



**John and Elaine McLachlan**

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## Forward

We have begun this book in a time when the leaders in our communities are panicking about a plague which has been running wild for 18 months. Although some confess to be Christians they are not proclaiming God's promises, but so called scientists' point of view. But the Bible states that there is no peace for the wicked. (Isaiah 48:22 and Isaiah 57:21) The wicked in the Bible are those who refuse to believe God's promises because they have twisted thinking. A Christian, one who follows Jesus Christ, is supposed to think like He does and honour His Word above all other opinions.

A dictionary defines peace as – quiet, tranquillity, mental calm, serenity, and also as freedom from war and civil disorder. The word also means harmony and accord or a truce.

"To make peace" is to establish friendly relations and to reconcile one with another.

"A peace offering" is defined as a propitiatory or conciliatory gift.

So we are writing this book to broadcast the truth about how we can acquire this state even as defined, but also even more importantly how to find the peace that God offers any and all who will accept His solution.

The Hebrew word for 'peace' is 'Shalom'. This word has a very broad meaning, which includes completeness, welfare, health, at ease and unharmed. It is used 237 times in the Old Testament. (Page 272 Vine's Concise Dictionary of Bible Words) Its primary meaning is 'to be whole', and to bring harmony and wholeness as opposed to strife and war.

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## Chapter 1 Peace in Eden until Adam and Eve sinned

We love to read how God created the world, preparing all the beautiful created things which He considered very good. (Genesis 1&2) Not only was there beauty but there was harmony with the Creator and nature and the people placed there. God visited His creation every evening and Adam and Eve were like carefree children, running naked and unashamed, just rejoicing in their relationship with God and each other. The four rivers watered the garden and the plants were there for food. Adam was obviously friends with the animals because God brought them to him to be named. (Genesis 2:19&20)

The Bible story does not tell us how long this idyllic situation lasted because it does not try to be a scientific story, but a HIS-story of how God planned this earth, unique in His creation, so that man could live safely. He breathed His Life into our bodies so that we could fellowship with Him in a loving relationship. He created very extravagantly so that there was something out there about which man

could become curious and dream big. We are so small in this big world God has made, yet He wanted to have a personal relationship with us, small as we are.

Meanwhile in Heaven there was a beautiful angel named "morning star" and "son of the dawn". He thought that his becoming God would be a good idea and decided to believe he could have it. (Isaiah 14:13-15) But God could not have rebellion in Heaven so this angel was cast out and visited the Garden of Eden as a serpent. Jesus told His disciples He had witnessed Satan falling like lightning from heaven. (Luke 10:18)

Of course Adam and Eve did not know about this rebellious angel, but they had fellowshiped with God in the cool of the day and Adam had been given instructions about living in the garden. (Genesis 2:16&17)

The Scripture says the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord had made. This must surely be why Satan chose to take on that guise. They are quite hypnotic animals and beautiful in their way, so Eve was tempted to distort and disobey God's instruction. If peace is living in harmony she chose the wrong voice to be in harmony with. She effectively sided with the devil and the Bible says that, just as the devil had said, both Adam's and Eve's eyes were opened to understand evil. They saw their naked bodies and were ashamed. They hid from the very source of their Life. Tranquillity, mental calm and serenity vanished from their lives for ever. God had indirectly defined this as death. The consequent separation from God when they were sent from the Garden brought the knowledge of evil and hard work in their own strength. But God is always wanting us to have this peace that only relationship with Him can bring. He

reconciled them to Himself as best He could by making garments of skin for Adam and Eve to clothe them. (Genesis 3:21) This sacrifice of an animal became the pattern for what was previously God's own glory as their covering. People needed to wear clothes as nakedness was an opening for shame and guilt, and the blood shed by the animal was the spiritual covering for sin to satisfy a Holy God. God also made promises about how there would eventually be full reconciliation when the head(ship) of the devil would be crushed by the offspring (literally 'seed') of woman. (Genesis 3:15)

It is interesting that it is recorded that God placed cherubim on the east side (or the front) of the Garden and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard it. (Genesis 3:24) Cherubim are symbolic of God's Presence as on the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:18-22) God said He would meet with His people between the cherubim. Jesus was seen by John to have a sharp double-edged sword from His mouth. (Revelation 1:16) So we will only meet with God through Jesus. This was decreed by God from the very beginning after the fall of man, from his intimate position of favour, to that of estrangement.

## Chapter 2 What rebellion against God caused

When God has made things simple, it is a curious thing that man wants it to be complicated. God says, "I have made you very good in My sight, and I know how I have made you to 'function' best. I have made some rules or principles that will be most efficacious if you follow them. I promise that I will make them so if you follow My Word."

But as we have discovered with our own children, finding our own way of doing things is innate in our fallen natures. Rebellion to God's plans is almost automatic. But this also means that we are always having to justify ourselves and this never actually gives us peace of mind. Man's approval is capricious and often causes more angst.

This constant rebellion brings civil strife which results in more and more laws, which introduces more and more creative rebellion. After Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden and one son murdered the other it is recorded that, not only did creativity increase in good ways but also in evil ways too. (Genesis 3:23 – 4:24) Many people were born and died, but only one, Enoch, was recorded as 'walking with God'. (Genesis 5:22) And this pleased God. (Hebrews 11:5)

'Walking with God' is an expression that is used in the Bible many times. Noah walked with God. (Genesis 6:9) He is described as righteous and blameless. So when God asked him to build an ark Noah was willing to obey all God's instructions without questioning. David walked in God's ways and Asa is recorded as having done what was right in the eyes of the Lord, as his father (forebear) David had done. (1 Kings 15:11) But many of the kings of Judah and Israel are recorded as having done evil in the eyes of the Lord and 'walking in the ways of their fathers'. (eg 1 Kings 15:26&34 and 16:19)

In the New Testament there are examples of this expression but The New International Version uses the word 'live'. But when the expression is used it always implies a hand-in-hand fellowship, thus walking, or living one's life in and with the power of God to enable, and relying on God's promises. So rebellion breeds unbelief. But the

greatest loss is peace. If connection with God is essential for peace, because He created us this way we end up living in fear – feeling inadequate, looking for love and acceptance and often unable to meet the hopes and dreams for our lives. We will be tempted to try anything to meet these hopes, and people who do not know God have ruined their lives in this cause.

God is genuinely grieved to see us suffer. All through the Old Testament He asks those who might listen, to Him and to His messengers, to turn back to Him. God speaks through Isaiah, "My unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor My covenant of peace be removed, says the Lord who has compassion on you." (Isaiah 54:10) Isaiah also writes on God's behalf, "I said, here I am, here I am. (The Amplified Version adds "says I AM") All day long I have held out My hands to an obstinate people, who walk in ways not good, pursuing their own imaginations." (Isaiah 65:1&2) God's Name is "I AM". (Exodus 3:14&15) Whenever God says a name twice He is calling for a personal relationship with Himself, so as He stands with His arms out as the father of the rebellious son did (Luke 15:11-20), He is always wanting to reconcile us to Himself. God, the all-knowing One, longs for us to respond to His Holy Spirit's wooing.

The problem of being made creative, but not in relationship with God, is that we are vulnerable to that other one who wants to be god and is active on the earth because of his first victory with Adam and Eve. They were tricked into giving him their authority and he has been able to inspire all sorts of creative things that are not good. Those tools made out of bronze and iron (Genesis 4:22) eventually became

weapons of war, as people wanted more power and influence. Jesus described the devil as one who kills, steals and destroys. (John 10:10) This lack of relationship and guidance from the Holy One has brought all sorts of disaster into our world.

## Chapter 3 Why God wants us to have peace

Walking with God is much more than living for God. God **IS** Love and He is always faithful to keep His promises. There is a beautiful verse in Proverbs. "Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favour and a good name in the sight of God and men." (Proverbs 3:3&4) Jesus echoes these words when He says, "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest (peace) for your souls." (Matthew 11:29) The word 'rest' here in Greek is not the same as the Hebrew 'shalom', the peace that comes from a personal relationship with God, but can be described as a breathing space, an unconditional gift from Jesus, so that anyone can taste and find that He is good. (Psalm 34:8)

The word used for 'peace' is the Greek 'eirene' and describes a harmonious relationship between men (Romans 14:19), between nations (Luke 14:32), and friendliness (proffered from within a person) (1Cor 16:11). But in God's sight the most important peace is harmonized relationships between God and man, accomplished through the acceptance of the gospel promises (Acts 10:36; Ephesians 2:17) and the sense of rest and



contentment which follows from this acceptance. (Mark 5:34; Luke 1:79; John 14:27; Romans 1:7 & 8:6) (Page 272 Vine's Concise Dictionary of Bible Words)

All these verses demonstrate how much God wants to impart His peace and rest for our souls, but believing is more than knowing about God's genuine desire. There are many references to walking, that full trust as a child has, which we have described as hand-in-hand. One of the fruits of the Holy Spirit is peace and "if we live by the Spirit let us keep in step with the Spirit." (Galatians 5:25) The apostle, John, is passionate about walking in God's peace. But he describes it as walking in the Light of Christ. (John 1:6&7) In his letters he wants us to walk in love (2 John 6) and in the Truth (3 John 4) and The Truth is Jesus who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. (John 14:6) In his gospels he wrote the words of Jesus, "I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12) "Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you." (John 12:35) In John's vision of heaven the same concept is expressed, not so much on a personal basis, but that the nations, "a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language" (Revelation 7:9) will walk by the light of the glory of God. (Revelation 21:24)

Our cover is a picture of a safe place with lights on, even though it is dark outside. Darkness is uncomfortable because we like to see our surroundings. When we know where we are we can relax in peace.

Peace was prophesied at Jesus' birth, when the angels told the good news to the shepherds. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favour rests." (Luke 2:14)

"Peace between man and man is part of the purpose for which Christ died (Ephesians 2:14-18) and of the Spirit's work (Galatians 5:22), but man must also be active to promote it (Ephesians 4:3 and Hebrews 12:14), not merely as the elimination of discord, but as the harmony and true functioning of the Body of Christ." (Romans 14:19 and 1 Corinthians 14:33a) (quote from New Bible Dictionary page 956)

One of Jesus' titles is Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6) Before He came in the flesh, born into this world as a boy to become a man, He came from Heaven as the Angel of the LORD to visit Gideon, whom God had chosen to deliver His people who had cried out to Him for help to be saved from their enemies. When Gideon was afraid He spoke "peace", revealing Himself as "YHWH Shalom", which means "I AM PEACE". "I AM" is the name of God which He told Moses. (Exodus 3:14)

But peace is linked to obedience. There is an amazing promise within the Law, offered as a reward. "I will grant peace in the land, and you will lie down (rest) and no one will make you afraid...You will pursue your enemies, and they will fall...before you. Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall before you". (Leviticus 26:6-8) This promise indicates that we have a part to play in acquiring this peace, and this is why God makes covenant with us, a cooperative agreement, rather than give us rules to follow, as a servant must do.

God gave Moses a prayer with which he was to bless even a rebellious people. "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn His face towards you and give you peace." (Numbers 6:24-26) This command to

Moses shows how God knows we need peace to live our lives, but that He initiates it because of our rebellious natures.

The New Testament letter writers begin with a greeting that includes peace. (Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 1:3; Ephesians 1:2; Philippians 1:2; Colossians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:2; 1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4; Philemon 3; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Peter 1:2; 2 John 3; 3 John 14; Jude 2) They understood the principle behind the instruction to Moses to bless, so that they speak God's Word, with the expectation that God will fulfil His Word, as he promises. Thus, since Moses was commanded by God to bless people with His peace, this direction has been followed to this day, especially by nations around the Mediterranean Sea. When Jesus sent out His disciples He told them to first say "peace to this house". (Luke 10:5) Jesus said that if a man of peace is there, the proffered peace would rest on him. This blessing must therefore be received in faith. The warning Jesus gave was that if the person does not receive, the blessing of peace does not remain and returns to sender. Peace then, has the power, the guarantee of God behind it. This truly shows how much God wants us to have His peace. When Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection He also uses this greeting which actually confers peace, as God intended. (John 20:19&21)

## Chapter 4 God wants us to live with inner peace

There are so many promises, written by many Bible writers, about this inner or inward peace that only God can give. The Bible says that God establishes this peace (Isaiah 26:12), but it comes as we develop our

relationship with God. God actually confers it (Isaiah 54:10) and it is because Jesus has taken our death penalty on Himself, our separation from our peace-giving God. (Isaiah 53:5) (Colossians 1:20). This is also David's experience. "The Lord gives strength to His people; the Lord blesses His people with peace." (Psalm 29:11)

But before the crucifixion took place God gave the Law, because He always looks for the heart attitude, so David could write, "Great peace have they who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble." (Psalm 119:165)

Isaiah wrote many of these promises about the peace that God wants us to have as he prophesies concerning the Messiah. He writes God's message to Israel. "If only you had paid attention to My commands, your peace would have been like a river." (Isaiah 48:18) God longs to fill us to overflowing with His peace. Isaiah gives God's invitation to the thirsty. (Isaiah 55) Are we thirsty enough to believe these words written for all time to the end of the age? "Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near." Isaiah finishes his message with God's declaration. "You shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace." (Isaiah 55:12)

Isaiah's amazing message goes further. God is intent on blessing us with this inner peace. "This is what the high and lofty One says – He who lives for ever, whose name is Holy: I live in a high and holy place, but also with those who are contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite...I will heal him and restore comfort to him, creating praise on the lips of the mourners (for our sins). Peace, peace (double shalom) to those far and near, says the Lord." (Isaiah 57:15-19)

However Isaiah writes about righteousness – its fruit is peace. (Isaiah 32:17) It is therefore obvious that this peace with God is dependent on our righteousness, but this righteousness is a gift from God, not earned or deserved. So again it is plain that even before Jesus dealt with the sin problem it is our heart that God is looking at. God makes these promises but receiving them is dependent on our desire to be a seeker after God. In this chapter in Isaiah (32) the picture is painted of the Kingdom of righteousness. Isaiah begins – "See, a king will reign in righteousness and rulers will rule with justice. Each man will be like a shelter from the wind and a refuge from the storm; like streams of water in the desert and the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land. Then the eyes of those who see will no longer be closed, and the ears of those who hear will listen..."

Isaiah finishes his message. "This is what the Lord says, I will extend peace to her (that is Jerusalem, or the Lord's dwelling place – Jerusalem means city of peace) like a river...like a flooding stream." (Isaiah 66:12)

But it is also the inheritance of the children of those who believe God, by God's gracious promise. (Isaiah 54:13) Most people are concerned about their children, but these words assure us that peace is transferable.

After the resurrection of Jesus Paul writes, "Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1) This indicates how important it is that we receive the peace of God, and why Jesus is the prince of Peace.

It is true that we cannot give away what we do not have so this is also a reason why God's wants us to have this inner peace. We can

spread it to others who do not have peace in their hearts. By faith in Him Jesus confers His peace just as He did to His disciples. It is a continuous message from the beginning, but only received by faith in God's written word and by the Word Himself. (John 1:1) So as we flow in this peace that Jesus confers, Isaiah's prophecy of peace flowing like a river will be fulfilled, to God's glory and pleasure.

## Chapter 5 God wants us to live in peace with others

We are in God's Kingdom to be His ambassadors. (2 Corinthians 5:20) This was His plan from the beginning. And when we are born again into His family we also inherit His characteristics, by which we must learn to live. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Galatians 5:22&23) Perhaps these are learned in this order, so after becoming aware that we have been filled with these first two gifts, love and joy, we will also seek this peace that God also gives as a gift. This understanding is part of the lifelong adventure of becoming not just a child of God, but a friend, a follower of His Word and an overcomer.

Jesus says something very strange as He teaches on our witness. We are to be like salt, which gives flavour to what it is put into. If the salt does not do this it is worthless. (Mark 9:50) Living at peace with one another is His instruction. This conscious desire to live at peace – to be like Jesus, Prince of peace – is true meekness. Jesus was promised the nations, and according to the letter to the Church in Thyatira His overcomers will receive from Him authority over the

nations. David writes that the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace and prosperity. (Psalm 37:11&37) This peace enables us to be generous on every occasion (2 Corinthians 9:11), not just with our possessions, but with our heart attitudes to others. Jesus, Prince of peace, knew His destiny, where He came from and where He was going (John 13:3), so He was able to become a lowly servant to His disciples. Jesus warned His disciples about greatness in the eyes of God. (Luke 9:48)

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God." (Matthew 5:9) Paul distinguishes between a young child and a son. (Galatians 4:1-7) A young child is still learning elementary truths but a son has trained himself to know all the gifts that accompany our right standing (righteousness) so that we can be teachers, especially by our example. (Hebrews 5:11-14)

When the Israelites went into exile Jeremiah wrote to them what the Lord had put into his heart to say. "Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." (Jeremiah 29:7) As we represent God to others and bring a blessing of peace (shalom) God will back us so that those who do not yet know Him will receive the revelation that they need so that they too can come into His family.

As the Bible tells us, there is joy for those who promote peace. (Proverbs 12:20) In the book of Proverbs, written by Solomon who asked God for wisdom above every other gift (2 Chronicles 1:10) he writes, "When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, even his enemies live at peace with him." (Proverbs 16:7)

When Peter was preaching in the house of Cornelius he had an amazing revelation. He said, "I now realise how true it is that God does not show favouritism but accepts people from every nation who honour Him and do what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all." (Acts 10:34-36) It does not matter where we have come from or what 'religion' we have followed before, and all that is required is to believe and receive the message that Jesus died in our place to bring us to God, to receive His gift of right standing (righteousness) and have fellowship with the heavenly Father Himself. This connects us to God's peace and His Light. Then we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin. (1 John 1:7)

Indeed, Paul's prayer is "may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace, as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13) We are urged to make every effort to live in peace with all people and to be holy. (Hebrews 12:14)

It is not just for a person that we can share peace. As we speak these words in faith, God's Words, it is our challenge to believe God will change the lives of those who are presently God's enemies. "For the sake of my brothers and sisters and my friends, I will say, Peace be within you." (Psalm 122:8)



## Chapter 6 How we receive this peace

"For sinful man there must first be peace with God, the removal of sin's enmity through the sacrifice of Christ (Romans 5:1) then inward peace can follow." (Philippians 4:7) (Quote from New Bible Dictionary page 956) This faith act is simple, childlike trust that Jesus did die for our sin, and God's Word is true. God does the miracle in our hearts in response to our sincerity. The quote goes on – "unhindered by the world's strife (John 14:27 and 16:33)." (New Bible Dictionary page 956) The world around us might cause us many troubles but this trust will carry us through. Paul, ever practical, tells us how. "Rejoice in the Lord always...the Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer (just talking to heavenly Father) and petition with thanksgiving, (asking, seeking and knocking, as Jesus taught.(Matthew 7:7&8)) present your requests to God (Philippians 4:4-6)

When the Apostles taught the church they urged them to seek God's peace. "Seek peace and pursue it." (1 Peter 3:11, quoted from Psalm 34:14)

But Isaiah spoke out beautiful words from God's heart even before Jesus came bodily to the earth. "You will keep in perfect peace that one whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in You." (Isaiah 26:3) After calling people to repentance Jeremiah too proclaims God's heart of love. "Call to Me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know... I will bring health and healing... I will heal My people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security." (Jeremiah 33:3&6)

Ezekiel received the revelation from God indicting false shepherds – the prophets and priests who had abused God's precious people in

the past. God made a promise that He would search for His sheep and look after them carefully. He made a promise that He would gather them and make a covenant of peace with them. (Ezekiel 34:25) Then God adds that it will be an everlasting covenant of peace. (Ezekiel 37:26) He had promised this to David many years before. (2 Samuel 7:12&13) David received this promise, though he knew he would actually never see it in his lifetime. Believing God's words would bring it to pass. God has never changed this principle. When He makes covenant and His people receive the promise, anticipating it and excited about God's mercy and grace, it must happen because God does not make idle promises, and He waits for those who will gladly receive them. David was called a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22) because he was convinced of God's faithfulness. He wrote, "You (O Lord) have filled my heart with greater joy...I will lie down and sleep in peace, for You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety." (Psalm 4:7,8)

Paul is writing to the Romans about arguments and strife among believers about such things as eating different foods and celebrating on different days. He emphasises that the Kingdom of God is a matter of righteousness before God, not being right (having the right doctrines) before men. It is a matter of peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men. (Romans 14:17-19) He asks us to have the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus. He asks us to have the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. (Philippians 2:1-5)

Paul emphasises that it is Jesus Who is our peace. It is essential to believe in Him, in what he has done for us by dying on the cross. Sin

had made it impossible for us to fellowship with a Holy God. "He, Himself is our peace...by abolishing in His flesh the law with its commandments and regulations." His purpose was to create peace, to reconcile man to God and put hostility to death. He preached peace to both those who were far from God and those who were near. (Ephesians 2:14&15&17) So it makes no difference about lineage, race or even religion. Preaching is not teaching facts as much as it is speaking about God's desires and His heart for all people, so that any listeners who actually hear can open their hearts and minds to receive.

There is a hymn written many years ago which expresses what was Jesus' intention by enduring such a hideous and unfair death. "Peace, perfect peace in this dark world of sin. The blood of Jesus whispers peace within." (Edward Bickersteth in 1875)

"Because of the world's chaos through man's sin, and because peace comes only as God's gift, the Messianic hope was of an age of peace (Isaiah 2:2-4 and 11:1-9 and Haggai 2:7-9), or of the advent of the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6ff)." (quote from New Bible Dictionary page 956) To receive this peace, therefore, we must accept God's gift – Jesus Himself – the Anointed One of God. God decided a long time ago that people could not keep His Law. They are just too rebellious and creative, but receiving the Spirit of Jesus, Prince of peace, actually changes the heart.

## Chapter 7 How we walk in peace

Having accepted God's gracious gift in an appropriately gracious manner we must continue in this relationship and grow in confidence and favour.

At the end of Paul's letter to the Corinthians he tells them (and us) his prayer is for their (and our) perfection, then instructs them "Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace." (2 Corinthians 13:11) This 'perfection' is, in Greek, 'katartisis', and implies a process leading to completion or fulfilment. As Paul writes, "not that I have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me...one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press toward the goal..." (Philippians 3:12-15)

"I will listen to what God the Lord will say; He promises peace to His people, His saints – but let them not return to folly. Surely His salvation is near those who reverence Him, that His glory may dwell in our land. Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other." (Psalm 85:8-10) Poets have a very expressive way of saying things, but when one has experienced the gifts of God, the righteousness in Christ and the peace which He gives, this poetry is most meaningful.

But academics express the same ideas. "Harmonious state of the soul and mind encourages the development of the faculties and powers. The state of being at ease is experienced both externally and internally." (Vine's Concise Dictionary of Bible Words page 272)

A wise man writing about wisdom wrote, "Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace." (Proverbs 3:17) Isaiah, prophesying about the forerunner to Jesus, wrote, "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace..." (Isaiah 52:7) Yet this is echoed by Jesus Himself who said "there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the Kingdom is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven has been advancing, and passionate (forceful) men lay hold of it." (Matthew 11:11&12) The purposefulness of our walking with Jesus advances His Kingdom, by His faith linked to ours.

Although Nahum's oracle concerned Nineveh and the Lord's wrath towards these people who had become enemies of God's chosen people, looked forward to, and spoke of the Prince of Peace. "Look, there on the mountains, the feet of one who brings good news, who proclaims peace." (Nahum 1:15) Jonah had been to Nineveh previously (about 150 years before) and the people there had repented, turned from their 'evil' ways, and acknowledged the True God. God's eternal purpose is that we continually turn to Him and His Word.

Paul also writes that we fit our feet with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. (Ephesians 6:15) He has written about his longing to see people saved and he worked and travelled because he believed God's word so strongly. "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How then can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is

written, how beautiful are the feet of them that bring good news." He goes on: faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ. (Romans 10:13-17) If we share the peace of God He guarantees that it will have effect. (Isaiah 55:11)

Malachi wrote on behalf of the Lord Almighty, of His covenant with Levi, a covenant of peace. God said He gave it to them: this called for reverence and he revered Me and stood in awe of My name. (Malachi 2:5) This refers to when Moses came down from the mountain and all the people were worshipping the golden calf in the gross way that pagans might do. Moses stood up and asked "whoever is for the Lord, come to me." And the Levites rallied to him. (Exodus 32:25&26) The Bible does not say why no other tribe chose the Lord's side, but the Levites became the priests, ministers unto the Lord, because of this choice. But Peter writes that when we have come to Him, the Living Stone (Rock) we are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2:4&5)

When Jesus came into Jerusalem to fulfil the prophecy of Zechariah (Zechariah 9:9) all those who had been following Him were caught up in the supernatural joy and glory of the occasion and began to praise God. (Luke 19:38) They called out, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord", words with which they celebrated the great 'Hallel' (Praise Yahweh) at the feasts of Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles and Dedication. (Psalm 118:26) They added "Peace in Heaven and glory in the highest." The Pharisees rebuked the people, but Jesus told them that if they kept quiet the stones will cry out. As Jesus approached

Jerusalem...He wept over it and said, "if you had only known on this day what would bring you peace – but now it is hidden from your eyes...you did not recognise the time of God's coming to you. (Luke 19:41, 42&44) We need to be so aware of His presence and His grace.

Jesus confers peace. It is as if we have received spiritual vaccination against the troubles of this world. (John 14:27) Jesus is particularly concerned about the repercussions for His disciples failing Him when he went through His ordeal of the Cross. When we are prepared in advance and ready for when trouble strikes, we can have peace because Jesus has completed His task – He has overcome the world. (John 16:33)

God has called us to live in peace in our married relationships. (1 Corinthians 7:15) If we have come to a point of commitment after we are married to an unbeliever and that partner will not agree to stay, Paul writes that the believer is not bound. Every believer hopes that the unbelieving partner will see the beauty of Christ that changes lives, but it does not always happen, but walking with Jesus is more important than compromise. He writes: "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts." (Colossians 3:15) Also: "The mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace." (Romans 8:6) Compromising our relationship with God is a sure way to backslide and to lose the peace that comes from a childlike trust in Jesus. Not only can we compromise to keep an unbelieving marriage partner supposedly happy, but we can also compromise with a business partner, which is why Paul warns us not to be unequally yoked (2 Corinthians 6:14-16), and also why he is so strong about sexual immorality. (1 Corinthians 6:15-20)

Paul gives the best advice to Timothy: "Pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace...and do not have anything to do with foolish arguments." (2 Timothy 2:22) And to the Romans: "Glory, honour and peace for everyone that does good." (Romans 2:10) When we are walking hand in hand with the Lord, and He is guiding our steps along the journey of life we are conscious of His radiance lighting our way. We just want to do things His way, because He has told us He only does the will of the Father and seeks glory for the Father. (John 8:28&50 and John 17:4) There is only One that does good, yet we have been entrusted with His Spirit so that we can truly represent Him on this earth.

Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians: "Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace at all times and in every way. (2 Thessalonians 3:16) this prayer is something we also can pray for others as we try to spread this peace that only Jesus can give. But Paul gives an instruction to the Philippians which is a beautiful Scripture on which to finish.

**"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."** (Philippians 4:7)