I applaud those who are given awards for it and marching for it, but ain't never going to happen until Jesus comes.

But you can experience peace personally. You can be connected to him. You can experience his own sense of tranquility and calm by being connected to him. It can be yours. And it's something I not only preach on, I pray for you for. I pray you experience God's peace.

Father I do that now. We've come through a very tough season and reports, even locally in our own state, of peace officers, police officer, being gunned down, down in Deming. And we think of those men and women who give their lives to keep the peace and then get shot in the process. Lord, our hearts go out to their family.

Our hearts go out to our community who are experiencing loss and economic hardship. And I do pray for your peace. It can be found, it can be had, it can be experienced. The world will never give it, they can't give it, they don't know it.

What they have to offer is ignorance. It's all the dumb answers that lead nowhere. And it just makes people feel good for a day. But there is a lasting sense of tranquility, and calm, and peace, and respite that does come from a relationship with you that is out of this world. That is so real and it can be ours.

I pray, Lord, that your people would experience it. And that those who don't know you would come to know you and have it. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen. Let's all stand, shall we?

[UPBEAT MUSIC PLAYING]

(SINGING) All we are--

(SPEAKING) We hope you enjoyed this--

(SINGING) --saying--

(SPEAKING) --special service from Calvary Church. We'd love to know--

(SINGING) --is give him--

(SPEAKING) --how this message impacted you.

(SINGING) --a chance.

(SPEAKING) Email us at [MyStory@CalvaryNM.Church](mailto:MyStory@CalvaryNM.Church). And just a reminder--

(SINGING) All we are--

(SPEAKING) -- you can support this ministry with a

(SINGING) -- saying--

(SPEAKING) --financial gift at [CalvaryNM.Church/Give](https://www.calvarynm.com/give).

(SINGING) --is give peace a chance.

(SPEAKING) Thank you for joining us for this teaching from Calvary Church. [MUSIC ENDS]