



# A Prayer of Peace by Howard Thurman

The following words of Howard Thurman are taken from a collection of 15 sermons on the parables of Jesus, titled simply, "Sermons on the Parables". This week allow yourself 20 minutes to an hour to sit with this prayer. Maybe making some time to reflect through art making or reciting a line meditatively while taking a long walk!

*Center:* start by finding a comfortable seat, in or out of doors, where you will remain for 20 minutes or so. Have journaling and art materials on hand.

breathe, clear your thoughts. Deepen and expand your breath for a few rounds and then read through the following passage. *Read*, preferably out loud — two or three times through. The first time, get a feel for the passage. When you read the passage a second time, note the word or phrase to which your attention is being drawn. Read with the intention that a prayer for your life will present itself. If nothing stands out to you, read the passage a third time:

**"The peace of God,  
which passeth all understanding,  
shall guard my heart and thoughts.  
There is the peace that comes  
when lowering clouds burst  
and the whole landscape is drenched in rain,  
refreshing and cool.  
There is the peace that comes  
when hours of sleeplessness**

are swallowed up in sleep,  
deeply relaxing and calm.

There is a peace that comes  
when what has lurked so long  
in the shadow of my mind  
stands out in the light.

I face it, call it by its name,  
for better or for worse.

There is a peace that comes  
when sorrow is not relieved,  
when pain is not required,  
when tragedy remains tragedy,  
stark and literal,  
when failure continues through all the days  
to be failure.

Is all this the peace of God?

Or is it the intimation of the peace of God?

The Peace of God

shall guard my heart and thoughts.

There are feelings, untamed and unmanageable  
in my heart:

The bitterness of a great hatred, not yet absorbed;

The moving light of love, unrequited or  
unfulfilled,

casting its shafts down all corridors of my days,  
the unnamed anxiety brought on by nothing  
in particular,

some strange foreboding of coming disaster  
that does not yet appear;

The overwhelming hunger of God that  
underscores all the ambitions, dreams and  
restlessness of my churning spirit.

Hold them, O peace of God, until Thy perfect  
work is in them fulfilled.

The Peace of God, which passes all understanding,  
shall guard my heart and my thoughts.

Into God's keeping do I yield my heart and

**thoughts, yea, my life –  
with its strength and weakness  
its failure and success,  
its shame and its purity.  
O Peace of God, settle over me and within me  
so that I cannot tell mine from thine  
and thine from mine."**

*Reflect:* what line or phrase stands out to you? How is God speaking to you through this line or phrase? Is there an invitation? What image comes to mind? What feelings are evoked? Take your time and allow God to speak to you from the depths of your soul.

What is your response? What is your prayer? Allow your words or images to come from a place deep within, resist analyzing what bubbles up. Take some time to write or draw about this, or take a long slow walk.

Be still and rest. Simply be present to what is being revealed to you in this moment, to the silence, to God's incarnation, and God's peace within you.