

“The Peace of God Will Guard Your Heart”

Can you relate to humming along nicely in life, when, bam—several crises occur all at once? You can handle one challenge, but two or three at a time? Maybe you wonder where God is in the middle of this terrible storm. Peter and the disciples can relate—they got caught in a “perfect storm,” where every element was working together to create an insurmountable disaster. The disciples battled the storm for nine hours before Jesus appeared. Paul addresses these type of situations with his clear and concise words in Philippians 4:5: “*The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*” As we do our part—rejoice in the Lord, pursue a gentle spirit, pray about everything, and cling to gratitude—God does His part, He bestows upon us the peace of God. This is not a peace *from* God, our Father gives us the very peace *of* God. As we celebrate God and pray to Him, He constructs a fortress around us, protecting us from the attacks of the devil.

The Apostle Paul had endured his own perfect storm on the Mediterranean Sea. The ship enjoyed smooth sailing until they encountered great difficulty. The crew of Paul’s ship weathered their storm for fourteen days. The sailors lost all reason for hope, they gave up. Perhaps you’re in the same place. You’ve done all you can think of, but you’re too worn out to fight anymore; you’re ready to let the storm sweep you away. If that fear is coming at you from all sides, hear God’s voice, let Him speak to you.

In Acts 27, Paul related three crucial promises to his shipmates that can give us peace. **First**, we can know that during any storm *heaven has helpers to help us*. On the deck of a sinking ship in a raging storm, Paul received an angelic visitor from heaven. Know that your prayers have been heard in heaven, and that angelic armies have been dispatched and reinforcements have been rallied. A **second** promise we can grasp in the middle of a storm is that *heaven has a place for us*. Paul knew that he belonged to God, for he had given his life to Him. When we give our lives to God, the Lord takes responsibility of us. **Third**, we can have peace in the midst of the storm because *we are in the Lord’s service*. The Lord had given Paul the assignment of carrying the Gospel to Rome. Paul had not arrived there, so God was not finished with him. Paul knew he would survive. All of God’s servants have the assurance that we will not live one day less than we are supposed to live. If God has work for us to do, He will keep us alive to do it. This is not to say we won’t have problems, because we’ll all have our share. God never promised a life without storms, but He has promised to be there when we face them. In this world you will have trouble, but in the midst of that trouble God will extend His arms. He will send His angels. He will catch you and carry you in His arms. Choose to place yourself entirely in His care. As you do, you will find it possible to be anxious for nothing.

Discussion Guide/Action Steps

1. Have you endured a perfect storm of bad events? What happened? How did you spiritually and emotionally face the storm?

2. Read John 14:27 aloud. What is the difference between the “peace” the world gives, and the peace God gives?
3. When facing anxieties, take a deep breath and speak these words to yourself: *You don't need to worry. You're safe. God has you in His arms.*