

The Peace of God Part 9 – When the Inside Is Stronger Than the Outside

Key Points:

- The signs Jesus described in Matthew 24, including earthquakes, tribulation, and persecution, are increasing in frequency and intensity like woman with birth pangs that is drawing closer to delivery.
- Believers are called to resist the spirit of the age, which seeks to stir division, hatred, racism, ethnic hatred, and fear among people and nations.
- **Psalm 91** should be regularly confessed and declared over one's life, family, home, and business as an act of faith and agreement with God's Word.
- Earthquakes are a fulfillment of biblical prophecy, and our safety is rooted not in geography, but in who lives within us.
- The Greek word for tribulation describes pressure so intense that a person feels trapped and barely able to breathe, which mirrors the anxiety and stress visible in modern culture.
- Worry and faith cannot coexist; when believers worry, they stop the activity of faith and prevent God's answers from manifesting.
- Christians around the world are being killed for their faith, and this will increase as the end times progress; believers must be grounded in the certainty of their salvation and eternal destination.
- Fellowship with other believers is a critical defense against the cultural and spiritual pressure of the age.
- The life of a believer is brief, as James describes it as a vapor, making eternal perspective essential.
- The enemy cannot ultimately silence the church; Christ's return is the final answer.

The Peace of God Part 9 - 5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Peace That Surpasses: Living Faithfully in Uncertain Times

Day 1: Peace That Cannot Be Shaken

Reading: John 14:27 and John 16:33

Devotional: The world offers a counterfeit peace -- one that depends entirely on favorable circumstances, stable news cycles, and personal comfort. But Jesus offers something radically different. His peace is not the absence of trouble; it is a settled confidence that exists inside trouble. When earthquakes shake the ground and headlines stir anxiety, the believer is not left without an anchor. Christ declared that he has already overcome the world -- past tense, finished, done. That victory is yours to stand on today. Refuse to let external chaos dictate your internal condition. Your peace is not borrowed from your circumstances. It was given by the Prince of Peace himself.

Reflection: Where in your life have you been looking to external circumstances for peace rather than to Christ? What would it look like to consciously choose his peace today?

Practical Application: Write down one situation that has been stealing your peace. Commit it to prayer, and deliberately choose to leave it at the throne rather than carry it back with you.

Day 2: Casting Every Care

Reading: 1 Peter 5:6-7 and Philippians 4:6-7

Devotional: There is a profound difference between bringing your burdens to God and actually leaving them there. Many believers rehearse their worries in prayer without ever releasing them. **First Peter 5:7** is a clear instruction: pour out your worries and stress upon him and leave them there, because he tenderly cares for you. Worry is not a neutral activity. It actively works against faith, creating a cycle of anxiety that crowds out trust. God is not indifferent to what you carry. He is not a distant observer. He is a Father who cares deeply and specifically for you. The invitation is not to pretend problems do not exist, but to transfer their weight to the One who is fully capable of bearing them.

Reflection: Are you in the habit of casting your cares or collecting them? What fears have you been carrying that were never meant to be yours to carry?

Practical Application: Make a written list of your top three anxieties. Pray over each one specifically, releasing it to God, and then physically set the list aside as an act of faith that you are leaving them with him.

Day 3: Refuge in the Shaking

Reading: Psalm 46:1-3 and Psalm 91:1-7

Devotional: The psalmist did not write **Psalm 46** from a place of comfort and ease. He wrote it imagining mountains collapsing into the sea, waters roaring, and the earth itself being removed -- and declared that the people of God would not fear. That is not reckless denial. That is faith rooted in the character of God. **Psalm 91** is not merely poetry; it is a covenant declaration. When you confess it over your life, your family, your home, and your work, you are coming into agreement with what God has already said about his protection. The safety of the believer is not determined by geography or geology. It is determined by the God who dwells within.

Reflection: Do you regularly speak God's Word over your life and family as an act of faith, or do you tend to speak more about the problem than about the promise?

Practical Application: Print or write out **Psalm 91**. Read it aloud over yourself and your household every morning this week. Let it be a daily act of faith and agreement with God's covenant protection.

Day 4: Faithful Under Pressure

Reading: Romans 8:35-39 and 2 Corinthians 4:8-10

Devotional: The Greek word translated as tribulation paints a picture of pressure so heavy that a person can barely breathe -- events piling upon events, weight upon weight. This is not an experience foreign to the believer; it is one Jesus specifically warned his followers to expect. But the apostle Paul, writing from his own experience of beatings, imprisonment, and constant danger, declared that none of these things could separate the believer from the love of God. Pressure is real. Hardship is real. But so is the God who sustains you through it. The goal of tribulation is to break you. The promise of God is that it will not. You are hard-pressed but not crushed, struck down but not destroyed.

Reflection: What pressures in your life right now feel nearly crushing? Have you brought them honestly before God, or have you been trying to manage them alone?

Practical Application: Identify one area of pressure you have been silently enduring. Share it with a trusted fellow believer this week, and pray together, choosing fellowship over isolation as a deliberate act of resistance against the enemy's strategy.

Day 5: Eternal Perspective in a Temporary Tent

Reading: James 4:14, 2 Corinthians 5:1-8, and Revelation 2:10

Devotional: James reminds us that this life is a breath -- here and then gone. That is not a discouraging thought for the believer; it is a liberating one. When you know where you are going, the length of the journey matters far less than the faithfulness of the One who walks it with you. Throughout history, an estimated 70 million Christians have died for their faith. They are not victims. They are heroes of the faith who understood that the body is a tent, temporary and passing, while the spirit is eternal and secure in Christ. The enemy can silence a voice, but he cannot touch a soul that belongs to God. Make sure today that Christ is in your heart. That is the only certainty that outlasts every earthly uncertainty.

Reflection: How does an eternal perspective change the way you view your current trials, fears, and even your mortality? Are you living as someone who knows where they are going?

Practical Application: If you have never made a definitive commitment of your life to Christ, do so today. If you have, take time to reaffirm that commitment and ask God to renew in you a sense of eternal purpose that shapes how you live every ordinary day.

The Peace of God Part 9 – Scripture References from the Sermon

Here are all the scripture references mentioned or alluded to in the sermon:

Explicitly Referenced

- **Psalm 91** (covenant protection and declaration of faith).
- **John 14:27** (Jesus gives a peace the world cannot offer).

- **John 16:33** (Jesus has overcome the world; peace amid tribulation).
- **Matthew 24** (signs before the return of Christ, including wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, tribulation, and persecution).
- **Psalms 46:1-3** (God as refuge and strength; no fear even if the earth shakes).
- **1 Peter 5:7** (casting all cares upon God because He cares for you).
- **Matthew 24:6** (Jesus telling his disciples not to be troubled).
- **James 4:14** (life is like a vapor or breath, here and then gone).

Alluded to Without Direct Citation

- **John 5:24** (passing from death to life through faith in Christ).
- **Romans 8:5** (seeing one another after the spirit, not the flesh).
- **Matthew 5:13-14** (believers as salt and light in the world).
- **Ephesians 6:12** (the spiritual nature of the conflict believers face).
- **Revelation 6 / Matthew 24:7** (wars, famines, and pestilences as end-time signs).
- **Hebrews 11** (the faithful martyrs).

The Peace of God Part 9 – Personal and Small Group Study Guide

Small Group Guide

Matthew 24: Peace in the Midst of Signs

Overview

This guide is based on a sermon from **Matthew 24** exploring the signs Jesus described before his return — earthquakes, tribulation, and persecution — and how believers are called to respond not with fear, but with the peace of Christ that lives within them.

Key Takeaways

1. The signs Jesus described in **Matthew 24** — conflicts, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes — are not surprises to God and should not be surprises to believers. They are birth pangs that will increase in frequency and intensity before Christ's return.
2. The peace Jesus offers is internal and rooted in him, not dependent on external circumstances. **John 14:27** and **John 16:33** establish that Jesus has already overcome the world and given us a peace the world cannot provide.
3. **Psalms 91** is a declaration of covenant protection that believers should confess regularly over themselves, their families, their homes, and their businesses.
4. The Greek word for tribulation, *thlipsis*, describes pressure that feels nearly crushing — event piled upon event. Believers have the answer to this pressure through the peace of Christ.
5. Worry and faith cannot coexist. When a believer returns to worry after casting their cares on God, they stop the activity of faith. **First Peter 5:7** calls believers to cast their cares on God and leave them there.
6. Persecution of Christians — including martyrdom — is a reality in the world today and will increase as the church rises in power. Knowing where you are going when you die is the foundation of peace in the face of even the most extreme pressure.

Discussion Questions

Opening Question

- When you hear about earthquakes, global conflicts, or persecution of Christians in the news, what is your first emotional response? How does that response reflect your current level of peace in Christ?

Diving Deeper

1. The sermon described the signs in **Matthew 24** as birth pangs — increasing in frequency and intensity before Christ's return. How does understanding these events as birth pangs rather than random chaos change the way you process difficult news?

2. The pastor said, "Our safety and protection is not in where we live, but rather in who lives in us." What does that statement mean to you practically in your day-to-day life? Is it easy or difficult to believe?
3. **Psalm 46:1-3** describes God as a refuge even when the earth itself is removed and mountains are thrown into the sea. What is your current "refuge" when life feels unstable? Is it truly God, or is it something else — finances, relationships, plans, or routines?
4. The pastor described the way many people pray — bringing their cares to God and then picking them back up on the way out. Can you relate to that pattern? What makes it difficult to genuinely leave your worries with God?
5. The sermon stated, "You stop your faith when you worry. You stop the activity of it." How does worry interfere with faith in your own experience? What practical steps help you move from worry back to faith?
6. The Greek word *thlipsis* describes tribulation as event piled upon event — pressure so heavy it is hard to breathe. Have you experienced a season like that? How did you navigate it, and what did you learn about God's peace during that time?
7. The sermon addressed the reality that Christians around the world are being killed for their faith, and that this will increase. How does knowing where you are going when you die shape the way you live today? Does that reality feel distant or close to you?
8. The pastor emphasized that believers are called to be light and salt in the midst of tragedy. When the people around you are overwhelmed by the pressure of current events, how are you positioned to be a source of peace and answers rather than adding to the noise?

Practical Applications

This Week, Choose One or More of the Following:

- **Declare Psalm 91 daily.** Print or write out **Psalm 91** and place it somewhere visible — a bathroom mirror, kitchen counter, a dashboard. Read it aloud over yourself, your family, and your home each morning. Make it a confession of faith, not just a reading exercise.

- **Practice leaving your cares with God.** During your prayer time this week, intentionally bring specific worries before God and make a conscious decision not to pick them back up. If a worry returns to your mind, speak **1 Peter 5:7** aloud and redirect your thoughts to what God has promised.
 - **Examine your source of peace.** Take a few quiet minutes this week to honestly ask yourself: Where am I actually looking for peace right now? Is it in news, plans, money, relationships, or routines? Bring whatever you find back to God and place your trust back in the peace of Christ.
 - **Be salt and light to someone under pressure.** Identify one person in your life — a coworker, neighbor, family member, or friend — who is clearly living under the kind of crushing pressure described in this sermon. Pray for them specifically this week, and look for one practical opportunity to bring the peace of Christ into their situation.
 - **Settle the question of eternity.** The sermon closed with a direct challenge: make sure you have Christ in your heart and know where you are going when you die. If that question is not settled for you, talk to your group leader or pastor this week. If it is settled, take time this week to thank God for the assurance you have.
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Closing Prayer Points

- Pray for believers around the world who are facing persecution, imprisonment, and martyrdom for their faith.
- Pray for your group members to walk in genuine, rooted peace this week — not peace that depends on circumstances, but peace that comes from Christ alone.
- Pray for boldness to be light and salt to those around you who are living under pressure without answers.