



God. Self. Others. Trials. Purpose.

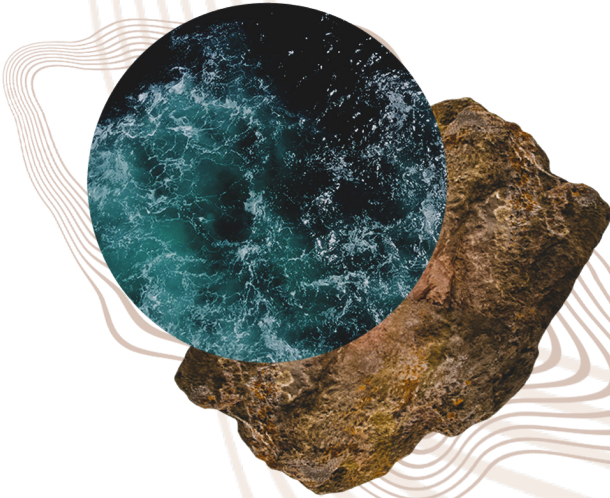
WEEK 4

Peace in Times of Crisis

By: Dr. Jody Ray

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

(John 16:33, NIV)



INTRODUCTION

In John 16:33, Jesus speaks to His disciples, offering them words of comfort and assurance during a time of impending crisis. This verse is a powerful reminder that during turmoil and uncertainty, believers can find peace and hope in their faith.

Jesus begins by acknowledging the reality of the trials and tribulations that His followers will face in the world. He does not sugarcoat the difficulties that lie ahead but instead prepares them for the challenges they will encounter. This acknowledgment of the harsh realities of life is important because it validates the struggles that we all experience in the face of crisis.

However, Jesus does not leave His disciples without hope. He offers them a profound promise: “But take heart! I have overcome the world.” This statement is a declaration of victory over the trials and troubles of the world. It reminds us that ultimate triumph belongs to Jesus and that His

followers can find solace and strength in Him.

The peace that Jesus offers is not the absence of trouble but a deep sense of inner calm and assurance that transcends circumstances. It is a peace that comes from knowing that God is in control and that His purposes will ultimately prevail. This peace is not dependent on external factors but is rooted in a steadfast faith in God’s promises.

During times of crisis, when the world seems to be falling apart around us, we can find comfort in Jesus’ words in John 16:33. We can take heart in the knowledge that our faith in Him gives us access to a peace that surpasses understanding. This peace enables us to navigate the storms of life with courage and grace, knowing that we are not alone and that we are ultimately secure in God’s love.

As we reflect on this verse, may we be reminded that amid

chaos and uncertainty, we can find peace in the unchanging character of God and the victory that Jesus has already won for us. Let us hold fast to our faith and trust in the promises of God, knowing that in Him, we can find peace that sustains us through even the darkest of times.

DAY 1 | WEEK 4
A Stronghold in Times of Trouble
By Dr. Jody Ray

“The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name trust in you, for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you.”

(Psalm 9:9-10, NIV)

A STRONGHOLD IN TIMES OF TROUBLE

DAY 1 | Week 4

During life's storms and trials, we often find ourselves seeking a place of safety and security. The world can be a chaotic and uncertain place, full of challenges that threaten to overwhelm us. However, in Psalm 9:9-10, we are reminded that we have a strong and unwavering stronghold in the Lord, who offers refuge and protection to all who seek Him.

"The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed." When we feel burdened by the weight of life's struggles, when we are oppressed by circumstances beyond our control, we can turn to God as our refuge. He is a safe haven where we can find peace, comfort, and solace. In His presence, we can lay down our burdens and find rest for our weary souls.

"A stronghold in times of trouble." God is not just a temporary shelter that offers fleeting protection. He is a mighty stronghold, an unshakable fortress that stands firm in the face of adversity. When troubles

surround us and fears threaten to consume us, we can find strength and courage in the steadfast presence of our Lord. He is our rock, our fortress, and our deliverer in times of trouble.

"Those who know your name trust in you." As we grow in our knowledge of who God is and experience His faithfulness in our lives, our trust in Him deepens. We come to understand that His name is a strong tower where the righteous can run and be safe (Proverbs 18:10). When we know the character of God—His love, His faithfulness, His sovereignty—we can confidently place our trust in Him, knowing that He will never fail us.

“For you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you.” The history of God’s faithfulness is a testament to His enduring love and care for His people. Throughout the ages, God has remained faithful to those who earnestly seek Him. He has never abandoned His children; instead, He has walked with them through the valleys, carried them through the storms, and upheld them with His righteous right hand.

Today, as you face the challenges and uncertainties of life, remember that you have a stronghold in the Lord. He is your refuge, your fortress, and your deliverer. In Him, you can find peace that surpasses understanding, strength that endures through trials, and hope that anchors the soul. Trust in His unfailing love, seek His presence earnestly, and rest in the assurance that He will never forsake you. May you find comfort and courage in the unchanging character of our God, who is a stronghold in times of trouble.

Questions for further reflection:

1. What does the Psalmist mean by “the Lord is a refuge for the oppressed?”

2. Why is it hard to trust God in the difficult seasons of life?

3. How can God become your “stronghold” in times of trouble?

DAY 2 | WEEK 4
Don't Be Anxious
By: Dr. Jody Ray

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, 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, NIV)

DON'T BE ANXIOUS

Day 2 | Week 4

I know what you're thinking, "Easier said than done." In a world filled with uncertainty, stress, and trials, it is easy to become consumed by anxiety and worry. The pressures of life can weigh heavily on our hearts and minds, threatening to steal our peace and joy. However, in Philippians 4:6-7, the Apostle Paul offers us a powerful reminder and a comforting promise: do not be anxious, but instead, turn to God in prayer and experience His peace that surpasses all understanding.

"Do not be anxious about anything." These words may seem easier said than done, especially when faced with challenging circumstances that evoke fear and uncertainty. Yet, Paul's exhortation is not a mere suggestion, but a command rooted in the truth of God's character and promises. As believers, we are called to trust in the sovereignty and faithfulness of our Heavenly Father, knowing that He is in control of all things and that He cares deeply for us.

"In every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God." Instead of allowing anxiety to overwhelm us, we are encouraged to bring our concerns, fears, and needs before God in prayer. Prayer is a powerful tool that connects us with God, inviting His presence into our lives and inviting His peace to rule in our hearts. As we present our requests to God with thanksgiving, acknowledging His goodness and faithfulness, we demonstrate our trust in His ability to provide, protect, and guide us through every situation.

"And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." The promise that follows our obedience to God's command is a peace that surpasses human comprehension. It is a peace that is not contingent on our circumstances but is rooted in the unchanging nature of God Himself. This peace acts as a guard over our hearts and

minds, shielding us from the attacks of anxiety, doubt, and fear. It is a peace that sustains us in the midst of trials, comforts us in times of distress, and anchors us in the assurance of God's presence and provision.

When we choose to surrender our anxieties to God in prayer, we open ourselves up to receive His peace – a peace that is beyond what the world can offer. This peace is not dependent on external circumstances but is a gift from God that dwells within us, calming our fears, soothing our worries, and strengthening our faith.

As you navigate the challenges and uncertainties of life, remember to heed the words of Paul in Philippians 4:6-7. Do not be anxious, but instead, bring your concerns to God in prayer with a heart of thanksgiving. Trust in His faithfulness, rest in His peace, and allow His presence to guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus.

DAY 3 | WEEK 4
We Live by Faith, Not by Sight
By: Dr. Jody Ray

“Therefore, we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. For we live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So, we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”

(2 Corinthians 5:6-10, NIV)

WE LIVE BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT

Day 3 | Week 4

Our culture values what is seen and tangible. So, the concept of living by faith, not by sight, can be challenging. Yet, as believers, we are called to walk by faith, trusting in the promises of God even when we cannot see the outcome. In 2 Corinthians 5:6-10, the Apostle Paul reminds us of the importance of living by faith and aligning our hearts with the eternal perspective that comes from a relationship with Christ.

“For we live by faith, not by sight.” These words represent what the daily rhythm of Christian life. Faith is the foundation upon which our relationship with God is built, the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). While the world around us may be filled with uncertainties and challenges, our faith in God provides us with a firm anchor, a source of strength and hope that transcends our circumstances.

As followers of Christ, we are called to trust in God’s wisdom

and sovereignty, even when we cannot see the full picture. Our faith enables us to navigate life’s twists and turns with confidence, knowing that God is faithful to fulfill His promises and guide us along the path He has set before us.

“We make it our goal to please him.” Living by faith involves aligning our desires and priorities with God’s will. Instead of being driven by the fleeting pleasures and pursuits of this world, we are called to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33). Our ultimate goal is to please the Lord, to honor Him with our lives, and to live in a manner that reflects His love and grace to those around us.

“Whether we are at home in the body or away from it.” The Apostle Paul acknowledges the tension between our earthly existence and our eternal destination. While we are currently living in the limitations of our physical bodies, our true

home is with the Lord in eternity. This perspective reminds us that our lives on earth are temporary and fleeting, and that our ultimate hope lies in the promise of eternal life with Christ.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.” The reality of standing before the judgment seat of Christ serves as a sobering reminder of the accountability, we have for the lives we have lived. As followers of Jesus, we are called to live in a manner that honors God, knowing that one day we will give an account for our actions and deeds. This truth motivates us to live with purpose, integrity, and faithfulness, seeking to bring glory to God in all that we do.

Today, as you reflect on 2 Corinthians 5:6-10, be encouraged to embrace a life lived by faith, not by sight. Trust in the unseen promises of God, seek to please Him in all you do, and keep your eyes fixed on the eternal perspective that comes from a relationship with Christ. Walk confidently in faith, knowing that He is faithful.

DAY 4 | WEEK 4
Perseverance in Adversity
By: Dr. Jody Ray

“For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.”

(2 Corinthians 4:6-10, NIV)

PERSEVERANCE IN ADVERSITY

Day 4 | Week 4

In 2 Corinthians 4:6-10, the Apostle Paul shares profound insights on perseverance in the face of adversity. As believers, we are called to navigate life's challenges with unwavering faith, knowing that God's power shines through our weaknesses. This passage serves as a beacon of hope and encouragement for all who are enduring trials and tribulations.

Verse 6: "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:6, NIV)

Paul reminds us that just as God brought light out of darkness at the beginning of creation, He also shines His light into our hearts through the knowledge of Christ. In the midst of our struggles, God's light illuminates our path, guiding us through the darkness and revealing His glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

Verse 7: "But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us." (2 Corinthians 4:7, NIV)

As believers, we are like fragile jars of clay containing the priceless treasure of God's light and power. Our weaknesses and imperfections serve as a backdrop for God's strength and glory to be displayed. In times of adversity, we can find solace in the truth that God's power works best through our vulnerabilities and limitations.

Verse 8-9: "We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed." (2 Corinthians 4:8-9, NIV)

Paul acknowledges the reality of facing hardships and trials in the Christian journey. Despite being hard-pressed, perplexed, persecuted, and struck down, believers are not defeated.

Through God's grace and strength, we can endure adversity without succumbing to despair or destruction. Our resilience in the face of challenges is a testament to God's sustaining power at work within us.

Verse 10: "We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body." (2 Corinthians 4:10, NIV)

In our suffering and struggles, we are reminded of Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection. Just as Jesus overcame death, His life is made manifest in us as we persevere through trials. Our endurance in adversity not only reflects the power of Christ within us but also serves as a witness to His transforming grace and love.

We are not promised a life without hardship and struggle. However, God does promise to be with us. It's often in life's struggles where God teaches us the most about ourselves and His grace. If you are facing adversity today, allow God's light to shine through your darkness. Remember that His power is made perfect in our weakness and it's His grace that will sustain you through every trial. Embrace your challenge with faith and hope, knowing

that God is with you, guiding you, and empowering you to overcome. Press on with courage and perseverance, trusting in the promise of God's presence and provision in all circumstances.

Questions for further reflection:

1. How can we apply the concept of treasure in jars of clay to our own lives? In what ways do you see God's power being made evident in your weaknesses?

2. How do you understand the idea of being "hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; struck down, but not destroyed?" How does this apply to your own struggles and challenges?

3. In what ways can you keep your focus on eternal things rather than temporary difficulties, based on these verses?

4. How can we share the light of Christ with others, especially when we ourselves may be facing challenges or difficulties?

DAY 5 | WEEK 4
Resting in the Goodness of God
By: Dr. Jody Ray

“Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him.”

(Psalm 62:5)

RESTING IN THE GOODNESS OF GOD

Day 5 | Week 4

All of us face storms and challenges in life. It's easy to become overwhelmed and consumed with doubts and fear. We may find ourselves searching for peace and security in the things of the world. However, Psalm 62:5 reminds us of where our true rest and hope comes from – God.

The Psalmist encourages us to find rest in God alone. This rest is not merely physical relaxation, but a deep spiritual peace that comes from trusting in the goodness and faithfulness of our Heavenly Father. When we place our hope in God, we can rest assured that He is in control and has a perfect plan for our lives.

God's goodness is unchanging and unwavering. Even when circumstances around us may seem uncertain, we can trust in His character and promises. He is a loving and compassionate God who cares for each one of us with an everlasting love. As we rest in His goodness, we can

find comfort in knowing that He is working all things together for our good. Now, that doesn't mean everything that happens to us is good, but that God will work through the difficult times in our lives to bring about His perfect plan.

Resting in the goodness of God requires surrendering our fears, worries, and doubts to Him. It means letting go of our need to control every aspect of our lives and instead placing our trust in His perfect timing and wisdom. When we choose to rest in God, we are acknowledging that He is our source of hope and strength.

Today, I want to challenge you to take a moment and consider God's goodness in your life. Remember the times He has been faithful to you in the past and trust that He will continue to be faithful in the future. Find rest in His presence and allow His peace through the power of the Holy Spirit to fill your soul. Remember the God is always with you. He

will never leave you or forsake you. God is with you – right now – in this very moment.

Prayer for Peace

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your unending goodness and faithfulness. Give me the grace I need to find rest in You alone, trusting in Your perfect plan for my life. Fill me with Your peace and comfort and remind me of Your unwavering love. Lord, I surrender my fears and worries to You, and I know that You are in control. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Questions for further reflection:

1. Take a moment and list 10 ways God has blessed your life.

2. What in your life causes you to worry?

3. What keeps you from resting in the goodness?



Mt. Bethel Church
4385 Lower Roswell Road, Marietta, GA
770.971.2880

Visit us at: mtbethel.org

©2024 Mt. Bethel Church, Marietta, GA. All rights reserved.