

There can be...

Peace in the Midst of Stress

God has not guaranteed us a life without struggle. He has not promised that we will always have ideal conditions in this life. It is logical, therefore, to assume that our lives may be stressful at times. But He has said that He would give us peace. Perhaps you are an unbeliever. You sneer, "How can you have peace and stress at the same time? The two are not compatible, like oil and water. They can't mix."

I can't explain it to you; you will simply have to take my word for it. I certainly do have stress in my life, but at the same time I have the peace of God deep within me. This is not something I learned to say from my parents. (They taught it to me, but I learned it for myself. We all have to learn anew many facts we have already been taught.) The peace of God is what makes the adversities in any believer's life bearable. We who believe are threatened often; we have more than our share of anxieties, but through it all we have the calming assurance that God is with us. He watches over us and lets nothing happen to us that will not help us in some manner. For "...we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8.28) That gives us the incredible peace to which I refer. It comes only from a God who is all-knowing and all-powerful – and loving beyond degree.

Do we experience fear at times? I have to say yes. But time and time again God has beat back the fear by His soothing presence with us and within us. Do we ever get "down"? Again, yes, but God never leaves us in the valley of despair. We who have lived and trusted God more than a few years are living testimony to the faithfulness of God in delivering us before we could be overcome by our afflictions. We are living proof that His peace can run still and deep within us when the storm is churning the waters and our fragile boat is bobbing fearfully high and perilously low, like a cork going up and down on the waters – except that a cork always remains afloat. We, however, are not corks; we can be sunk without hope *IF* the Master of the seas does not watch over us.

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Do you still wonder how we can have peace and turmoil in our lives at the same time? We have a hope in Christ that the churning of the seas will pass in time, even in this life, although we know without doubt that another storm will bear down upon us. The sun will reappear, and it too will be only for a time, but through dashing waves or sunny skies the peace of God is always there. It is like His Spirit, who is constantly abiding in our innermost beings, forever keeping and reassuring us.

No doubt we the followers of Christ are invincible because we have this peace that engenders a hope – or is it hope that engenders peace? Whatever the right sequence is, we have peace and we have a hope in Christ and neither can be taken from us. We are indeed invincible, but we dare not boast with poet William Ernest Henley, “I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul”: we give all that into the hands of the real Master and the indisputable Captain: Jesus Christ. And we remain invincible. ***Invictus!***

- Aaron J. Smith