

Resting in the Confidence of His Love Joseph Herrin (4-10-03)

I suspect there are a large number of people like myself who are struggling with issues of faith and seeking a place of rest. The Spirit has led us to one perilous place after another. We find ourselves in situations where we are looking steadfastly unto God to deliver us from some trial that we cannot resolve in our own strength, or do not wish to resolve by our own strength knowing that we will only bring forth an Ishmael. We may have been down this way many times before, but we find that the struggle to maintain an attitude of peace in the midst of the trial still rages. If we could just have peace, the things we face would be as nothing.

I have shared before that beginning quite a number of years ago I began to ask the Lord for peace in my life. I knew a great yearning within to walk faithfully before the Lord, to follow Him anywhere, yet I observed many fears lurking inside my being that would arise up with much clamor to dissuade me from doing that which my spirit man desired. At times these fears won out, and I was hindered from going where Christ led. Yet often I would follow, though the fears would accompany me. Though I made my soul and flesh submit to the spirit, there was little peace. In much fear and trembling I would follow the Lord.

The Spirit witnesses to me that there is a place of peace and rest that we can enter into. We do not have to be tormented by fear when the Lord leads us into desperate and threatening places. I want to dwell in this place of peace. I believe it is the heritage of all the saints. After all, we are being conformed to the image of Christ, and I can see no place in Scripture where He was ever overcome by fear, or had His peace stolen from Him because of assailing fears. An incident in His life that has often moved me is the following.

Mark 4:37-40

And there arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up. And He Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" And being aroused, He rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Hush, be still." And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm. And He said to them, "Why are you so timid? How is it that you have no faith?"

I can envision these disciples of Christ, many of them fishermen who had spent their life in and around the water, and a fierce storm of hurricane proportions suddenly envelops them. They are straining against the storm, yet the boat is filling with water and they know from experience that the natural course of things is for the boat to soon become swamped and they will be left to drown in an angry sea. Certain calamity is before them and their hearts are filled with fear, yet as an island of peace

in the midst of great unrest, Yahshua is sleeping on a pillow in the stern of the boat.

My heart has been captivated by this image and I have cried out to Yahweh, "God, if I could just have the type of peace that your Son had, I could endure anything and follow You anywhere with joy in my heart. God, I would like to be able to sleep while the storm is raging around me and other men's hearts are failing them for fear." One day as I prayed this the Spirit spoke to me and said, "I can give you this peace, but I will have to take you through some storms in order for you to attain it." These words were both comforting and uncomfortable. I greatly desired to have this peace, but not yet possessing it I didn't look forward to the storms.

Since that time I have been through some fierce gales of my own. I have seen my boat filling with water and I have known that apart from divine intervention that the natural end of what I was facing was a devastating calamity with much loss resulting. It seemed that the very winds that were assailing me were filled with voices of fear, and at times I have been much afraid. Yet the Spirit kept telling me to look to Christ, and as I did I found the strength and courage to continue on. He has delivered my family and I from many perils in recent years, and I have found my faith growing, yet it has not been perfected.

I know that there are many who are in a similar place today. You have withstood many trials and have seen the salvation of God appear time and again in a moment of great need. Often His provision has been uncomfortably late, but in hindsight it is evident that He has always been faithful. Perhaps you are now in the midst of another great struggle, and you too are dealing with doubts and fears and crying out for Yahweh's provision to be manifest, for His victory to be made known. Yet, in considering where you are walking, and where I am walking, can we not conclude that the victory is not in being delivered from our current test, but in attaining a place of rest and peace in the midst of it?

I believe this is the mind of the Father for His children in the midst of their various difficulties. He is inviting us to enter into a place of perfect peace and rest that is reserved for us. It is a place where nothing can touch us. It is a place where we know such a profound security in Him that nothing can disturb us or cause fear to dwell in our midst. I have felt the Spirit wooing me to enter into this place, and He has pointed me to the door. I have gone through this door many times before and found peace, but to my own loss I have not remained in this place. Instead I have walked back out. Often I did not recognize the door, but now it is much more clear and the Spirit is saying that it is free to be entered into at any moment.

What is this door? It is the love of Christ. How do we enter in? We do so by choosing to place our confidence in His love.

As a young man I often struggled with the following thought. When I was brought to a place of testing, and faith in God was required, I would often reason, “I know that God is all powerful and He CAN do anything. I know that it would be an easy thing for Him to deliver me and to meet my pressing need, but how do I know that He WILL do this thing?” This was a great torment to me. I knew God was able, but I didn’t know if He was willing to deliver me. It profits us nothing at all to know that God is capable of saving us, if we do not believe that He is willing to provide what we need.

I would like to interject here that I am not talking about God meeting some soulish desire of ours. I am not speaking about a ‘name it and claim it’ type of religious mindset where we ask God to fulfill all of our carnal desires for the things of the world. I am talking about legitimate needs where our spirit does not condemn our desire as being fleshly.

I have written about some of these situations in other writings. One situation was desiring to see my son healed from a hereditary bone disease that had caused him to experience 13 fractures and 2 surgeries by the age of seven. Another was trusting God to be the source of health and healing for my entire family, and to heal me from the diabetes that I had just been diagnosed with and which was causing me many problems.

I knew God could do these things, and He confirmed to me by His Spirit that He WOULD do these things, yet in each instance He required a step of faith before the provision was manifested. Praise Yahweh, He has been faithful. My son is now 13 and is in his sixth year of being free from all broken bones, and it has also been years since the Father healed me of diabetes and has been the source of health for our entire family. We have seen the victory of God in these things, yet I will admit that I went forward in both situations with some fear in my heart, and I did not know a perfect peace.

As I am now facing more trials, but not related to health, I see set before me an opportunity to experience victory before the victory. I hear the invitation to walk in perfect peace, and to be undisturbed. I hear the Spirit inviting me to enter into the place of safety from the storm.

Proverbs 18:10

The name of Yahweh is a strong tower; the righteous runs into it and is safe.

Some might argue that it is only natural to have fears about our provision and safety, yet what man considers natural, and what God considers pleasing and appropriate, are two different things. We are told that “without faith it is impossible to please God” and when Yahshua was awakened by His disciples who were filled with fear as

their boat was filling with water He said, “Why are you so timid? How is it that you have no faith?”

These words of Yahshua are words of rebuke and admonishment. He was stating with these words that there was no reason for the disciples to be manifesting such fear. They could all have been experiencing the same peace that He knew. They didn't have to be timid and fearful. Just because the wind was blowing fiercely, and the waves were breaking over the boat, just because the boat was filling which was making it ride lower in the water and allowing the waves to fill it even quicker, just because others had perished in similar circumstances, this was no reason to be fearful, for what is all this when God is in the boat with you?

If we are following Christ wherever He leads then He is in the boat with us as well. You can be assured that whatever your situation is that God is not filled with timidity and fear. He is at perfect peace, and you and I can be too.

The Spirit of God is witnessing to me that the secret to knowing such peace is to rest in confidence of Christ's love toward me. One thing that can disturb this peace is to have sin in our life that we have not repented of, but if we are walking with a clear conscience before God and men, and we are seeking to know His will and obey, then we have placed ourselves in a position to experience His peace that passes all understanding.

At times I wonder if I might have missed God's will, for He often leads me to do things that are contrary to natural sense. Yet I know that even if I have missed His will, if my heart has been intent on obedience then He will not make me suffer, nor will He abandon me. He looks on the heart. If my own son asked me for instructions, but he sincerely misunderstood me, and got off down the wrong road, I would not treat him like a rebellious son. Since he came to me with a submissive and obedient heart, I would show him much grace because of it. In the same way, our Father in heaven shows us much grace. When our hearts are set on obedience and we are humble before Him, we need not fear that He will smite us because we have made a mistake.

Our peace comes from our confidence in His steadfast love toward us. Paul was called to follow Christ into places where he was often in peril and distress. He was able to do so because He became thoroughly and completely convinced that as He obeyed Christ that he would always be right in the center of His love. Nothing could shake Paul's confidence in Christ's love toward him. He knew, therefore, that everything he experienced would turn out to his good and would advance the kingdom of God.

If you are like me, you have at times suffered the paralysis of analysis. I have at times

wondered, “Did I hear wrong? Did I miss God at some turning? Am I missing Him now?” Yet the Spirit has shown me that at any given moment He is able to speak to me with such clarity that there is no room left for doubting. I need not strain so hard to analyze every decision, for as I submit myself to Him and ask for the Spirit’s leading, He will be faithful to answer at the right time. The periods of silence are often the greatest trials for us, but it is in these lulls that our faith is developed. We must remain confident in His watch care and love for us in these periods of silence.

Romans 8:35-39

Who shall ever separate us from Christ's love? Shall suffering and affliction and tribulation? Or calamity and distress? Or persecution or hunger or destitution or peril or sword?... For I am persuaded beyond doubt (am sure) that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things impending and threatening nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Amplified Bible)

Having this confidence in the love of God, a confidence that looked beyond his circumstances, enabled Paul to maintain an attitude of joy at all times.

Romans 15:13

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

We are told that “the joy of the Lord is our strength” (Nehemiah 8:10). Satan, the adversary of the saints, knows how this entire process works. He knows that a saint that is confident in the unfailing love of God will be filled with joy in the midst of circumstances that would lead other men’s hearts to fail them due to fear. He knows that such a saint who is resting in the love of Christ will stand confidently and will not be cowed by fear. He knows that the joy of the Lord will give them strength. So he attacks us with doubts and fears knowing that this will sap our strength. Solomon wrote:

Proverbs 17:22

A joyful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit dries up the bones.

I desire to ever walk in a place where I will confess, “Lord, the storm is raging, but my eyes are on You. I know that You do always love me, and that nothing can separate me from Your love. I am running to You Lord. You are my strong tower. Knowing that You are with me, my heart is at peace and joy resounds within me. I may be afflicted, but I am not crushed. I may be perplexed, but I am not despairing. I may be persecuted, but I am certainly not forsaken by You.”

Our confidence and peace arises out of a knowledge of God's great love toward us. It is not based upon an understanding of how our circumstances will be worked out. Our peace is based upon our confidence in Yahweh, and His love toward us.

Psalms 28:7

Yahweh is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart exults, and with my song I shall thank Him.

Is this not then the word of the Spirit to us, that victory is ours as we clothe ourselves with peace, casting out all fear? This victory comes from entering into this place of security where we put on confidence as if it were a garment, donning the assurance that God will never leave us or forsake us.

Can we not hear the voice of the Lord in whatever trial we are facing, "Why are you timid, and why has your faith fled away? Am I not here with you? Can I not calm the storm that rages in your soul? Am I not the Prince of Peace? Will I not cause all of your circumstances to work out for your good?" As we dwell in Him we will experience all that He is. He is peace, and we will know peace as we rest in Him.

Deuteronomy 33:27

"The eternal God is a dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms..."

May peace be your portion all of your days.