

# ARE YOU IN CHAINS?

*“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*  
—**PHILIPPIANS 4:7**

In Rome, Paul was in chains for Christ and the whole palace guard knew it, yet Paul rejoiced and remained confident in the Lord. He wore his chains as a mantle to advance the Gospel, and dared all the more to proclaim it without fear. We are all bound by chains at one point or another, and they come in many forms; some merely troublesome, but others causing great anguish with no end in sight. Where then is this peace Paul talks about? How did he not only cope, but rejoice in chains?

The chains that seep into our lives may simply be a rut we are stuck in; a lack of purpose and significance, which turns every day into a drudgery. We can be chained to a body that does not function; chained to financial stress, marital problems, addictions, or being deeply hurt, longing for intimacy, harbouring anger and resentment, failing at school or at work; dreams, hopes and aspirations dashed, loneliness; all these are chains that cause us to cry out inwardly or visibly.

How do we find peace in these circumstances? By his example, Paul demonstrates how to cast off those chains and be content regardless of circumstances. He lived with the eternal in mind, trusting wholly in Christ, and fighting the good fight, knowing God was accomplishing His purpose through Him. That brought Paul immeasurable joy, and at times when many would think God had deserted them, Paul praised

and worshipped God. Through all the perils he faced, he drew upon the Spirit of Christ within him, and it was the peace of God which sustained and strengthened him.

Peace with God is not the same as the peace of God. Peace with God is received when we have acknowledged our sin, and are reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. Peace of God is experienced through tough, trying times where we do not know what the end will be, but like Paul, we are sustained and strengthened, knowing God is working out His will and purpose in our circumstances.

We know we are experiencing the peace of God when with prayer and thanksgiving we have genuinely turned our chains over to Him. Anguish begins to dissolve, replaced instead with a deep inner confidence in a God who knows where we are at and exactly what He is doing. Paul writes, “We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28). “In all things” includes every circumstance, and the peace that transcends all understanding derives from Christ, guarding our hearts and minds as we trust Him and love Him.

***PRAYER: Dear Lord, grant me your grace that by your presence in me, I will experience the path you have chosen for me in all that I do.***

***TO REFLECT UPON: In times of hardship, am I truly able to trust the Lord to lead my way?***