

Dear friends,

January, 2024

I've just finished reading the Gospel of John. My preferred translation is the English Standard Version and in it the word **peace** is found six times. After Jesus' death and resurrection, the Disciples had the door closed and locked for fear of the Jews. He helps them to not be afraid when He suddenly appears in the room by saying "**Peace be with you**" on three different occasions.

In chapter 14:27, a favorite of mine, He discourages us from looking for outward peace and promises inner peace. **Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.**

Then in chapter 16, as part of the Last Supper, He tells them again that He must leave them but gives them this word of encouragement. **"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."**

As we watch the world, and even our neighborhood growing more violent it is important to take Jesus' encouragement to heart! If we are to be victorious Christians in difficult times we must focus our faith on Him and accept His promise of inner peace and not be overwhelmed by the problems we face.

Speaking of problems, last week the power went out in Alpha's office. It stayed dark for a week! It wasn't the power grid but our neighbor moved out and the power was turned off for both offices :-(. How we handle problems like this reveals how much we believe what Jesus tells us about inner peace when things are not going our way!

As I look back over 2023, Alpha and myself have struggled with various situations and managed to continue faithful to what Jesus has promised. Hopefully 2024 will be a year of abundant blessings and inner peace for you and me no matter what kind of 'tribulation' the world gives us.

Thank you so much for your prayer and financial support for Alpha! Already this week we have had several calls of new people looking for God's answers to their problems. God bless your New Year!

Richard.

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