



Sunday 18th October 2020

Welcome to our Service  
Living in the Peace of God  
Prepared by Mervyn

When peace like a river attendeth my way  
When sorrows like sea billows roll  
Whatever my lot, You have taught me to say  
It is well, it is well with my soul

It is well with my soul  
It is well with my soul  
It is well, it is well with my soul

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come

Let this blest assurance control

That Christ has regarded my helpless estate  
And has shed His own blood for my soul

My sin, oh the bliss of this glorious thought  
My sin, not in part, but the whole  
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul

And Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight  
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll  
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend  
Even so, it is well with my soul

Words by Horatio Spafford 1828 - 1888

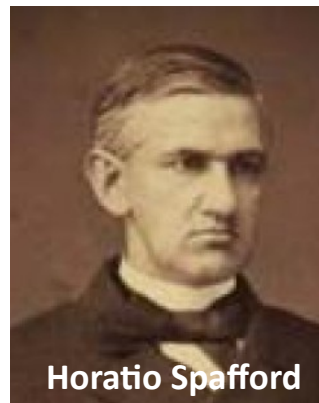
This hymn was written after traumatic events in Spafford's life. The first two were the death of his four-year-old son, and the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, which ruined him financially. He had been a successful lawyer, and had invested significantly in property in the area of Chicago that was extensively damaged by the great fire. His business interests were further hit by the economic downturn of 1873, at which time he had planned to travel to Europe with his family on the *SS Ville du Havre*. In a late change of plan, he sent the family ahead while he was delayed by business concerns. While crossing the Atlantic Ocean, the ship sank rapidly after a collision with a sea vessel, the *Loch Earn*,

Happy  
Birthdays to  
Jim (23rd)  
Grace P (24th)  
God bless you!



Dear God

During these uncertain times  
would you speak your peace  
deep into our lives. We ask  
for a tangible anointing of  
your peace that would settle  
our hearts, and enable your  
kingdom to grow through us.  
In Jesus name, and for his  
glory we pray. Amen



Horatio Spafford



Anna Spafford

and all four of Spafford's daughters died. His wife Anna survived and sent him the now famous telegram, "Saved alone ...". Shortly afterwards, as Spafford travelled to meet his grieving wife, he was inspired to write these words as his ship passed near where his daughters had died.

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I've called this talk today, '**living in the peace of God**', and it is my hope, and prayer that each of us would experience a touch of God's unexplainable peace as we spend this time together.

This is a season where many people are living under a heightened sense of stress and anxiety, with uncertainty on so many levels, and not knowing how long the Covid pandemic will last.

Often, when I have been faced with difficult situations, one of the prayers that I have noticed God loves to answer is "God, What do you want me to learn from this?"

This prayer changes the emphasis of the situation from a problem to an opportunity for growth and development. James writes in his letter in Ch 1: 2-4 Consider it joy when you face trials...

This doesn't mean that James loves hard times, but that these times have the potential to produce really good fruit in our lives.

Let's allow this season to motivate us to push through our deep fears and dig deep into God's peace.

Here are a small selection of Bible verses talking about peace, there are so many more!

**Isaiah 26:3 You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.**

**Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

**Jeremiah 6:14 They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. 'Peace, peace,' they say, when there is no peace.**

**Mark 4:39 Jesus says to the storm "Peace, be still"**

**Psalms 4:8 I will lie down in peace, and sleep; For You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.**

**Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**John 14:27 Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled; do not be afraid.**

**Colossians 3:15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful**



Now, we are complex creatures, and there is a chance that some of you may be feeling more anxious as a result of these verses because in some way they condemn you for feeling anxious!! If that's your experience, that's ok, and hopefully as we continue, that sense of condemnation will dissolve.

We just read John 14:27, and I really like the way the New Living Translation puts it.

**Jesus said, 'I am leaving you with a gift - peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid'.**

The Peace Jesus gives us is a gift, and what do we do with gifts? We receive them and unpack them. So, let's spend some time receiving and unpacking the gift of God's peace. Gifts can also come at unexpected times,

Barbara S in her interview on 23rd of August, said she was unexpectedly touched by God's peace while parked at traffic lights on Abbey road in Barrow and it changed her life!

God's peace is a gift for all of us to rest in, so what are some of the barriers that get in the way? Here are some barriers that I have experienced at times; we may need to address some of these to know God's peace in a deeper way.

**Unconfessed Sin** - A troubled conscience will rapidly steal our peace. We know when we have done something wrong, but God has done everything he can to enable us to be forgiven and set free. The words from our hymn today put it like this.

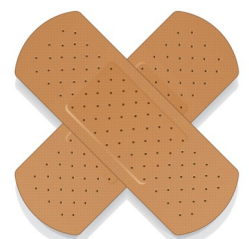
*My sin, oh the bliss of this glorious thought  
My sin, not in part, but the whole  
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul*

God wants us to live with a completely clear conscience everyday, to know the joy of his forgiveness, and the joy of forgiving ourselves and others! If you know there are areas of your life where you can't face yourself, tell Jesus all about it, and ask him to lead you into his peace.

**Deep Wounds** - Some of us have deep hurts and grief in our lives that can undermine our peace. God understands this and one of the verses we read earlier validates this.

**Jeremiah 6:14** They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. 'Peace, peace,' they say, when there is no peace.

God doesn't want you to have a form of pretend peace. If you experience on-going anxiety, this could be a sign that there is an area in your life in need of deep healing. Let God validate your pain as serious, and give him permission to do his restorative work. A plaster won't do if you need an operation!



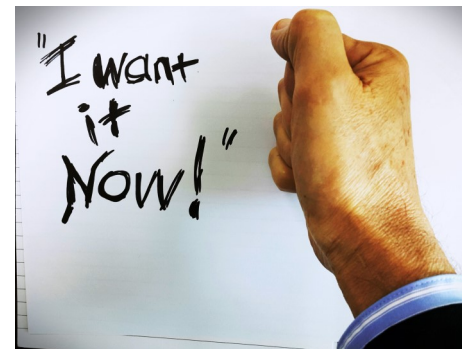
**An Unbalanced Diet** - The information you feed yourself can steal your peace. I have to admit I have become a bit of a news junky during this time, and I've yet to hear a news report end by saying, 'do not fear because God is in control!' He does have a plan, and he can turn evil to good to fulfil his purposes!



We read earlier from **Isaiah 26:3 You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.**

Everyday we are bombarded with media that fights for our attention, news channels jostle for ratings and adverts tell us what we need to make us happy! In this verse we see that perfect peace is promised to those who fix their thoughts on God.

**Impatience** - This will steal our peace and fuel our stress! As a society we have become used to getting what we want when we want it, which is not necessarily good for us. Could it be that the pace of our lives is getting faster, while our appreciation of what really matters is getting less?



God has perfect timing, he is never too busy to spend time with us, never stressed and never misses a call. Perhaps this season is a call for us to slow down, and realise our impatience will steal the peace God has for us.

**A Divided Heart** - Our hearts are very complex and can become attached to different things, and people that can subtly prevent us entering into God's peace. I have been particularly aware of this in my own life over the years, and even in the last few weeks God has released my heart from two different places where parts of it had been held, one of which I didn't even realise. Jesus says that a house divided against itself cannot stand, and a key part of experiencing God's peace is to be at peace with yourself!



The wonderful news is that God sees each of our hearts with all its connections and loyalties to different people, the places it has been deceived, hurt and broken, and as we journey with him he will set us free at just the right time. He is the wonderful counsellor, and is able to bring us to a place where we are at peace with ourselves.

**God's peace enables us to at peace with yourself!**

So we've looked at some barriers that can hinder us from accessing the peace God wants us to have, and as we assertively push through those barriers they become areas of peace. Peace is not always passive, but sometimes the result of a necessary conflict.

I remember the first time I sensed God speak to me and the huge peace I experienced. I was about 13 years old, kneeling by my bed and begging God to take something out of my life, and I heard him say it was there for a purpose. Even though it wasn't the answer I wanted, the peace I experienced was incredible.

God's peace assures us that he has a purpose and a plan for our lives, that we are fully known and loved by him, and that he is working for our eternal good, and that our lives don't end when we die!

I love the part of Hebrews 12 that says of Jesus - *'For the joy set before him he endured the cross'*. Jesus endured the most awful experience on the cross to open the way for us to be in a peace-filled friendship with God.

As we endure difficult situations, may we know that enduring with God always leads to joy, and even though there will be times of pain, the pain will be eclipsed by the greatness of the joy.



We read in **Colossians 3:15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts... and be thankful.**

May this be our experience and as our hearts are ruled by his peace, may we enjoy the wonder that Jesus has won all the battles we could never win against the enemy, and shares the peace he won with us. As his peace reigns in our hearts, may we become beacons of hope to those around us who are crippled with fear and anxiety.

**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.**