

The Peace That Surpasses All Understanding

(FOT Day 3)

James Farnsworth—October 28, 2023

Be turning to Phil. 4 and as you turn there, I want to read a story to you:

Once there was a king who offered to give a prize to an artist who could best paint a depiction of peace. Many artists decided to participate, so they sent the king their masterpieces. Among the various masterpieces, one picture was of a calm lake, closely resembling peacefully towering snow-capped mountains, where a blue sky with fluffy clouds was overhead.

Most of those who viewed the paintings of peace from different artists thought that this one would be the one. But the king had another winner in mind. To the crowd's surprise, the picture that won was of a mountain, as well. But was more plain, and it was more rugged than the other paintings. The sky was shady and looked angry because there was lightning.

It was exactly the opposite of what peace should look like. The others thought that the artist may have sent in the wrong painting that o pictures peace. What others did notice was that if you look closely at the painting, there was a tiny bush growing in the cracks of a rock, and in that bush there was a nest built by a mother bird, and in the midst of the stormy weather, the bird sits peacefully on her nest.

In that specific portrait, it was depicted that in the presence of all the turmoil, there's still someone who can be calm in his or her heart. The real meaning of peace for the mother bird in the story, as viewed by the king, *is finding calm within, despite the noise from the outside world! It is a peace of mind that's not affected by the state of our surroundings!*

In the story, the people only looked at the beauty of the painting that they were looking at, disregarding that calmness is possible in a not so tranquil place. If they only thought and looked hard enough through the painting, they could have seen what the wise king was looking at and what he saw.

The mother bird in the story knew that if the rain fell, there's nothing that she could do about it. Instead of panicking, being restless about the situation, she just decided to remain calmly in her nest and wait the storm out.

We, brethren, experience the noise from the outside world every day in our lives. We're often

distracted from the world and find ourselves in the midst of the storms. When we're at this point in our lives, we have to remember:

Isaiah 43:2: "When you pass through the waters, I *will be* with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. **When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned; nor shall the flame kindle on you.**"

James 1:2: "**Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you are beset by various trials.**"

And as Christians, we have to expect trials to come upon us. That's what we're told. When we are in the midst of storms we must count it a joy because we know that God is doing a work in you and me, which is a wonderful opportunity to be part of that.

At this point, we cannot lose sight of the big picture that God has for us. Just as David said in Psa. 40, 'You [God] are my Help and my Deliverer.'

That's who we depend on, too. God is our Help and He is our Deliverer.

Philippians 4:4: "**Rejoice in the Lord always.** Again I will say, rejoice! Let your moderation be known to all men; the Lord *is* near. Do not be anxious about anything; but by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God in everything; and **the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus**" (vs 4-7).

This is the verse from which I got the title today: *The Peace That Surpasses All Understanding.*

- What is that peace that surpasses all understanding?
- How do we get that kind of peace?

This peace is not just a psychological state of mind. This peace is a spiritual peace, the peace of God of all creation. *The peace that surpasses all understanding is **not relying on:***

- what's going on around us
- how much power that we have
- how many material possessions that we have

Worldly peace refers to the absence of conflict or turmoil in one's immediate surroundings,

but that's subject to change. That can change based on what's going on around us. But in contrast, the peace that we're looking for stays constant. It remains constant no matter what situation that we find ourselves in.

To have the peace in our lives that surpasses all understanding has two parts:

1. God does His part

This is where this kind of peace starts.

John 6:44: "No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day."

God calls each one of us out of this world. He opens our mind to His Truth. He opens our mind to His Plan that He has. The more eager we are to learn, God gives us more to learn.

Now we start that learning process, and we begin to understand the Sabbath. We begin to understand the Holy Days. We go through this process of yielding our lives to God. We seek Him every day, and we make Him part of our lives every day.

So as we grow, we understand God's will for us. We begin to see how much of a sinner we are. We then go to God in repentance, we're baptized, God gives us His Holy Spirit, and now we can begin to truly change from within, and we can strive every day to remove sin out of our lives.

We're now able to start that Christian journey. God has called us out of this world to start this journey of overcoming, of growing, allowing Christ to live in us. He's preparing us to be part of His Kingdom. That's what these days picture here at God's Feast.

2. We have to do our part

God has done His part by starting this calling. Now we have to do our part. ***Finding the peace that surpasses all understanding*** requires cultivating a deep relationship with God. We have to grow daily in grace and knowledge and understanding that God gives to us. We have to do that daily.

The peace that surpasses all understanding is not just a one-time experience. It takes our lifetime to grow; it's a lifelong pursuit! that's what our conversion is. It requires a continuous seeking, trusting and surrendering our lives to God. It's a journey that has its ups and downs. Individuals may sometimes experience a glimpse where we don't

have that much peace with what's going on in our lives. We may have challenges and trials that may momentarily disrupt that peace.

- we don't give up
- we don't quit
- we move forward

The key lies in consistently turning to God, trusting God in our lives in all that we do!

As God is renewing us from the inside, we start to have a small glimpse of that peace, ***the peace that surpasses all understanding!*** God's Plan becomes real in our lives, and we're honored to be called out of the billions on this earth to be part of His Plan. It takes work on our part. It takes effort from us to make sure that our calling and election is sure.

We're told how to have this peace that we're talking about:

Philippians 4:6: "Do not be anxious about anything; but by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God in everything."

This is the close contact that we begin to have with our Father in heaven!

How does this peace that surpasses all understanding begin in our lives? *As we're told here in this verse:*

1) By Prayer

That the first step toward having this peace is by prayer! We're to pray about everything. We're to tell our Father our needs, our concerns.

Romans 12:12: "*Be rejoicing in hope. Be patient in tribulation. Be steadfastly continuing in prayer.*"

- Are we faithful in prayer?
- Do we pray every day?
- More than once?

When we are faithful in prayer, even during our trials, ***God will give us peace that we need!*** When we pray, we're asking God for His help. He gives us the help that we need. We're surrendering our lives to Him. ***This helps us to trust Him and to know that He's in control!***

It takes the focus off of our problems and it puts it on God. We have to trust Him in knowing that He will be there for us. Prayer is a powerful tool that we have. God has given this so that we can go to Him in our difficult times.

- it can change our hearts
- it can change our minds
- it can give us the strength that we need
- it can give us the peace that we're looking for

2) Give Thanks to God!

Our prayers to God are to be accompanied by thanksgiving. When we're thankful for what God has done, it helps us to trust Him more, because we know that He's with us. It also helps us to see our current situation in light of all that God has done for us as we look back.

I'm sure we can all look back on circumstances in our lives and know for a fact that God has intervened to help us through. I know I can think of many in my life and wonder sometimes why I'm even here. But ***God protects us; He's with us!***

1-Thessalonians 5:18: "Give thanks in everything, for this *is the* will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

No matter what we're going through, we can always find something to be thankful for. When we focus on all that God's done for us, it's easier to trust Him in our current situation. ***We can then begin to enjoy the peace that surpasses all understanding.***

3) Meditate on the Promises of God

One of the best ways to experience the peace that God wants us to have is looking at the promises that He gives us. When we think about what God has promised us

- it helps us to rest
- it helps us to have peace in Him
- it helps us through our current situation in light of eternity

We're looking for that eternal life in His Kingdom!

Romans 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time *are* not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."

So no matter what we go through, we have the big picture; we know the end. There's many promises that you can read in the Bible that we can claim when we're going through tough times.

Psalms 119:105: "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

This verse reminds us that when we meditate on God's promises, it will help to light our

ways. It will keep us on the right path. We'll be able to see where we're going, and know where we're headed. This will bring us peace and hope in the midst of our trials.

Another promise that we can claim is, Isaiah 26:3: "You will keep *him* in perfect peace, whose mind *is* stayed on You; because he trusts in You."

- Do we stay strong?
- Do we move ahead?
- Do we not get distracted?

When our minds are focused on God and His promises, we will experience the perfect peace that we're looking for.

4) Walk in faith

If we want to experience the peace that surpasses all understanding, we *must* walk in faith. This means that we trust God even when we do not understand what He's doing. It means that we believe that He's good even when our circumstances are bad.

Hebrews 11:1: "Now, faith *is the* substance of *things* hoped for, *and the* conviction of things not seen."

It gives us assurance about things that we cannot see!

Deuteronomy 31:6: "Be strong and of a good courage. Do not fear nor be afraid of them, for the LORD your God *is* He Who goes with you. He will not fail you nor forsake you."

- Is this verse something that we believe is true?
- Do we believe that God is with us in all that we do?
 - we can't really rejoice in the Lord unless we have this kind of faith
 - we can't believe that He is with us in whatever we're doing

unless we trust Him and believe that what He says is true and that it will happen!

We must build this kind of faith in our lives because God says:

Hebrews 11:6: "Now, **without faith it is impossible to please God.** For it is mandatory *for* the one who comes to God to believe that He exists, **and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.**"

He rewards us when we seek God first in our lives. This kind of faith is trust in God Himself

is what we need to have is to the point that we know that we can risk everything on it. We can throw it all in, because we know God is there.

When we reach this kind of point in our faith, we experience the peace that can't be explained. It's beyond our understanding. ***Pursue the peace that passes all understanding*** and all that we do because there's something greater at stake.

We know that, brethren. In this world where there seems to be no peace, there's no way to achieve it, we need to be the ones that says, yes, real peace is possible through God and His Spirit living in us and living God's way of life, obeying God in all that we do.

Proverbs 3:5: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not to your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (vs 5-6).

We do not have to understand everything that's going on around us. We just need to trust in God to lead us, to give us the peace that we need in our lives. In this world, we do go through difficult times.

5) **Cast Our Cares on Him**

When we're feeling anxious, when we're feeling stressed, it is possible to cast our cares on God. We cannot do everything on our own. We need His help. Sometimes we may get to the point that we can't go on, but we can. ***We can't throw our hands up and quit!***

Psalms 55:22: "Cast your burden upon the LORD, and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be moved."

When we cast our cares on God, we will not be shaken by what's going on around us. Difficult times are coming ahead, but we will ***experience His peace and strength!***

6) **God is in Control**

God is in control of all things. He's Sovereign. He knows what's going on. We may not always understand what He's doing, but we can trust and know that He knows; He knows what He's doing.

I gave a sermonette many years ago, and I asked the question at the beginning, **Is God your co-pilot?** I went through some Scriptures, and at the end, I asked again, **Is God your co-pilot? *If God is our copilot, we need to switch places! We need to change places!***

Sometimes we do go through different things on our own. We try to do things on our own. We like to have God over here in the seat, 'I'm flying now, God. If I need You, I'll ask for You.'

But that's not how God wants it to be. He needs to be in control of our lives!

Proverbs 19:21: "*There are many purposes in a man's heart; nevertheless, the counsel of the LORD shall stand.*"

No matter what we plan, no matter what we think we might need to do, God's purpose will always prevail, because He knows what He's doing. We may have our own plans, but we need to remember that ***God is in control of our lives!*** When we do, we will experience that peace, because we know that God is leading us.

Isaiah 46:10: "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things, which were not *yet* done, saying, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure."

God knows what's going to happen. He has a plan and purpose for our lives. We may not always understand it, not always understand what He's doing, but we can trust in how faith that He knows.

Sometimes, brethren, we go through trials and difficulties in our life, and too often we try and do these and try to take over. Maybe it's because we're going through a trial that we think that's too big and God can't handle it. So, we try to take care of it, and we try to do it on our own. Or maybe we want out of the trial, and God's not getting us out of the trial quick enough. ***But God will!***

Sometimes, brethren, we have to be still and know that He is God. Sometimes we may feel that we're in a situation that's too big for God. Is there anything in our lives that's too big for God to handle? *I don't think there is!*

Psalms 46:10 "**Be still, and know that I am God!....**"

Sometimes we need to stop doing, thinking and problem-solving on our own ***and cast it onto God, and He will take care of the problem!*** Because He's God, we're not, yet. We're not, yet, gods in His Family.

Proverbs 16:9: "A man's heart devises his way, but the LORD directs his steps."

He's going to take us in the direction that He wants us to be in. We may plan, plot, brainstorm with what we want to do, but ultimately God is the One Who directs our steps.

This truth allows us to be still and know that God is in control. Then we can enjoy and experience His peace. We have a wonderful promise in:

Matthew 6:33: “But *as for* you, seek **first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness**, and all these things shall be added to you.”

We have to seek His Kingdom first in our lives! When we seek first the Kingdom of God, He will take care of the rest. This is another way that we can be still and know that God is God.

We don’t have to worry about the things of this world because God knows what we need and He will take care of us. Then we know that we can experience ***that peace that surpasses all understanding!***

Why don’t we always have this peace in our life? *It’s easy to be at peace when things are going well!* A lot of times when things are going well in our lives, we may even at times forget God, and when things are falling apart, we don’t have that peace that we need.

Often times this might happen to us because when we pray we may be anxious. Our minds begin to drift back through the circumstances that we’re going through, through the trials that we’re going through. To be honest, when that happens to us, we may often begin to doubt that God can get us out of the situation that we’re in. ***But He will if we stay strong.***

We live in ever-changing times. We’re living right now in the end-times. There’s no peace here on earth. *It’s wished for!* We would all love to have peace. *It’s hoped for!* Natural catastrophes come on us. Wars, terrorist attacks.

Look at the crime, how it’s increased over the last few years. The family unit is being eroded, and our youth corrupted by a pursuit of immediate pleasure. There is an increase of discord in homes, society, and even the nations.

As in Biblical times our voice cries out, ‘Peace, peace,’ but there’s none! There’s none now in this society that we live in. So, what are we missing here? ***We’re missing order!***

Order comes from God! When man voluntarily disrupts order, disorder becomes normal. Disorder is itself a sin. ***It’s a state of deliberate offense against God!*** In disorder, man begins to challenge God’s laws, and you see that today. All things Holy has become a sort of sick entertainment that we see around us today. Everywhere you look.

But peace is a fruit of order! It is hopeless

to try to attain peace without order. Peace is a gift from God, and He has to be part of it. So, ***if we want real peace***—the peace that surpasses all understanding—***we have to stop offending God in our actions!***

The Source of peace is God Himself. He is the *God of Peace*, and Jesus is the ***Prince of Peace.***

We find peace through His Spirit that’s in each one of us. With our obedience to God, we enter more into that true Godly peace that is so much different from what this world has to offer today. Peace is one of the most treasured commodities for any society.

For many, many years, people have prayed and they’d died. They’ve died and they’ve lived for peace and lived for peace. Jesus often spoke of the idea of peace, yet it was a little bit different than how we think of peace today. Today we think of peace as:

- how big our military is
- financial security
- when our home security alarm is working properly
- when the stock market’s doing good

This was not the kind of peace that Jesus spoke of! *Jesus spoke of a peace that transcends the physical!* He spoke of a kind of tranquility that regardless of whether you’re at war, you’re financially broke, or if your life’s on the line, ***you can overcome and you can be victorious!*** To His disciples, Jesus said:

John 14:27: “Peace I leave with you; **My peace I give to you**; not as the world gives do I give *it* to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it fear.”

How does one have this kind of peace? ***Christian peace comes through the right relationship with God!***

Romans 5:1—*Paul says:* “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Christian peace comes through living a spiritual-minded life. God tells us to come out of this world. *The Apostle Paul said:*

Romans 8:6: “For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace”

That’s what we want! Real peace comes knowing that we’re living according to God’s demands, and we’re doing what God wants with everything that He tells us in His Word.

Philippians 4:8: “Finally, brethren, whatever *things* are true, whatever *things* are honorable, whatever *things* are just, whatever *things* are pure, whatever *things* are lovely, whatever *things* are of good report; if *there be* any virtue and if *there be* any praise, think on these things. Whatever things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, you do also; and the God of peace shall be with you” (vs 8-9). *So, will true peace come?*

Micah 5:4: “And He shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD His God. And they shall live, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth. And **this One shall be our peace...**” (vs 4-5).

We’re here at God’s Feast, 2023, picturing the peace that surpasses all understanding during the Millennium when Christ will be here on this earth, and we will be with Him, showing others how to have this same peace by obeying God and His Law and doing things God’s way, seeking Him first every day.

So, we’re here getting a small glimpse of what the Millennium will be like. We’re also here getting a small glimpse of the peace that we long for, ***the peace that surpasses all understanding!***

Brethren, it cannot fully come until Satan, ‘the god of this world,’ is removed with his demons. Then for a thousand years, **we will begin to experience the peace that surpasses all understanding, a peace that will last for all eternity.**

Scriptural References:

- 1) Isaiah 43:2
- 2) James 1:2
- 3) Philippians 4:4-7
- 4) John 6:44
- 5) Philippians 4:6
- 6) Romans 12:12
- 7) 1 Thessalonians 5:18
- 8) Romans 8:18
- 9) Psalm 119:105
- 10) Isaiah 26:3
- 11) Hebrews 11:1
- 12) Deuteronomy 3:6
- 13) Hebrews 11:6
- 14) Proverbs 3:5-6
- 15) Psalm 55:22
- 16) Proverbs 19:21
- 17) Isaiah 46:10
- 18) Psalm 46:10
- 19) Proverbs 16:9

- 20) Matthew 6:33
- 21) John 14:27
- 22) Romans 5:1
- 23) Romans 8:6
- 24) Philippians 4:8-9
- 25) Micah 5:4-5

Scriptures referenced, not quoted: Psalm 40

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