

Faith Should Provide Peace

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Turn on the news or plug into your favorite flavor of social media and within seconds you will hear about suffering all around us. There are countries tragically at war. We face a looming recession and economic struggles. The political divide and race relations continue to rage. There was another school shooting in Texas. All of these situations certainly can and do bring suffering into our lives. It seems that everyone wants us to be wound up and stressed out. I read one brother in Christ recently post, "prepare for the coming chaos." Now I'm not going to suggest that there aren't problems and that times are tough - they are. They may get worse. Only time will tell. But as Christians, we have a great opportunity to show people around us what faith does for us in difficult times. FAITH SHOULD PROVIDE PEACE.

At the end of Peter's first letter to the early church, he encouraged them to remember who they are and what that provides. "Peace be to all who are in Christ" (1 Peter 5:14). Peace is a sometimes misunderstood quality. Some would define peace as the "lack of conflict." The idea is that we will have peace when there is no strife or struggling. While that is a common way of looking at the word peace, God never promises a "lack of conflict." We live in a fallen and sinful world. Man's push to put himself first and satisfy his own desires often give rise to conflict and suffering. But the word "peace" in Scripture is more often talking about a calmness of heart in the face of conflict rather than a lack of conflict. It expresses "a state of tranquility" even as the struggles swirl around us. Peter addresses persecution and great suffering in his letter and yet he says that we are to "seek peace and pursue it" (1 Peter 3:11). The question becomes, are we feeding the chaos and panic in people's lives by echoing the chaos or are we seeking and pursuing peace by showing others the calmness that comes from trusting God to see us through anything that comes? Are we contributing to the "worries of the world," choking the word of God out of the lives of our brethren by echoing the doom and gloom around us? Or are we showing the tranquility and peace that comes from a saving relationship with the Master of the Universe? If we have "entrusted our souls to a Faithful Creator (1 Peter 4:19) there should be a marked calmness and peace that surrounds us.

May we be lights in the world that brings peace (a calmness in the face of conflict) to those around us. May our behavior be so different in difficult times that people will ask us to explain the hope that is in us (1 Peter 3:15). But more than that, may we be those who show the world that "the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard OUR hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:7). Truly, may "peace be to you all who are in Christ."