

***Peace on Earth
Finding Peace in Troubled Times
John 14:27; 16:33***

ONE THING

When I EXPERIENCE Peace on Earth WITHIN me, I will be able to then EXPRESS Peace on Earth AROUND me.

Our key verses we will examine this morning are both found in John...

They were spoken by Jesus on the night He was betrayed...

As Jesus begins to unfold the events that are about to transpire He tells them not to let their hearts be troubled...

John 14:1a (ESV) — Let not your hearts be troubled...

Jesus then tells them HOW they will be able to FIND PEACE IN TROUBLED TIMES...

John 14:27 (ESV) — 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.

Jesus ends His discourse/teachings by telling His disciples WHY they will be able to FIND PEACE IN TROUBLED TIMES...

John 16:33 (ESV) — 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 overcome the world."

The HOW and the WHY Jesus shares make sense, but are they the present reality of our Christmas?

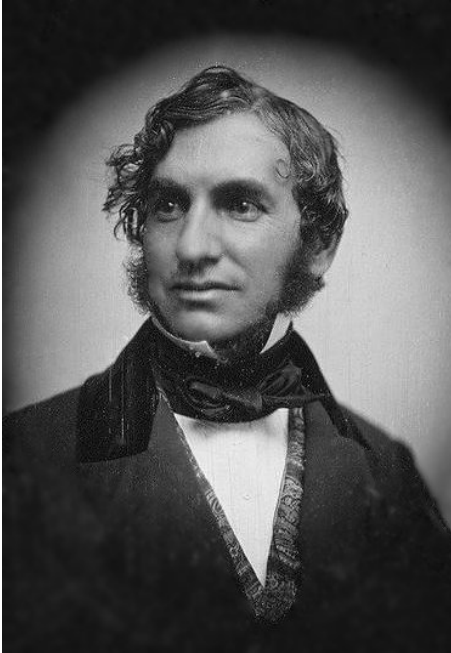
→ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

One of my favorite stories on a believer finding peace during troubled times is the story of a man named Henry Wadsworth Longfellow...

Henry was born in the early 1800's to a very distinguished family...

Henry was born February 27, 1807 to a distinguished family...

→ PICTURE of Young Henry



He became a famous writer of stories and poems...

One of his most famous poems was titled, "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere"

Why I'm drawn to Henry's story is because of another famous poem he wrote...

For he wrote this poem, titled, "Christmas Bells" expressing his journey from troubles that were stealing his peace into experiencing PEACE ON EARTH...

On September 14, 1831, Longfellow married Mary Storer Potter

In October 1835, his wife Mary had a miscarriage during the trip, about six months into her pregnancy. She did not

recover and died after several weeks of illness at the age of 22 on November 29, 1835.

He was deeply saddened by her death and wrote in his journal:

"One thought occupies me night and day ... She is dead - She is dead! All day I am weary and sad"

Henry later began to move forward in life...

In 1836 Henry met and began courting Francis (Fanny) Appleton...

She had no desire to marry and Henry was determined she would marry him!

In 1839 Henry wrote a friend about their courtship...

"Victory hangs doubtful. The lady says she will not! I say she shall! It is not pride, but the madness of passion".

On May 10, 1843, after seven years, Longfellow received a letter from Fanny Appleton agreeing to marry him.

Soon after Henry married Fanny Appleton...

They had a wonderful marriage and God blessed them with six (6) children...

→ PICTURE of Fanny with two of their sons



On July 9, 1861, Fanny had just cut locks of hair from her 7-year old daughter Edith's hair.

She wanted to preserve the hair by sealing it in wax.

As she lit the wax to soften it in order to place it around the locks of hair, some of the hot wax dropped on her dress.

Fanny hadn't noticed the drops of hot wax beginning to burn on her dress...

As a breeze gusted through the window, the light material of her dress burst into flames...

Henry was in another room napping...

When he heard the screaming he raced to the room to find his wife, Fanny engulfed in flames.

He attempted to put the flames out with a rug, but being too small, he wrapped her in his own body being badly burned himself.

At 10 AM the next morning (July 10, 1861) Fanny died from her severe burns...

Christmas became excessively sad for Henry following the death of Francis...

The first Christmas after Fanny's death, Longfellow wrote,

"How inexpressibly sad are all holidays."

A year after the incident, he wrote,

"I can make no record of these days. Better leave them wrapped in silence. Perhaps someday God will give me peace."

1. The AWARENESS of SABOTAGED Peace

John 14:27 (ESV) — 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.

The word, "troubled" used here literally means "stirred or churning" as in water that is stirred...

John 5:6-7 NLT - When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, "Would you like to get well?" "I can't, sir," the sick man said, "for I have no one to put me into the pool when the water bubbles up. Someone else always gets there ahead of me."

A Sabotaged Peace is evidenced by the loss of one or more of FOUR primary things...

➤ **A loss of CALMNESS in HEART**

A troubled heart is one that is stirred or churning because of something...

Along with this Jesus says that we should not let our hearts be afraid...

The word used here for “afraid” means to become “fearful or timid”. It has to do with the loss of courage...

➤ **A loss of COURAGE in FAITH**

In John 16:33, Jesus refers to our response to difficulties ...

John 16:33 (ESV) — 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 overcome the world.

What is Tribulation? It literally means, trouble involving direct suffering...

Jesus says that we should not be at all surprised by suffering...

He follows this by saying, “But take heart...”

This means to be confident or to find confidence in the face of suffering...

➤ **A loss of CONFIDENCE in GOD**

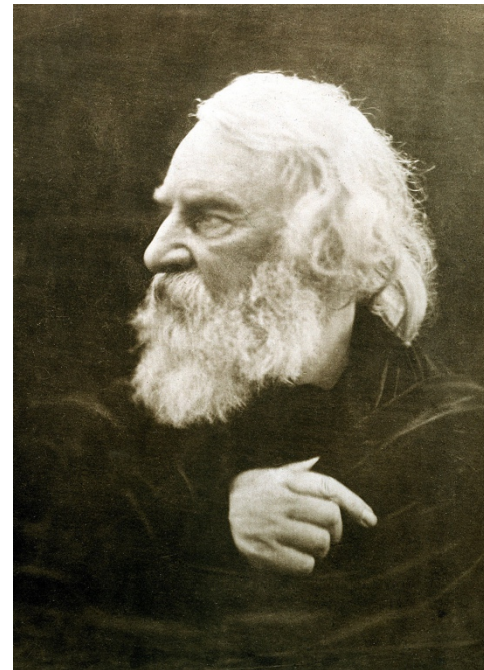
When any or all of these are present, we will also experience another loss...

➤ **A loss of COMPASSION for OTHERS**

If you find and one or more of these occurring in your life it’s probably because something or someone has sabotaged your peace...

The Holidays filled with sorrow and soured by grief was never more described than in the life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow...

→ **PICTURE of Older Henry**



The second Christmas following Fanny’s death...

Longfellow's journal entry for December 25th 1862 reads:

"A merry Christmas' say the children, but that is no more for me."

Almost a year later, Longfellow received word that his oldest son Charles, a lieutenant in the Army of the Potomac, had been severely wounded with a bullet passing under his shoulder blades and taking off one of the spinal processes.

The Christmas of 1863 was silent in Longfellow's journal.

In his poem, "Christmas Bells", Henry wrote of this pain and loss he had experienced and was accentuated during the holidays...

His next three stanzas reflected on the grieving pain not only of himself, but of a grieving nation locked in the divisive Civil War...

Stanzas #3-5

**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!**

**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!

**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!"**

When I experience Peace on Earth within me, I will be able to then express Peace on Earth around me.

1. The AWARENESS of SABOTAGED Peace

2. The AVOIDANCE of SUPERFICIAL Peace

John 14:27 (ESV) — 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 16:33 (ESV) — 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 overcome the world.

There are two fallacies that lead many of God's people to settle for a superficial peace rather than the peace God alone can give...

Fallacy #1 – Problems DO NOT COME in the life of believers who are walking TOTALLY IN STEP with God.

First of all this goes against the very words Jesus told His disciples...

John 16:33b (ESV) — ... In the world you will have tribulation...

Second, this means that all the apostles including Paul were not walking close to God because they ALL went through suffering and pain.... In fact, listen to Paul...

2 Timothy 2:3 NLT - Endure suffering along with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 3:12 NLT - ... everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

Fallacy #2 – Believers who are walking TOTALLY IN STEP with God DO NOT ALLOW any problems or pain to TROUBLE their heart.

This idea basically leads so many of God's people to settle for a SUPERFICIAL Peace...

It's, in reality, denial...

In fact, Jesus Himself had situations and events come that "troubled His heart"...

When Jesus saw the pain in Mary at the death of her brother Lazarus...

John 11:33 ESV - When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.

When Jesus thought about the Cross that He was going to bear within 24 hours...

John 12:27 ESV - Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour.

When Jesus was with His disciples knowing Judas was going to betray Him...

John 13:21 ESV - After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me."

When Jesus tells us to not let our hearts be troubled He is not telling us to put on a show by masking our pain behind a superficial peace...

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem, I'm sure by now some of you have figured out was put together with music and became the famous Christmas Hymn, "I Heard The Bells On Christmas Day"...

Both the poem and hymn begin with Henry expressing, what I'm calling "SUPERFICIAL PEACE"...

"Christmas Bells"

(The original poem, complete with all seven stanzas)

Stanza #1

"I heard the bells on Christmas Day

***Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!***

His poem then began to reflect on how this had been the song of the Church since the birth of Jesus...

Stanza #2

***And thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along
The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!***

***When I experience Peace on Earth within me, I will
be able to then express Peace on Earth around me.***

1. The AWARENESS of SABOTAGED Peace

2. The AVOIDANCE of SUPERFICIAL Peace

***3. The ACTIVATION of SUPERNATURAL
Peace***

John 14:27 (ESV) — 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 16:33 (ESV) — 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 overcome the world.

➤ ***FEEL your PAIN***

Stanza #5

***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!"***

➤ ***FAITH God's PRESENCE***

2 Thessalonians 3:16 (ESV) — Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all.

➤ ***FIND God's PEACE***

Isaiah 26:3 (ESV) — You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.

Finally, on Christmas Day of 1864, he wrote the words of the poem, "Christmas Bells."

The reelection of Abraham Lincoln or the possible end of the terrible war may have been the occasion for the poem.

Longfellow, having begun to work through his grief and beginning to see signs of a possible end to the bloody Civil War, heard church bells off in the distance.

Rather than giving in to the waves of despair, he sat down and began to write.

The first five stanzas move from a SUPERFICIAL RELIGIOUS PEACE (lodged in the head)...

... To FEELING THE PAIN of a SABOTAGED PEACE...

Then as we come to Henry's 6th stanza we see a shift beginning...

He continued with this same thought...

Stanza #6

**Till, ringing, singing 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!**

**Then, as the Church bells pealed a resounding crescendo,
Henry penned the seventh and final stanza...**

Stanza #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!"**

**Peace on Earth!
Finding Peace in Troubled Times
John 14:27; 16:33**

When I _____ Peace on Earth _____ me, I will
be able to then _____ Peace on Earth _____ me.

1. The _____ of _____ Peace

- A loss of _____ in _____
- A loss of _____ in _____
- A loss of _____ in _____
- A loss of _____ for _____

2. The _____ of _____ Peace

**Fallacy #1 – Problems _____ in the life of believers
who are walking _____ with God.**

**Fallacy #2 – Believers who are walking _____
with God _____ any problems or pain to _____
their heart.**

3. The _____ of _____ Peace

- **FEEL your PAIN**
- **FAITH God's PRESENCE**
- **FAITH God's PRESENCE**