

## Pray More Lenten Retreat - Transcript

### Searching for and Maintaining Peace

**Tim Glemkowski**

*In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen. Jesus, we ask for the gift of Your peace, the peace that only the Holy Spirit can bring, and we cast ourselves and all of our worries and our anxieties on You, that You might help us to find this peace. And we entrust ourselves to You and Your providence, we trust that You'll watch over our lives, and that even in the midst of suffering You can bring good out of any bad situation that's in front of us. And we trust this retreat and this session to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, into her maternal care. Amen. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Good, I want to talk in this talk about the idea of peace. I think peace is something that we all crave, like that deep rest, you know what I mean? And I don't think it's something that we're very good at finding, at the end of the day. I think there are so many voices and noises and anxieties, and each of us has so many responsibilities in our lives, and sufferings, and things that we're worrying about in the future, and we're worrying about in the past, and we're, you know, doing anything but living in the present moment. But peace is a really important thing for the Christian life. Like it's kind of an underrated important thing. Jesus seems to talk about it a lot, and so I'm just going to trust that it's really an important and a crucial part of the Christian life, and really something that He wants for us.

And so peace is better... It's better, it's different, it's more than just the absence of any problems or any troubles, and I think that's what we want sometimes. Like, when we want peace, we just want there to be no issues in our lives essentially, at the end of the day. It's like "If I just had enough money, and we just had enough freedom, and we lived on a yacht somewhere, like then I could find peace," you know what I mean? There's some future scenario where, when we retire, or when the kids are older, or when we're... like then I'll find peace.

But I think the peace that Jesus Christ is trying to bring to us, that He's talking to us in the gospels is something a lot deeper. It's really a spiritual gift, like something that's the presence... It's not the absence of worry, it's the presence of the Holy Spirit in our life. And I think it's crucial, because I think peace allows the Lord to work in our life. Like, when we're... when our hearts are cramped, and we're anxious, and we're just spending all of our time worrying, really we're not able to step into the fullness of the plan that God has for us. Like, it's almost like our life and our heart don't really have space for what God might do. Like, there's something about when He's talking to the apostles, and they're in the boat, and the

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storm is rocking the boat, and He's asleep, and they finally wake Him up and He stills the storm, and He says to them like, you know, "Why were you worried?" Right.

Like, there's something about... Jesus doesn't want our hearts to be troubled, and I don't mean... I'm trying to be really careful to not say, like, we're not never going to have any suffering in life. But at the end of the day, He wants us to make space for Him to send the gift, the grace of spiritual peace, which is about the trust that a child would have in their father. That he loves them and that he cares about the things of their life, even in the midst of difficulty, right. At the end of the day, that's what peace is all about.

And so I want to read really quickly from Matthew's gospel what Jesus says about peace. ***Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink; nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?*** Are you not of more value than they? You see, what Jesus is asking us to put... like why should we have peace? Why should we have confidence? It's because of our relationship with our Heavenly Father. It's because God is our Father and He actually cares about us that we should have peace.

And He's also saying here, like, "Don't be anxious." And I don't mean like, you know, clinical anxiety, like that's, you know, involving brain chemistry, and it's something more than just here. But each of us can count our situations in our lives where circumstances seem to be out of our control - We're in a job we don't like, or we don't feel like we're making enough money, or there's some suffering or illness, or something where life has, all of a sudden, our circumstances have left us in a place where our life is out of control.

You know, for me I had kind of my big conversion when I was like 18 years old, really like gave my life to Christ. I grew up in a Catholic family, but didn't really, like, I certainly wasn't following God. I wasn't to trying to, like, grow in holiness at all until I was about 18 years old. And so most of my early Christian life was in college which, at the time, I thought was really hard. You know, I thought, like, finals week was really stressful, and classes, and relationships, and everything that is kind of, like, stressful about a college I guess. I don't know.

But it wasn't until I graduated from college and I got into the work world and, you know, more responsibilities started coming up in life, and I got married, and we started having kids and, like, kind of growing into adulthood, then I really began to struggle with the kind of anxiety and stress that Jesus is talking about here, where I

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was kind of constantly worried about the future. “What’s God’s plan for my life, and what’s He doing in this situation. And this isn’t going how I thought it would.” And I really began to... like, because you don’t realize in college, right - I would talk, I would lament to my wife like “Oh, I had so much more peace, I felt so much more connected to God in prayer, you know, back in college or whatever.” And she would say, like “Well, you didn’t have anything to worry about.” You know what I mean? Like, life was just so easy that there wasn’t really anything.

And that’s kind of what happens, is, like, we’re great at this, we’re great about not being anxious until those scenarios where our circumstances, where we’re troubled about them pop up. And Jesus is really asking us here, like, to trust God in the midst of any difficulty that might arise. You know, He says in John’s gospel, I think this is kind of powerful. So this is at the Last Supper, you know, chapters 14 through 17 in John’s gospel are Jesus’ kind of high priestly prayer at the Last Supper. Like, praying for the apostles, praying for us, praying for the world, the church. Just kind of, like... Just really, in a lot of ways I think, speaking from His heart in a really powerful way about, you know, His desires that He has for His apostles.

And He says here in chapter 16, verse 33: ***I have said this to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation. But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world!*** “In the world you have tribulation. But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” What I find powerful about that verse is that Jesus is saying it on the night He’s about to be crucified. ***I have overcome the world.*** The world is about to kill Him, right. Mock Him and beat Him and reject Him, cast God out. And He’s saying that, through that cross, He’s going to be a conqueror. That He can then step into any of our sufferings and bring the same kind of victory.

And I think what He means there is that, like, what peace really takes is the kind of detachment that we talked about in our first talk. Like the kind of detachment in our lives where we’re not so attached to the things of this world that we’re unable to see the Heavenly Father’s bigger plan. We get so caught up. I think, at the end of the day, like true peace, in many senses, like the circumstances that Jesus is talking about in Matthew’s gospel, where He’s saying like, you know, ***Is not life more than clothing?*** Right. Like, is not life more than the circumstances of our life, and what we think, like, our life here should look like?

St. John of the Cross says this, where he says, like, true peace, at the end of the day, is really about detachment. Like, what it requires is a certain sense of kind of casting our entire lives upon God’s providence. And no matter what life brings, to continue to trust God in the midst of that. John of the Cross actually says, like, a good way to know that, like, you still have something in your life that you kind of

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need to grow in detachment from, like maybe either a certain, like I said, a career objective, or a monetary situation, or a, you know, a certain friend situation, like a good way to know that there's not enough detachment yet in your heart, like God doesn't have the first place, is that we have these worries and anxieties about our circumstances. Like specifically about "No, no, no, I wanted this to be this way, and I wanted to control it, and it's not that way, and so I'm anxious and I'm worried until God puts it that way," right.

What a peaceful heart does instead, what I think Jesus is calling us to here, is that He's saying in the world you're going to have tribulation. Like, if you're trying to make heaven on earth here, that's not how this works, right. He's about to be crucified. Like, that's what the world, you know, is in many ways. But have peace still in your heart. Like, have rest even in the midst of tribulation, because Jesus has overcome the world. And what that requires is a certain willingness to place all of our hope and all of our trust in God's promises. It's very possible that God wants to, like, fix your circumstances. Like, it's very possible that Jesus wants to make you more than a conqueror in your particular situation.

He might be asking you to be patient, He might be asking you to just wait on that victory that's coming in a later season. But even in the season of struggle, even in the season of possible anxiety and worry, we begin to really grow in the spiritual life and take kind of that level up next step in the spiritual life when we begin to actually find peace even in the midst of any difficulty. And that's when the peace that surpasses all understanding, that's the kind of peace that Jesus comes to bring actually enters our heart.

So what does that take, right? This is the goal, peace. We often don't have it because of suffering. We also often don't have it because of a lack of trust in divine providence. Like, we don't, in our heart of hearts, really believe that God is all powerful, and so we don't trust that whatever comes to us in life, in humility, God is going to bring good out of it, and that in some strange mysterious way, His will is active in it. That He is in charge, and that He's... anything that has come to us can be brought to a greater good and a greater purpose, and might even... it proceeds from His hand.

Like, there's been so many times in my life where I've wanted a particular outcome and it hasn't come to pass, and it's only later, you know, 2 years later that you look back and be like "Oh, thank God the Lord protected me from that path." Because, you know, X, Y, and Z wouldn't have then happened if I hadn't just trusted. But I spent so much time worrying, and so much time like, you know, I wish, I wanted it to be this way though, and so I'm frustrated that it didn't turn out,

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when really God had a much better plan in mind. And I think that's really how it works.

At the end of the day, I think what... So how do we have peace? What protects our heart in peace is a certain humble confidence that God is in charge, and that He wants our good in life, right. So, like I think that we do sometimes is we get frustrated and think we should be holier, and think we should be more prayerful, and think our life... Like, if we were only better, if we were only different, if we only overcome our weaknesses, like then all of our circumstances would really work out. But really, when I read the saints, what I read in them is that, at the end of the day, to strive for perfection in all things, but at the end of the day to really just trust humbly that, even in the midst of our weaknesses, God still looks upon us with love, right. That we are His children.

Like, there's a certain strength that comes from that kind of humility, like a certain confidence that just says "God's love for me is not dependent upon my ability to earn that love." That even in the midst of my weaknesses, even in... That my own sinfulness even, my own sadnesses, my own weaknesses don't depress me, don't bum me out, don't, like, you know, we're able even in the midst of that brokenness to just kind of cast ourselves completely on God and to say "I just need to entrust my life to You." Though. I think at the end of the day, like, that's one of the, really, the prerequisites for peace, is that kind of reliance on God.

It's first that detachment that John of the Cross talks about, but then it's that childish reliance on God that says "I don't have to fix this. I don't have to earn, you know. Like, I can even trust You to take care of me." And I've heard amazing stories, right, that people who start to live this way, even like practical, financial situations, or health situations, like, whatever it is, to begin to say when we're anxious, it's because we're trying to control our circumstances. We're trying to say "I can be the one that can fix this. I'm the one that can make this outcome, the desired outcome I have, happen."

And what I think real peace comes from is to say "I just cast my entire life on the Lord. Whatever He sends me or doesn't send me, I will be okay with that, whatever that circumstance is." And I trust that, even in the midst of not being enough, and even in the midst of not being smart enough, or good enough, or holy enough or whatever, God is still alive, and He's still in control, and He's still active in my life, and so I have good reason to trust Him.

I think, at the end of the day, like, that's the disposition that begins to allow peace to work in our heart in a powerful way. And that peace, that kind of trust, that kind of joy opens our lives and opens our heart to God then doing amazing things that are so far beyond even what we ever could have possibly considered, because

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there's space for Him to work, right. So let the peace that surpasses all understanding, that's the Holy Spirit active and working in your life, let it take over. Let it be. Even in the midst of whatever current difficulty you're working with, let that peace come and rest your life, and watch the joy of the Lord, even in the midst of your circumstances not being what you hoped they would be, watch them make you more alive.