

Chaotic Peace
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I don't know if you have been to the mall or shopping lately, but the crowds are growing daily. While the stores started putting Christmas decorations out in October, most people apparently waited until the last week or two to begin their Christmas shopping. The season has arrived officially and Christmas music is playing in all of the stores. Santa Claus has arrived to listen to children divulge their greatest hopes for Christmas gifts.

One thing for is for certain. Ready or not Christmas is coming. If you haven't decided what you are getting someone for Christmas by now, you have probably waited too long. Even if you haven't purchased it, you need to have picked out what you are going to get, or at least have given it a great deal of thought.

I guess for some people, pressure really gets intense this time of year. Some people become impatient looking for parking places at the store. Others wearily stand in line to pay for their items. Others wander around trying to find a sales clerk to assist them. In all of this, we are reminded that the angels proclaimed to the shepherds that Jesus came to give "peace on earth." So, did we go wrong somewhere along the line? After all, this looks like anything except peace.

Actually, I don't think we have done anything wrong at all. There are many definitions for "peace," but the Scripture tends to lean toward a specific kind of peace that comes through Jesus. In fact, the Bible seems to teach that Christians will never know some kinds of peace in this life. We will never escape conflict with others. There will not come a time that the world has no international crisis or struggle. There will always be some type of disagreement around us, even if it does not involve us directly.

So, with all this going on, how can we say that we have peace? The Bible teaches that the type of peace that Jesus came to bring was an inner peace and contentment. It is referred to as "the peace that transcends all understanding" (Phil 4:7, NIV). This means that even when we have chaos around us, we still have an inner peace. In fact, the word *transcends* means that it is above our understanding. People look at us and wonder how we can have an inner peace, even when there is pain or conflict around us. It defies our logic and reason.

The reason we are able to experience this peace is because we know that in the grand scheme of things, our souls are secure. We are only on this earth temporarily and we have the peace of knowing that we will eventually be released from the difficulties of this life and enjoy eternity in the presence of God. We can endure here because we know that it is temporary. We have hope and peace because of the transient nature of our struggles.

If you have never experience the peace of God, don't try to make it through another season without it. Find the one who is able to exhibit an inner peace during a chaotic time and ask them how. They will be glad to share with you the peace of the season.

Semper Fi in the Lord and I hope to see you in Church on Sunday.