

Peace

*"Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division."
(Luke 12:51)*



*"Glory to GOD in the highest and on earth PEACE among those with whom He is pleased."
- Luke 2:14*



The Berean Lamp
For the Body of Christ.

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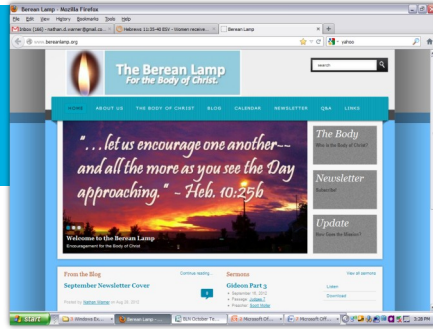


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The Berean Lamp Ministry seeks to:

1. Encourage and strengthen the Body of Christ by providing the means for each of its members to share their spiritual gifts with one another, rooted in the Word of God, thereby growing into deeper union with one another and with Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).
2. Minister to non-believers; be a witness for Christ and a testimony to His Body in the world.

We would appreciate your help in contributing to the content and in spreading the work of this ministry. Thank you, and God bless.

- Pastor Scott Moller

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*"And he said, "O man greatly loved, fear not,
PEACE be with you; be strong and of good courage."
(Daniel 10:19a)*

Messenger of Peace
by Jani Lynn Warner

Perilous Times

*These are the times
That make men pray
When finally the world
Has nothing to say.*

*These are the times
That try men's souls
Their burning dreams,
Their faded goals.*

*These moments of Truth
That burn like coals
Through webs of deceit
Through games and roles.*

*The Fire Christ came
To cast on the earth
Has already burned up
Their greatness, their worth.*

*And now is the time
When judgment has come
When all of their deeds
Have reached their sum.*

*When all of the earth
Is baptized in flames
And all the pretenders
Fall on their claims.*

*Faith is the road
That leads unscathed
Through fire and blaze,
While idols are razed.*

*For we have a Savior
Even Jesus, who saves
He will call us by name
From death and from graves*

By Nathan Warner.



*"But now in Christ Jesus
you who once were far off
have been brought near by
the blood of Christ. For he
himself is our peace, who
has made us both one and
has broken down in his flesh
the dividing wall of hostility
by abolishing the law of
commandments expressed in
ordinances, that he might
create in himself one new
man in place of the two, so
making peace."*

(Ephesians 2:13-15)

There Is No Peace for the Wicked

By Nathan Warner

As Christians, we are supposed to promote peace, aren't we? Aren't we supposed to champion tranquility in the world and avoid all turmoil at any cost? We hear much about it from every side. "Peace, peace!" say the churches; "Peace, peace!" says the world. Peace.

Peacemakers but a Sword?

Jesus told people in the Sermon on the Mount that "*blessed are the **peacemakers**, for they shall be called sons of God*" (Matthew 5:9). But just a few chapters away, Jesus says, "*Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me*" (Matthew 10:34-37).

How do we reconcile Matthew 10 with Matthew 5? The challenge is that the word "peace" is used to describe two completely different things. Sometimes it means tolerance among men, and other times it means reconciliation with God. In Matthew 10, Jesus is saying that if we love social, tolerating, "getting along" peace more than we love Him, we are not worthy of Him. If we aren't willing to stand up for Him at the price of social disturbances or family upheaval, then we are not worthy of Him.

Usually, God is speaking about spiritual peace – the only true, lasting, and eternal form of peace, which only comes by submitting ourselves under God's authority in our lives. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is speaking of reconciliation with God, bringing peace between us and God and between God and others

so that we will have peace between ourselves and others. He did not come to promote tolerating peace—quite the opposite, for tolerance of wickedness is an abomination to God: "***There is no peace,** says the LORD, for the wicked*" (Isaiah 48:22), "*precisely because they have misled My people, saying, '**Peace,**' when **there is no peace,** and because, when the people build a wall, these prophets smear it with whitewash*" (Ezekiel 13:10). Here I think Ezekiel describes a situation where people promote societal "peace" through tolerance at the expense of justice instead of reconciling themselves with God and obtaining peace.

We can never have peace unless we are at peace with God, and we can only do that by coming to Him in Truth to call Him Lord. "*But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in His flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that He might create in Himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace*" (Ephesians 2:13-15).

Once we come under His authority, and only then, will we have peace—peace with God and peace with each other. No person, church, town, state, or country can be experiencing peace when they are not submitting themselves to God's authority because "*the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth*" (Romans 1:18). Tolerance of ungodliness and unrighteousness for the sake of social or societal "peace" (getting along) brings the wrath of God because it suppresses the Truth of His Word and is an abomination to a Holy and Righteous God.

Where Tolerance of Wickedness Leads

"*Oh that you had paid attention to My commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river and your righteousness like the waves of the sea*" (Isaiah 48:18). Tolerance of wickedness nurtures and feeds what is

abhorrent to God and destructive to peace. Generations rise that do not know peace:

“Their feet run to evil, and they are swift to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; desolation and destruction are in their highways. The way of peace they do not know, and there is no justice in their paths, they have made their roads crooked; no one who treads on them knows peace. Therefore justice is far from us, and righteousness does not overtake us; we hope for light, and behold, darkness, and for brightness, but we walk in gloom. We grope for the wall like the blind; we grope like those who have no eyes; we stumble at noon as in the twilight, among those in full vigor we are like dead men. We all growl like bears; we moan and moan like doves; we hope for justice, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far from us. For our transgressions are multiplied before You, and our sins testify against us; for our transgressions are with us, and we know our iniquities: transgressing, and denying the LORD, and turning back from following our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart lying words. Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands far away; for truth has stumbled in the public squares, and uprightness cannot enter. Truth is lacking, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey. The LORD saw it, and it displeased Him that there was no justice” (Isaiah 59:7-15).

And yet, still we go on talking about tolerance for sin, *“for from the least to the greatest of them, everyone is greedy for unjust gain; and from prophet to priest, everyone deals falsely. They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed; they did not know how to blush.”* (Jeremiah 6:13-15a).

Peace in Tribulation

*“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have **peace**. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have over-*

come the world” (John 16:33). Here we see that as Christians we will not have peace in the world. We will have tribulation in the world, but we will be at peace with God through the blood of Jesus Christ that has cleansed and saved those of us who have believed in Him, confessed our sins, and confessed that Jesus Christ is Lord in our lives. He has already overcome those that persecute us.

When difficulties arise and rulers rise over us that are not Godly and there is no peace in the land, we must remember to turn to the Lord who is our peace and cry out, *“O LORD, You will ordain peace for us, for You have indeed done for us all our works. O LORD our God, other lords besides you have ruled over us, but Your name alone we bring to remembrance”* (Isaiah 26:12-13). We must turn to the Lord and never expect someone from the world to bring us peace. We must live our lives to God as living sacrifices - to be spiritually crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20) for the peace of God to rest upon us. We must be pleasing to a Holy and Righteous God through our obedience to Him in our thoughts and in our conduct, whether towards our friends, family, co-workers, strangers, or enemies.

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and all the prophets were raised up to confront the tolerance of wickedness in the people of Israel and preach the peace of God. They were not well-received. Jesus told Believers, *“Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets... Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets”* (Luke 6:22-23; 26).

As Believers, we should never expect to be loved by the world, nor should we seek to be tolerated by it through tolerating sin. As the Prophets are examples for us, we should confront wickedness and sin in our own lives and in the lives of those around us, testifying to the Word of God. Take Paul’s instruction to heart to spend time in God’s Word, to *“continue in what you have learned and have firmly be-*

lieved, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work...preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Timothy 3:14-17 & 4:2-5).

The Good News of Peace through Christ’s Rule

Peace throughout the world will only occur with Jesus ruling in the heart of everyone. This was the message the angels delivered at Jesus’ birth – the good news of a day when men would be ruled by Jesus in their hearts, not a message of political and social peace to the world at large. *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!”* (Luke 2:14) There is no peace for those who do not please Him, for *“the nations raged, but Your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding Your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear Your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth”* (Revelation 11:18).

Peace between nations and peoples will come to pass only when Jesus Christ returns to rule the earth as we read in Revelation:

“And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords” (Revelation 19:14-16). The King of Kings says, *“Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”* Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood...He who testifies to these things says, *‘Surely I am coming soon.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!*” (Revelation 22:12-15, 20)



*Purify me with hyssop,
and I shall be clean;
Wash me, and I shall be
whiter than snow.
:: Psalm 51:7::*

Lives of the Christians



Ravensbruck Concentration Camp



"There is no pit so deep that God's love is not deeper still...God will give us the love to be able to forgive our enemies." - Betsie ten Boom

Betsie ten Boom was born on April 15, 1892, in Haarlem, Holland. From birth, she suffered from pernicious anemia. Despite this, Betsie lived contentedly at home as a bookkeeper for her clockmaker father, Casper ten Boom, and homemaker after her mother died following WWI. In the early part of WWII, when the Nazis invaded Holland, Betsie, her sister Corrie, and her father Casper felt led to work for the Dutch Underground, a secret system of hiding Jews persecuted by the German "police" - the Gestapo. On February 28, 1944, the ten Boom family was betrayed and arrested by the Gestapo. Ten days later, Casper ten Boom died, leaving his two daughters to cling to the promises of God's Word during their horrific experiences in Nazi concentration camps. Finally, on December 16, 1944, at the Ravenbrück camp, Betsie died. During their horrendous experiences, Betsie was a true testimony of the Lord's grace, and His peace in her was evident. She encouraged her sister Corrie to continue sharing the Gospel to their fellow prisoners. Betsie lived with constant thanksgiving to the Lord in all circumstances - even the appalling life they led in the prison barracks. Before her death, Betsie told her sister that they would travel the world sharing what they had learned of God in the camps, a task Corrie continued after the war. Throughout her life, Betsie counted trials as joy and surrendered her entire life into the Lord's Hands, and, as a result, the Lord was her Peace.



Betsie ten Boom



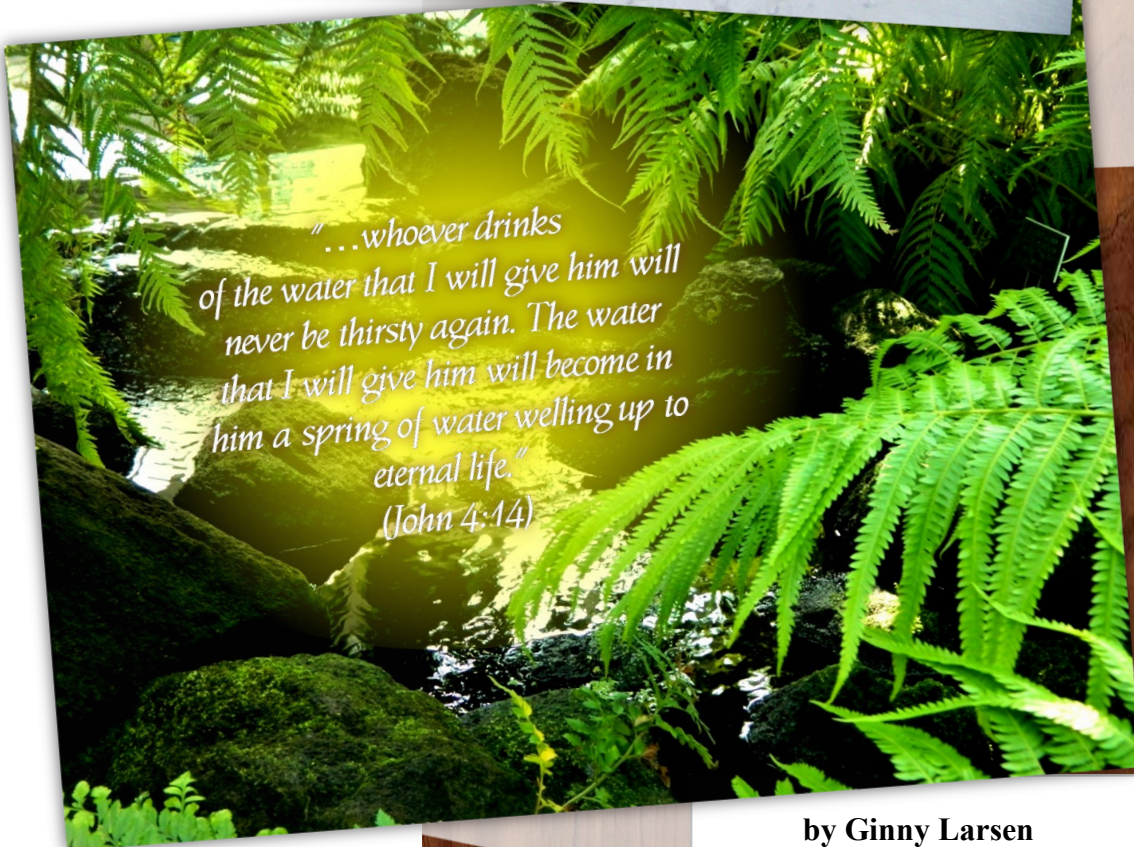
The Hiding Place



by Micah Larsen



*"While the EARTH
remains,
seedtime and harvest,
cold and heat,
summer and winter,
day and night,
shall not cease."
(Genesis 8:22)*



*"...whoever drinks
of the water that I will give him will
never be thirsty again. The water
that I will give him will become in
him a spring of water welling up to
eternal life."
(John 4:14)*

by Ginny Larsen

Springs and Sponges

By Shelley Tvedt

Do you remember the old-fashioned spring beds – the metal frames with hard springs on which mattresses were placed? Which do you think is the better place to sleep—between the springs and the mattress or on top of the mattress? Of course on top of the mattress is the answer; yet often, I find myself between the springs and the mattress.

The election, the moral decline of our nation, the future for my children, making ends meet, the daily concerns of life...the circumstances of life keep piling up into a huge mattress, and there I go...under. I'm uncomfortable, worried, restless, hurting, troubled. And then God gently says, "Shelley, you're under the mattress again!" He lovingly reaches for me... *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"* (Matthew 11:28). I turn to look in His Word and I begin to read... *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah"* (Psalm 46:1-3). I think about that, and as I do, I realize I'm on my way out from under the mattress.

I continue to read... *"The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah. Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah"* (Psalm 46:7-11). I lie down on the mattress. Nothing impedes my view of God. Before, all I could see was the mattress of my circumstances, not God. I had a heart in turmoil - discouraged, weighed-

down, and blinded because I had crawled where I could not see God. Now there is nothing to hide the view of the LORD my God, and I can rest. What Peace! For my resting is on the only One who can provide peace amidst the circumstances of life. Isaiah reminds me that God *"will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee"* (Isaiah 26:3). He goes on to remind me to *"be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things"* (Philippians 4:6-8).

Peace is restored to me and life seems good again...until the next time I see the raging sea, and like Peter, I sink beneath the mattress. But praise God, for He loves me and ever reaches beneath that mattress to draw me out.

I have yet another conflict. I battle with a sponge. When I let the sponge be filled with what it was created to be filled with, then I know peace. But when I take hold of that sponge and begin to squeeze it according to my pleasure, peace departs, and I become filled with tension. I often don't notice until my "hand" begins to ache from the tension of squeezing the sponge. It is then that I recognize I have been trying to squeeze God off the throne of my heart and to place myself in command. It is disobedience to the will and commandment of God.

"Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Romans 13:13-14).

"Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that

call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Timothy 2:22).

“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another” (Romans 14:19).

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Romans 6:12-13).

I hear my Heavenly Father say, “Shelley, let go of the sponge...yield...obey.” I hear the words of an old song:

*Let go and let God have His wonderful way.
Let Him be the Potter and you be the clay.
He'll mold you and make you what you
ought to be.
Let go and let God have His way.*

Let go of the sponge and let God have His throne. Present “*your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God*” (Romans 12:1-2). “*And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you*” (Ephesians 4:30-32). Be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) and “*This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh*” (Galatians 5:16).

Again, I must choose to let go of the sponge and as I do, I find the Truth of God's Word and the Way in action in my life, “*for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would...But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness,*

faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (Galatians 5:17; 22-25).

Whether I am struggling with the mattress or the sponge, I have robbed myself of the peace that God intends for me as His child. As I yield my will to His will, taking my eyes off the circumstances of my life and placing them back on Him, I find that “*the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places; When it shall hail, coming down on the forest; and the city shall be low in a low place*” (Isaiah 32:17-19). The storms and struggles don't end...I just “*know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day*” (2 Timothy 1:12b).

Today, like me, crawl out from under the mattress, and let go of the sponge.



Everlasting King
By Jesse Larson

*Long ago the Word became flesh,
He dwelt among us to give us rest.
He was born that day to set us free,
under the law of death were we.*

*Through Moses came the law,
through Jesus came grace and truth,
and now through His Spirit
we clearly have the proof.*

*We must understand exactly why He
came,
He came not to condemn, but to free us from
our shame.*

*The condemnation is through our strife,
but through His Spirit alone is life.*

*That which is born of the flesh is flesh,
that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
Some have ears to hear this saying,
and some refuse to hear it.*

*The strength of sin is the law,
but the Son sets us free,
Jesus was born into the world...
to win this victory!*

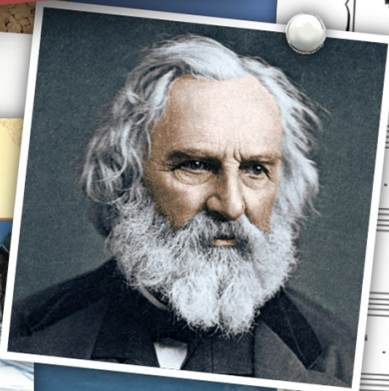
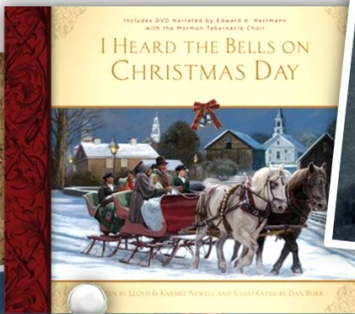
*Hades will lose its victory,
death will lose its sting,
all praises to Emmanuel...
the everlasting King!*

Sing A New Song

Words by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Music by John Baptiste Calkin

"God is not dead,
Nor doth He sleep."



I Heard The Bells On Christmas Day
 Words by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
 Music by John Baptiste Calkin

1. I heard the bells on Christmas Day
 thought how as the Christ day - mas day Their
 had come, The

fa - mil - iar ca - rols play, And wild and sweet the
 nes of all Christ - en - dom, Had rolfd a - long thum -

re - peat of peace on earth, good will to men
 ken song Of peace on earth, good will to men,

3. Till, ringing, swinging on its way,
 The world revolved from night to day,
 A voice, a chime, a chant sublime
 Of peace on earth, good will to men.

4. Then from each black, accursed mouth
 The cannon thundered in the South,
 And with the sound, the carols drowned
 Of peace on earth, good will to men.

5. It was as if an earthquake rent
 The hearth-stones of a continent,
 And made forlorn the households born,
 Of peace on earth, good will to men.

6. And in despair I bowed my head;
 "There is no place on earth," I said,
 "For hate is strong, and mocks the song
 Of peace on earth, good will to men."

7. Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
 "God is not dead, nor doth He sleep!
 The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,
 With peace on earth, good will to men."

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I Heard The Bells On Christmas Day
 By Maggie Moller

"Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests.'"
 (Luke 2:13-14)

"For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over His kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on

and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this."
 (Isaiah 9:6-7)

As we approach the Christmas season, I thought it would be perfect to reflect on a Christmas hymn for my article this month. As I looked through the hymnal, I was drawn to my dad's favorite: "I Heard The Bells On Christmas Day."

The Lyricist: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was born in Portland, Maine, on February 27, 1807. He was the second eldest of eight children. He started school at the age of three, and by the time he was fifteen, he was enrolled in Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, alongside his older brother, Stephen. On September 14, 1831, he married his childhood friend, Mary

Storer Potter. Sadly, Mary passed away on November 29, 1835, after a long illness. Henry was deeply saddened by her death and devoted himself to his work as a professor at Harvard. Henry was later remarried to Frances (Fanny) Appleton after a seven-year-long courtship. He and Fanny had six children together. Henry suffered the loss of Fanny after she was severely burned when her dress caught fire. Once again, Henry was forced to bear the deep sorrow caused by the death of his wife. At the same time Henry was mourning Fanny's death, his eldest son, Charles, joined the Union army against his father's wishes. Charles was severely wounded in the Battle of New Hope Church. It was then, on Christmas Day, that Henry was inspired to write his poem entitled, "Christmas Bells," which would become the lyrics for "I Heard The Bells On Christmas Day."

On March 24, 1882, Henry died after suffering from severe stomach pains. He would later be recognized as one of the best-known poets of the 19th century.

The Composer: John Baptiste Calkin

John Baptiste Calkin was born on March 16, 1827, in London, England. He received his musical training from his father who was a pianist, cellist, and composer. He served as an organist and choirmaster at a variety of churches and was also a professor at Guildhall School of Music and later at the Croydon Conservatory. He composed the music for "I Heard The Bells On Christmas Day" in 1872. Throughout his life, he composed a variety of church music, hymns, and anthems. He passed away on May 15, 1905, in London, England.

As I reflected on the theme of "Peace" for this month's newsletter, I thought about what was happening in America at the time this hymn was written. America was in the midst of a civil war: brothers were fighting against brothers. The thought of peace seemed a distant memory for most during this tragic time in our nation's history. Yet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow chose to write a poem around the theme, "Peace on earth, good will to men."

How could he write such words when there was so much suffering and unrest in our country? He explains this in the fourth and fifth verses of his hymn, which say,

*And in despair I bowed my head
There is no peace on earth, I said,
For hate is strong and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men.*

*Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail
With peace on earth, good will to men.*

The key message comes in verse 5 when Henry writes, "God is not dead, nor doth He sleep." We can have peace, even when the world is in turmoil, because our God reigns! He is the Prince of Peace! This is good news that should cause us to rejoice! We are facing a similar situation today to what Longfellow was experiencing during the Civil War. While America might not be in outright civil war with guns and cannons, we are definitely facing division within our nation.

And while it may be tempting to get discouraged as we see the direction our country is heading, we must remember to follow the words spoken in Hebrews 12:2: "*Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*" Paul also tells us in his letter to the Philippians, "*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus*" (Philippians 4:6-7). I hope that in this Christmas season you may be filled with the peace of God as you celebrate our Savior's birth!

The Things That Make For Peace

By Jane Titrud

As Jesus rode toward Jerusalem in order to face suffering and death at the hands of the city's wicked rulers, He paused to weep over the city when it finally came into view, saying,

*If you had known in this day, even you, **the things which make for peace!** But now they have been hidden from your eyes. For the days shall come upon you when your enemies will throw up a bank before you, and surround you, and hem you in on every side, and will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation. (Luke 19:42-44 NASB)*

He had also mourned over the city a few days before, saying to the Pharisees:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it! Behold, your house is left to you desolate; and I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!' (Luke 13:34-35)

Jesus wept and mourned because the people of the city were about to make the same mistake they had made several times before. Once again, they would kill a man who had been a true prophet in their midst. Yet, this time they would kill One who was more than a prophet. They would crucify the very Son of God, even their long-awaited Messiah.

Considering the way Jesus rode into Jerusalem mounted on a foal of a donkey, there

would have been no excuse for not knowing who He was. Everything happened just as the prophet Zechariah said it would in Zechariah 9:9: *"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you: He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey."* The multitudes even called out to Him as He predicted they would back in Luke 13:35, *"saying, 'BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; peace in heaven and glory in the highest!'"* (Luke 19:38)

Yet, the people of Jerusalem would soon deny their King. The irony here is that a city whose very name meant "possession of peace" did not know the things that make for peace, nor did the place that was also known as "the City of God" (Psalm 48:1-2) recognize His coming.

One problem was that the Jews were living under the thumb of Rome. They wanted deliverance from foreign rule, and they expected their Messiah to lead them to victory and establish political peace immediately. That is why many were initially anxious to make Him king. The Jews did not understand, however, that their greatest enemy was within themselves, in that their hearts had become callous and cold toward the things of God.

When Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate, He did not deny that He was a king. He spoke the basic truth when Pilate asked Him, *"So You are a king?"* Jesus answered, *"You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice'"* (John 18:37).

Yet, the full truth was that He was more than a king. He was the Son of God and the Savior of the world. As the perfect sacrifice, He was about to willingly die in order to provide all who would believe in Him a way of salvation from the bondage of sin. His death would bring all of the necessary elements together that would lead to everlasting peace with God. Thus, He also bore witness to the truth concerning the spiritual condition of the

people. Otherwise, they might not recognize the need for such a salvation.

His convicting witness unto those who thought they were already righteous, however, led to a secondary and more acute problem. The Jews basically did not want to acknowledge their sinfulness. This was mainly why they rejected Him. What He was about to accomplish was not the kind of salvation they were looking for or thought they needed. Hardened hearts still keep the majority of the Jews from recognizing their true need even today.

The blindness of the Jews has not been due to a lack of revelation knowledge in the Hebrew Scriptures. The elements of salvation that lead to everlasting peace were disclosed hundreds of years before Jesus was born. God inspired the sons of Korah to include them in Psalm 85. Verses 8-13 of this psalm reads as follows:

I will hear what God the LORD will say; for He will speak peace to His people, to His godly ones; but let them not turn back to folly.

Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him, that glory may dwell in our land.

Lovingkindness and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Truth springs from the earth; and righteousness looks down from heaven.

Indeed, the Lord will give what is good; and our land will yield its produce.

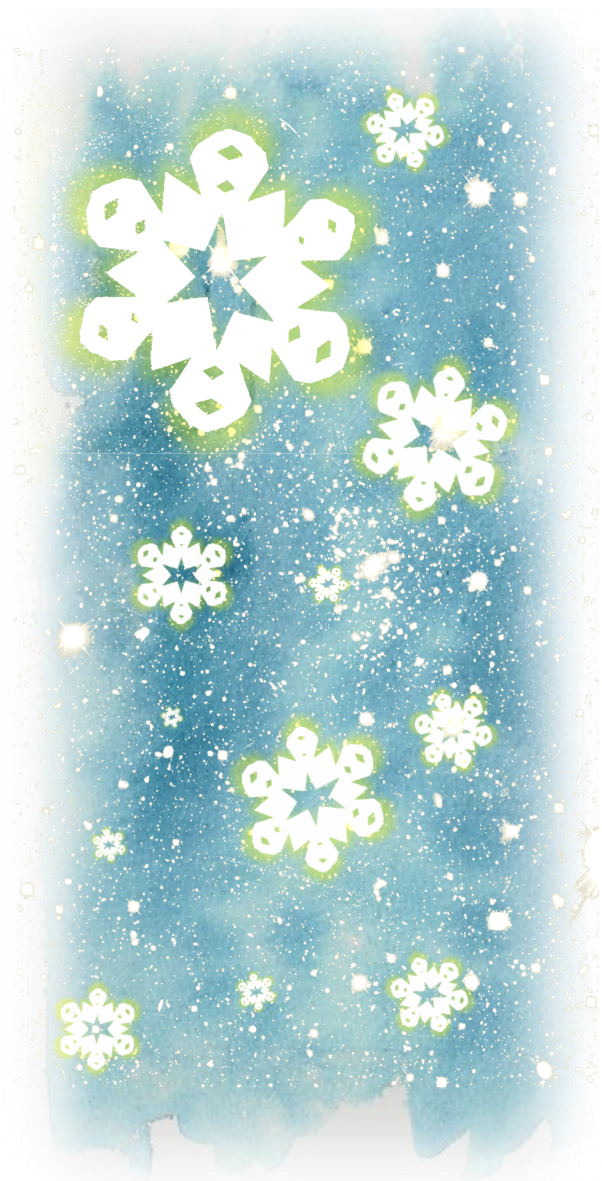
Righteousness will go before Him, and will make His footsteps into a way.

(Psalm 85:8-13)

Notice especially that the salvation of God would be characterized by loving-kindness balanced with truth. Moreover, true peace must meet the righteous demands of a Holy God. These things only come together perfectly in the person and work of Jesus Christ. This kind of salvation and its resulting peace cannot be achieved by mere human effort. Hence, the reason why unbelievers in any age do not un-

derstand the things that lead to peace is that such knowledge comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

It naturally follows that the farther people become removed from the truth, the more they need the Gospel. Christians must, therefore, not be discouraged by the current rejection of truth. Jesus willingly died for the sins of mankind despite the rejection He knew He would face. Believers should thus be faithful to share the Good News as well. The truth that God has provided a way unto salvation and peace through the righteous work of Jesus Christ is the only hope of the world.



Grace and Peace Multiplied

By Ginny Larsen

“May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.”
(2 Peter 1:2)

The word “in” means “in which alone” (Jamieson, Faucett, and Brown Commentary on 2 Peter 1:2). The knowledge of the Father and the Son is that alone in which we have grace and peace multiplied to us. Are you growing in your *knowledge of Him*? We can grow in knowledge. We can grow in learning from teachers and from head knowledge about Him, but the times I have really had grace and peace multiplied to me was when I grew in my *knowing* Him. He taught me the knowledge I had of Him, and I applied it by faith in my life so that it became a knowledge that was truly *of* Him. It became rooted and grounded in me through the Spirit, making His Word life to me in my actual experience as I received it by faith. Through its confirmation again and again in His Word, He gradually opened up my understanding to it. It is by believing and by humility that we learn to know Him.

True knowledge of God cannot happen without humility. Without true humility in our inner being, we are not even teachable. We may think we are, because we can discipline our minds to learn something and to study it, but “*knowledge puffeth up*” (1 Corinthians 8:1). True learning only comes as God teaches us when we submit to Him and His Word in humility. By humility I mean truly seeing ourselves for what we are, in God's Light, and not deluding ourselves to think we are something when we are nothing, “*for if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself*” (Galatians 6:3).

We deceive ourselves and cannot learn of God if we think we can't be taught by others, if we think we are somehow superior in ourselves to others, or if we refuse to consider our own flesh and see it for what it is. We are

keeping ourselves from His knowledge if we lock ourselves into our own comfortable way of thinking and refuse to be taught by God or to listen to others whom He brings into our lives because we think they are spiritually beneath us. When someone confronts you, do you automatically react or instead take it to the Lord and say, “Is there truth I need in this, Lord? Examine my heart and reveal anything in my flesh I need to see and lead me to Your Light.” Maybe we simply “know we're right” and won't even consider what others may teach us. This is especially hard for someone who is in a teacher's position or who considers him or herself to have a gift of teaching. Yet if you are not teachable, you should not be teaching others. The greatest teacher is one who is not defensive but teachable and who understands his place before the Body of Christ and before God. I've seen pastors who are not approachable, but I've also been blessed to be under one who is very approachable, humble, and who even asks others to examine all he says in God's Word and to come to him if we have questions. What a difference that makes! I learn much more from the latter, even if I don't always agree with someone's way of looking at the Word! I see Jesus in them, and I see God's heart coming through. I can trust they will give me room to grow, and I can give them room to grow as the Lord continues to teach both of us.

In this true light of humility and true knowledge of ourselves and of God, “*His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence*” (2 Peter 1:3).

This verse has so much meaning to me in my daily life. What peace it gives! First of all, I count on Him to reveal true knowledge to me as His child, bought with His own blood and given His Spirit. Then I count on that divine power, His power, with nothing of myself, to grant all things – say it again – all things pertaining to life and Godliness. Wow! I've had some pretty rough trials lately that have ripped at my heart. There is no way I can get through them by my own power. I do not

have in myself any peace or grace or strength to face these trials in life that rip my heart out or to do the right thing! I want to lie down and die when these things hit me. I want immediate escape! But as I look to the Lord, for His knowledge, and for His power, I find He brings me to just the right knowledge I need to apply to the situation in His Word. I find I have just what I need through His power and presence in me to endure the pain, to endure the temptation to give up, and to overcome. I have all I need in His correct counsel to walk in His Godliness and according to the new life He has given me.

I find that if I go to the counsel of men, I find confusion if their words do not direct me to trust in the Word of God and to seek His face to know Him for myself. It is fleshly "help" that turns out too often to draw me more inward than God-ward and I discover in the long run that I have not learned to know Him through it. But Godly counsel comes from His knowledge, taught by God through His breaking the flesh and proving it in our lives. Then we know God's Word experientially and practically. I've learned in my life to steer clear of those that counsel through a head knowledge of "counseling principles" but have not the true knowledge of God for the situation.

Knowledge of God comes through a humble walk with God in faith, taking Him at His Word each time we are tested in it. That Word is then proven to us and in us. Grace and peace are more and more multiplied in our lives the more we grow in that knowledge. One definition of knowledge is "learning; illumination of the mind" (Webster's 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language). True illumination only comes by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:17-18).

"Ignorance is the curse of God, knowledge the wing wherewith we fly to heaven" (Webster's 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language). The Greek word for knowledge is correctly translated "full knowledge."

Thayer Greek-English Lexicon: knowledge

1) precise and correct knowledge

1a) used in the NT of the knowledge of things ethical and divine

If we put the Greek and the Thayer definitions together, we have "full, divine knowledge." Through that full divine knowledge, we can have everything we need and know just what to do in any given circumstance, having the counsel of the Holy Spirit as needed for our life and our Godliness. We don't need to seek it anywhere else but through Him.

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind" (James 1:5-6). This is said in regard to our trials. We are to ask God's wisdom for our trials. God alone knows the personal things in our hearts, our minds, and our will that we struggle with (He is working in us). He alone knows what effect He wants to have in and through us by each trial and circumstance. He alone can give you the true wisdom that is from above. This is the only wisdom I want.

When I've come to Him for that wisdom during those times, I've felt hopeless to see a way through it. Yet, as I bring it to Him, He begins to work. He brings to me the right Word, He brings things to light, and He shows me His way by taking my hand, enabling me, and leading me through it. He does what only He could have done. When we are given teaching or counsel from others, we need always to take it before God and not just take it blindly. I've learned to bring all counsel and teaching to God's Word and examine it there. I've learned to never, ever trust anything BUT His counsel and His wisdom. I must run to Him! I've learned to trust no other way but His. I've learned that I want His will above my own in any matter. I've learned there is no security, safety, peace, or grace outside of His will. I've seen His grace and peace multiplied in my life over and over when I've trusted Him, and it has reinforced my trust in Him, my knowledge of Him, and my rooting in the knowledge He gives. I continue to learn.

There's no debate left when someone challenges God's knowledge, because it is a deep Holy Spirit-taught knowledge of His living Word that is now living and abiding in you. You know it in your whole being. It's not just a doctrine in your head you've come to through study. Precept upon precept, He teaches you, and it can't be argued anymore, and it can't be taken from you. Are we willing to have our own knowledge of things examined and tested and put through the fire by God? Are we willing to be humbled enough to see and admit our misunderstanding it? When our faith goes through the fire, what is not of God will be burned up. Sometimes it feels like the rug being pulled out from under our feet. Sometimes it feels almost as though we have no faith left and are abandoned by God.

But then we find something pure growing in us in its place – something that is of God, something that is solid and pure as gold. Even though it is as small as a mustard seed, it is solid and real, and it enables us to truly walk in the knowledge of God personally. We see God and know God a little more than we did. Only God can do this. No friend, counselor, or spiritual leader can do this in us but only God. When that faith of pure gold is brought forth, grace and peace are multiplied over and over in our lives, enabling us to grow in our love for Him more and more and toward others.

What has He called us to but *to His own glory and excellence*? Praise to His name! Just stop and think on those words for a minute. Don't lightly brush over them as though they had no significance. We are not called to a glory that we see in this earth. We are not called to the glory of honorable position among men or women in the world. No glory of this earth can compare to the Glory God has in store for us. It is His own glory and His own excellence that we are being called to. And that's what He's provided for. He's provided for it all through Himself. The more we know Him, the more of that glory and excellence fills us and guides us through this life and the more of it we enjoy. Do you want to settle for anything less as His child? If you do, please examine your heart in His Light and ask where you are truly at in your relationship with Him! How can any other pursuit be greater or more rewarding?

May the grace and peace of our Lord now truly be multiplied to you as you submit yourself wholly to the knowledge of Him. May that knowledge fill you fully, and may others see it and partake as well. Feed us, Lord Jesus, from Your Heavenly stores above, that You may be glorified through us to this world around us. Amen.

*"Peace I leave with you;
my peace I give to you.
Not as the world gives
do I give to you. Let not
your hearts be troubled,
neither let them be
afraid."
(John 14:27)*

January Newsletter Theme—Discernment
Submission Deadline: January 6
Publish Date: January 13

Theme: Discernment, "who can discern his errors?" "The wisdom of the prudent is to discern his way," "This is a people without discernment," "The discerning of their discerning men shall be hidden," "By testing, you may know the will of God," spiritually discerned knowledge, The Word of God discerns the thoughts and intentions of the heart, etc...