

12/14/17

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Do you have peace? Maybe your first response is, “How can I?” How can I have peace when it’s only ten days until Christmas? How can I have peace when my schedule is packed with all kinds of extra social events, when I have gifts to buy, meals to plan, and cookies to bake? Or maybe it’s just the opposite. Maybe you are wondering, how can I have peace when my loved one is gone this Christmas, when everyone else seems so busy, and I’m all alone? Or maybe you have different concerns and are wondering, how can I have peace with the continual threat of terror, the world seemingly on the brink of another World War, and constant bickering between the leaders of our country?

Then there are the deeper spiritual issues. How can I have peace when my conscience is continually bringing up bad feelings over the things I’ve said and done? How can I have peace when feelings of anger so often simmer in my heart? How can I have peace when I know that I have so often failed to put God first and to love others above myself?

With all of these concerns how can we have peace? Because God has chosen to give it. Holy Scripture promises, “The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:7). It is the “peace of God” because it is something that he himself accomplished through his Son Jesus Christ. When Jesus came into this world, he took our violations against God’s law, our selfishness and anger, along with every other sin, and willingly carried it himself. Through his death on the cross and resurrection from the dead he has removed the hostility between human beings and the holy God. He has won peace for all who trust in him.

This doesn't mean that there still won't be things that upset our hearts and minds here on earth. But the peace that God gives runs beneath and goes beyond our earthly problems. It is beyond all human understanding. Human reason tells us that true peace exists only once every evil has been removed. As long as there are problems or threats, there really can be no peace. But the peace that our Savior God gives is not dependent on outward circumstances—it goes beyond human reason. When we rejoice in God and find our peace in him, we can be content. We can be content even when faced with busy schedules, threats of violence, and a troubled conscience. We can be content because we know that the God who loved us enough to send his own Son into our world, is the same God who is controlling all things in this world. Even when we can't fully understand, we can trust that no matter what the circumstances God is working everything in our lives for our good, so that we can be with him forever. This is peace.

Prayer: *Dear Heavenly Father this Christmas season continually fill my heart with the joy and peace that comes from knowing that you sent your Son for me. Amen.*

(WELS E-Devotion, adapted)

...See you in church.

Keep looking up because the Lord is always looking down – Psalm 121

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