

Got Peace?

Hey, how many of you guys have lived long enough in life to encounter this reality? Are you ready? Here it goes. Sometimes life can seem like one big huge mystery, can it not? You know what I'm saying? I mean, it's as if we live day to day moving from one series of questions to yet another, right? Anybody? Well that right, for those of you who have no idea what in the world I'm talking about, I'm here to help you out! I'm going to share with you a few of the mysterious questions in life that I've encountered and let's see if you can agree.

- Can atheists get insurance for acts of God?
- If FedEx and UPS were to merge, would they call it FED UP?
- If a cow laughed, would milk come out her nose?
- If quitters never win, and winners never quit, what fool came up with, "Quit while you're ahead?"
- Could it be that everyone has a photographic memory; it's just that some of us don't have film?
- Why is there Braille lettering on the Drive Thru ATM machines?
- Do Pediatricians play miniature golf on Wednesdays?
- How much deeper would the oceans be without sponges?
- What do you do when you see an endangered animal eating an endangered plant?
- If vegetable oil comes from vegetables, where does baby oil come from?
- If you threw a cat out the car window, does it become kitty litter?
- If the police arrest a mime, do they tell him he has the right to remain silent?
- If I played a blank tape at full blast, would that make a mime go nuts?
- If a man is standing in the middle of the forest speaking and there is no woman around, is he still wrong?

- What hair color do they put on the driver's license of a bald man?

Yes, sometimes life can seem like one big huge mystery, can it not? But you know, there's one thing that I hope you **never** question nor consider a big mystery, and that is of course, God's love for you, as His child. And the reason why I say that is simple. Because, the devil knows that if you don't think that God loves you, then **you simply won't draw near to Him**. Therefore, what we're going to take a look **at just one** of the many ways in which God extends His love towards us as His children. And that is this...**God loves us by giving us His peace**. Got peace? Yes you do, if you know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. But don't take my word for it. Let's listen to God's.

John 14:22-27 "Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world? Jesus replied, If anyone loves Me, he will obey My teaching. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me will not obey My teaching. These words you hear are not My own; they belong to the Father Who sent Me.

All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My Name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

Now folks, according to our text, if you're paying attention to what Jesus is saying here, we've got some absolutely amazing news. What did he say? He said that when He goes back to be with the Father, He's not going to

leave us hanging high and dry. Are you kidding? He said He's not only going to make His home with us by sending us the Holy Spirit but what? He's going to Personally give you and I **His peace**, right? And folks, the word "peace" in the English is defined as being, "calm, quiet, untroubled, or undisturbed by worries or fears. Literally "a state of tranquility." That's what Jesus is going to give you and I. In fact, in the original Greek it's even more emphatic.

John 14:27 "Peace I am leaving behind for you. Peace which is mine I am giving to you. Not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart continue to be agitated, neither let it continue to be fearful."

And folks, here's what I want you to notice. **First of all**, notice the phrase Jesus used, "My Peace" okay? That means it's not the same kind of phony baloney peace the world gives with strings attached, which is no peace at all. It's the very same kind of peace that Jesus Himself had, right? And yes, Jesus wept, He got hungry, and He got tired. But did you ever see Him huddled in a corner freaking out wringing His hands wondering what in the world He was going to do? No, of course not! **And secondly**, notice that Jesus **did not** say that we "might" have this kind of peace or that maybe "someday" if we grunt or groan Jesus will "think" about giving us His peace, but what? He said He's **already** given it to us, right?

Therefore, here's the good news. If you're a child of God, if you've surrendered your life to Jesus Christ, then guess what? You've **Got Peace** straight from the Prince of Peace Himself whether you realize it or not. This is why we don't have to **continue** to be fearful. This is why we don't have to **continue** to be agitated. Why? Because God, **out of love for you and I His children** has already given us His peace! Isn't that amazing?

But herein lies our problem. Even though we **Got Peace** from the Prince of Peace Himself, Jesus Christ, if we're honest with ourselves, we hardly ever experience it, do we? And so the question is, "Well, how can this be? How can we Christians not be full of peace when Jesus Christ Himself has already given it to us?" Well hey, great question. It's actually pretty simple. Here's what we do. We allow ourselves to be tricked and seduced into short-circuiting the peace of God from flowing in our lives.

And the **first way** God's Peace gets short-circuited in our lives is **We Refuse to Trust in God's Good Plan.**

Romans 15:13 "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him."

Now folks, according to the Bible, when it comes to receiving God's supernatural hope, joy and now **peace**...what's the key? How do we maintain it? What was the phrase? **As we trust in Him**, right? In other words, we simply trust that God has a **good plan** through it all, whatever

we're going through, the good, bad, and the ugly. Not just the high times or exciting times, but even the low times. Why? Because God is good! But don't take my word for it. Let's listen to God's. I'm going to share with you just a **few verses** just in the Book of Psalms, about God being incredibly Good! He is Goodness itself! Let's take a look.

Psalm 25:7 "Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to Your love remember me, for You, LORD, are good."

Psalm 25:8 "Good and upright is the LORD; therefore He instructs sinners in His ways."

Psalm 27:13 "I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living."

Psalm 34:8 "Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in Him."

Psalm 52:9 "For what You have done I will always praise You in the presence of Your faithful people. And I will hope in Your Name, for Your Name is good."

Psalm 86:5 "You, Lord, are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to You."

Psalm 100:5 "For the LORD is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations."

Psalm 106:1 "Praise the LORD. Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; His love endures forever."

Psalm 119:68 "You are good, and what You do is good; teach me Your decrees."

Psalm 135:3 "Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good; sing praise to His Name, for that is pleasant."

Psalm 145:7 “They celebrate Your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of Your righteousness.”

Psalm 145:9 “The LORD is good to all; He has compassion on all He has made.”

Now folks, I don't know about you, but I'm starting to get the impression that the Bible is saying that God is **good**, how about you? Slightly! In fact, so much so, that that means that all things and everything that God ever does **must also be good**, right? Of course! It **has to be!** Otherwise He wouldn't be a Good, right? Exactly! And so here's the point. It's in understanding this aspect of God's character, His Goodness, that I believe is why the Apostle Paul could make this amazing statement that frankly we take for granted to our own detriment!

Romans 8:28 “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.”

Why? Because God is **good** and that means that everything He ever does **also** has to be **good**, otherwise He wouldn't be a **good** God, right? In fact the literal Greek says, “And we know with an absolute knowledge that all things are working together resulting in good.” Paul is saying that there should be absolutely no doubt whatsoever in the Christian's life that God is **good** and that He works all things out for **good**.

In fact, **God is so Good**...that He can even **make good** out of the **bad behavior of others**. Don't believe me? Just ask Joseph. What happened to him? You talk about a calamity! His brothers tried to kill him, they sold him into slavery, they lied about him to their father, he was falsely accused of rape, he was sent to prison, he helped a guy in prison who left him there to rot, and then one day his brothers show up and have the audacity to ask him for something, to do them a favor? And what does he say? Let's take a look.

Genesis 50:20-21 "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children. And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them."

In other words, he was at peace even after all the calamities his brothers and other people had put him through. Why? Because apparently he had a good understanding of the Goodness of God, right?

But herein lies our problem. Instead of **internally** trusting God and the fact that He **must** have a good plan for the reason why were going through some hard times, we instead look to our **external** circumstances for peace. We think that if we could just arrange our external environment the way **we like it or the way we think it should be** then that's when we'll have peace. But people hello, this never works because our lives always change and some things are beyond our control, right? You are living a pipe

dream if you think you can order your life exactly the way you want it at all times. Are you kidding! Who do you think you are, God?

Besides, here's the great news. God's got a better way. **First of all**, He's never promised us a rose garden, but He has promised us that if **internally** trust Him no matter what is going on outside of us externally, then what? We'll receive His peace, **as we trust in Him** and in His Goodness and His god plan. What a deal huh?

And since we have a tendency to think we've got it worse than anybody else and that some things not even God can fix...which is a lie...I'm going to share with you, to me, what's probably one of the greatest testimonies of learning to trust in God's loving **good** care towards us and how we can have His peace, no matter how bad things get. It's the true account of a Christian man named Hein Pham.

“Shortly after Vietnam fell to the communists, Hein was arrested. Accused of aiding and abetting the Americans he was in and out of prison for several years. During one long jail term, the sole purpose of his jailers was to indoctrinate him against the West—and especially against democratic ideals and the Christian faith.

He was cut off from reading anything in English and restricted to communist propaganda in French or Vietnamese. This daily overdose of the writings of Marx and Engels began to take his toll on him. Hein began to buckle under the onslaught.

Maybe, he thought, *I have* been lied to. Maybe God does *not* exist. Maybe my whole life *has* been governed by lies. Maybe the West *has* deceived me. The more he thought, the more he moved toward a decision.

Finally, he made up his mind. He determined that when he awakened the next day, he would not pray anymore or ever think of his Christian faith again.

The next morning, he was assigned to clean the latrines of the prison. It was the most dreaded chore, shunned by everyone, and so with much distress he began the awful task.

As he cleaned out a tin can filled to overflowing with toilet paper, his eye caught what he thought was English printed on one piece of paper. He hurriedly washed it off and slipped it into his pocket, planning to read it at night.

Not having seen anything in English for such a long time, he anxiously waited for a free moment. Under his mosquito net that night after his roommates had fallen asleep, he pulled out a small flashlight and shining it on the damp piece of paper he read at the top corner, 'Romans, Chapter 8.'

Literally trembling with shock, he began to read:

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose...What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?

He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?...Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:28,31,32,35,37-39)

Hein wept. He knew his Bible, and he had not seen one for so long. Not only that, he knew there was not a more relevant passage of conviction and strength for one on the verge of surrendering to the threat of evil.

He cried out to God, asking for forgiveness, for this was to have been the first day in years that he had determined not to pray. Evidently the Lord had other plans.

The next day, Hein asked the camp commander if he could clean the latrine again. He continued with this chore on a regular basis, because he had discovered that some official in the camp was using a Bible as toilet paper.

Each day Hein picked up a portion of Scripture, cleaned it off, and added it to his nightly devotional reading. In this way he retrieved a significant portion of the Bible.

Later Hein was released and through an equally miraculous set of circumstances, escaped the country to Thailand and eventually came here to America.”

People of God, whether you have locked yourself out of your car in a parking lot, or whether other people have somehow caused you pain, or whether you are behind enemy lines in a communist prison camp, I’m here to tell you that if you are a child of God, He loves you and He’s going to take care of you. He’s good! And no matter the situation, no matter the difficulty you’re facing, may you learn to trust in God’s good and loving care for you and His **good plan** through it all...**and receive His peace**, as you trust him, like Hein Pham learned.

But that’s not all. And the **second way** God’s Peace gets short-circuited in our lives is that **We Refuse to Turn Our Eyes Toward Heaven.**

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 “Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For

our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”

Now folks, Paul clearly tells us the reason why he doesn't lose heart. He can consider his troubles as being merely “light and momentary” because of what? His focus is on that which is eternal, or heaven, right? In fact, in the very next verse Paul goes on to talk about the new body we're going to receive in heaven and how we should be longing for this place. **Why?** Because it's another key to maintaining God's peace! We not only need to **trust in Him** and the fact that **He has to have a good plan** but we are to also **look forward to being with Him in Heaven** the a place beyond our wildest dreams!!! **Why?** Because it gives us the proper eternal perspective that keeps all our temporary problems in line! In fact, just before the text we read, Paul says this.

2 Corinthians 4:8-9 “We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.”

Why Paul? Because he had his eyes on the prize! His focus was eternity. He knew that all the problems we face here on earth are just temporary and one day, we will be spending eternity in a place beyond our wildest dreams! Therefore, Crone Translation, “Don't sweat the small stuff! It's not worth getting worked up over! Chill out!” **Why?** Because one day

we are going to be in heaven and all these temporary troubles will be **forever** forgotten.

Therefore, let's do that. Let's remind ourselves of this amazing place that Paul said we need to be focused on if we're not going to get bogged down by our problems here on earth.

The **first amazing aspect** of heaven is **We Get A New Body**.

1 Corinthians 15:42,44 "It is the same way for the resurrection of the dead. Our earthly bodies, which die and decay, will be different when they are resurrected, for they will never die. They are natural human bodies now, but when they are raised, they will be spiritual bodies. For just as there are natural bodies, so also there are spiritual bodies."

Now folks, according to our text, the Bible is clear. As you can see, we **will not** continue to exist in heaven as we do now, right? What did it say there? It said we must **out of necessity** be changed in order to partake of our new surroundings, right? And what was the first change mentioned. We're going to get a new **heavenly body**, right? What did it say there? Our bodies will become **imperishable**. Simply put, they will never die, they will never rot, they will never decay, they will never break down, they won't even age. Is that incredible, or what? And think of it. That means, there will be no more back aches, no more broken bones, no more disease, and yes ladies, no more anti-aging creams! Which means, there's going to be no more wrinkles, no more crinkles, no more age spots, nothing! None of that stuff.

Max Factor will be bankrupt. Why? Because the Bible says our bodies will be **imperishable!**

But that's still not all. As if that wasn't cool enough, the Bible also says our bodies will not only be imperishable, but they'll be what?

Spiritual, right? Which means, **our body is going to be like Jesus' body** after He was raised from the dead. And if you study the characteristics of Jesus' resurrected body you're going to see He was **not affected by matter**.

I.E. He could walk through doors. He **could travel instantly anywhere**.

And yes, for those of you who were wondering, we will still have the **ability to eat food**, which is great news for Baptists I hear because the Bible says Jesus ate food with the disciples after His resurrection. But apparently, when it comes to food in heaven, there's going to be one exception. Apparently, there's not going to be any harmful side effects, like this guy learned.

“One day there was this 85 year old couple who had been married for almost 60 years, and suddenly they both died in a car crash. And they had been in good health for the last ten years mainly due to her interest in health food, and exercise. Well, when they reached the pearly gates, St. Peter took them to their mansion which was decked out with a beautiful kitchen and master bath suite and Jacuzzi.

And they ‘oohed and aahed’ but the old man asked Peter how much all this was going to cost. ‘It's free,’ Peter replied, ‘this is Heaven.’

So next they go out back to survey the championship golf course that the home was backed up to. And they learned they would have golfing privileges everyday and each week the course would change to a new one representing one of the great golf courses back on earth.

And so the old man asked, ‘What are the green fees?’ And Peter replied, ‘This is heaven, you play for free.’

Well next they went to the clubhouse and saw the lavish buffet lunch with all the cuisines of the world laid right out before them.

And so the old man asked, ‘Well, how much to eat?’ And Peter by now is getting a little exasperated and he says, ‘Don’t you get it yet? This is heaven, it’s free!’ So the old man asked timidly, ‘Well, where are all the low fat and low cholesterol tables?’

And Peter exclaimed, ‘Well hello, that’s the best part...you can eat as much as you like of whatever you like and you never get fat and you never get sick. This is Heaven.’

Well with that the old man went into a fit of anger, throwing down his hat and stomping on it, and shrieking wildly. And so Peter and his wife were both trying to calm him down and they asked him what was wrong.

And the old man looked at his wife and said, ‘This is all your fault. If it weren’t for your stupid prunes and bran muffins, I could have been here ten years ago!’”

Yes, if we only realized how wonderful our new bodies in heaven will be like, it’d save us a lot trouble here on earth, would it not? Uh huh, slightly. But people, I’m telling you, that’s still just the tip of the iceberg.

The **second amazing aspect** of heaven is that **We Get A New Abode**.

1 Corinthians 2:9 “That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, ‘No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love Him.’”

People of God, according to our text, the Bible is clear. Our new **heavenly abode** is not only going to be a place prepared for us by God

Himself, but it's going to be what? It's going to be absolutely literally unimaginable, right? It's going to be a place beyond our wildest dreams! Why? Because God Himself is making it! Do you expect anything less? In fact, just like the text says, since it's so hard for our minds to conceive how wonderful heaven's going to be, let's try to expand our imagination by taking a look at heaven from a **scientific** point of view, like this man shares.

“The electromagnetic spectrum contains all the different wavelengths, like radio waves, microwaves, and including a small piece called light. Now your eyeball can see the colors, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, violet, that's all.

The spectrum goes forever in both directions beyond that. Suppose we get to heaven and God gives us new eyes that can see the entire spectrum. That means there will be brand new colors, trillions of them. Not new shades of our current colors...but brand new colors! That's why heaven has to be so large. It's for the women's closets!

But can you imagine if we get new eyes that can see the whole spectrum? You're going to be able to see the sounds coming off the piano. Right now we can only hear them. Imagine seeing the sounds. What if we get new ears that can hear the whole spectrum? You're going to be able to hear the colors, or smell them, or taste them!

We've only got five senses folks. Maybe there's more. But if God just took these five and expanded them to the max, we would spend forever walking around heaven going, “Wow! Did you smell that? Here, lick that! Wow!”

Now folks, I don't know about you, but when you look at it scientifically, music coming from flowers is not just possible, but it sounds like that's just the beginning. I don't know about you, but I can't wait to get there! No wonder the Bible says, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no

mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love Him.” That’s sure puts all our “light and momentary” trials into perspective, doesn’t it?

And that’s why Paul told us, you simply need to **Trust in God’s Good Plan and Turn Our Eyes Toward Heaven**. Why? Because that’s how we maintain His peace that He’s already given to us as His children. Got peace? Yes, you do, if you’re a Christian. The question is, “Whether or not you’ll receive it.” Amen? Let’s pray.

To find the way to God, to understand the *truth* of God’s Word, and to received the gift of eternal *life*, begin by repentance and faith through a prayer like this:

“Dear God, I understand that I have broken Your Law and sinned against You. Please forgive my sins. Thank You that Jesus suffered on the cross in my place. I now place my trust in Him as My Savior and Lord. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.”
