

# The Peace Which Passes All Understanding

**Russell Elliott**

online: 02.12.2022, updated: 02.12.2022

© SoundWords 2000–2022. All rights reserved.

All articles are for private use only. They can also be distributed privately without demand. Commercial reproductions of any kind are prohibited. Publications on other internet pages are only possible after consultation.

There is the authoritative command of God to His people not to be careful. "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:6-7). It is hardly necessary to explain that when God tells us to be careful for nothing, He does not mean we are to be careless. But He positively forbids us to be worried and anxious, and it becomes a sin, grieving to the Holy Spirit, when we are. This verse promises us that we may exchange all our care for His peace. How, then, is the great blessing of this verse to become ours — the peace of God keeping our hearts and minds?

In the first place, we must accept it as a direct command from God not to be careful. And as soon as we find ourselves becoming anxious, we must say to ourselves, "This is dishonoring to God; I am disobeying Him; He has told me I am not to be anxious." Sometimes this may seem easy, but the test lies in that word "nothing." There are some matters about which we think it the correct and proper thing to worry. But God says there is nothing. Can we believe Him? Nothing, in heaven or earth, in the church or the world, in your private life or business life, nothing as to yourself or anybody else, even your nearest and dearest, nothing as to the past, present or future about which you are to worry. And yet we are so accustomed to do it that we live in a chronic state of worry, and we have become so accustomed to the burden that sometimes we awake with a start to find how really anxious we are getting.

Instead of worrying, we are told what we are to do: "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Tell God all about it. Have you never found relief when you could tell a friend what you were passing through? Well, God invites you to make a friend of Him. He can be better than any earthly friend, for many reasons. He is never weighted with care Himself, and our earthly friends often are; He is always at hand, and earthly friends cannot be; He is always ready to listen and can impart to us His own peace, which others cannot do. Moreover, we can tell to Him what we could not breathe into any human ear, for He says, "In everything by prayer." The same God that made the mammoth and the mote will pay attention alike to our smallest as well as our greatest concerns.

The prayer is to be with "supplication" and "thanksgiving." We can go again and again to God about the same thing and be as importunate as we like. At the same time, do not let us omit to mingle our thanksgivings with it all, for while there may be much to ask Him to give and take away, yet, if sufficiently observant, we shall find many blessings to count and very much demanding our praise. And this will bring us to the very verge of that marvelous blessing contained in the verse following. Here God does not promise to do what we ask, nor does He undertake to alter our circumstances, but something better is offered us, even His peace, that passes all understanding, to keep our hearts and minds. God's own peace, this becomes ours — a thing that has never been disturbed by anything that has happened, nor can be by anything that may yet happen. What shocks and rude alarms there have been since the earliest dawn of creation — Satan's fall, the first sin, the angels that left their own habitation, the fall of man — and yet through it all God's peace remained unshaken. And He who could be undisturbed by all this offers to "garrison" your heart and mind, that you may be able to meet all that shall come across your own little life. Yes, He offers nothing less to the trusting and thankful heart than His own peace. It is wonderful to think of such a peace being anywhere, when around us on every hand are the traces of care, but up there in the heart of God is peace, and if it is wonderful that He has it, it is not less wonderful that He gives it. It can be imparted, and the blessed God is willing to do this, so that poor, troubled, burdened human

hearts may be sharers of God's own prerogative.

Have we tasted this peace yet? Why should we not? Why should we allow unbelief to bar the door of our hearts, with care inside and peace outside? Let us, in obedience to God, refuse to give care a place any longer — it is not the lawful tenant of our hearts — but, telling God everything, admit His peace. Then our hearts and minds will be garrisoned, because care is sure to assault us again, and this may disturb us if we become occupied with the battering ram, but it can never disturb God's peace. Instead of being occupied with the enemy at the gate, rather let us be occupied with Christ Jesus, for it says this peace "shall keep [or garrison] your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." It is most important that we should be engaged with Him — for this reason that our care not infrequently is the consequence of some failure on our own part, and, consequently, sensitive, conscientious souls fix their eye upon their own delinquencies and become disqualified for enjoying this peace of which we are speaking. Of course, if the believer has sinned, that sin must be confessed and communion restored. We could not for a moment imagine the peace of God filling the heart of anyone who is pursuing a path of disobedience. But, on the other hand, it is to be noticed that in the verse before us it says nothing as to this peace becoming ours because of anything we have either done or not done. It is "through Christ Jesus." Let us think of Him. He is altogether pleasing to God. He was the obedient One — obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, and nothing was ever more glorifying to God. And that cross has, as it were, shut you out of God's sight altogether as to what you have done and what you are, and left only Christ in all His perfection between you and God. And so the peace of God, which passes all understanding, reaches us through a perfect medium and does not have to find its way through our imperfections, or possibly it would be turned back long before it came to our hearts at all. Christ Himself is the living link between your heart and God's.

By comparing what has been now said with what went before, it will be seen how we are advancing. Our first real deliverance from care is when we hear the words, "Take care of him" (Luke 10:35), and know that they are meant for us. Then we are to become possessed of a peace which passes all understanding. But there is one step more, one statement in God's Word which completes the subject and seems to leave nothing unsaid. We refer to those words in 1. Peter 5:7, "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you." In this last clause is found the unfailing cure for all care.

Oh, has anyone else ever stood before you and said, "Give me your care"? Many have come, it may be, and asked for your friendship or your society or your entertainment or for some benefit, but did any want your care? No; they would not like you to bring your care into their company. "Come with a bright face," they say; "make us happy with your sparkling wit and lively conversation." But here is One who asks for your company in order to relieve you of your care. He does not even say, "Cast your care away," but He invites you to cast it upon Him. Could anything be more calculated to touch us? And He says "all" your care. It is not even that He promises to help us to bear it. This word carries us infinitely beyond that. Often we try to bear our cares and ask God, as it were, to carry us and our cares. We are like the man of Ganton, of whom we read, that he was riding to market with a sack of flour, when suddenly he was filled with remorse at the weight his horse had to carry, so, without getting off, he lifted the sack upon his own back. Foolish man, to add to his own burden without lightening that of his horse! And are we any wiser when we keep the burden that we might cast upon God, and instead of riding to heaven without a featherweight of care, we go heavily laden?

Rather, let us be like another man of whom we have heard. His wife had a little business, and she was at one time anxious and disturbed because it seemed likely that someone else in the

same line was about to open a shop close by. “What would become of their trade?” “What a loss it would be to them!” were the thoughts that filled her mind and often found expression in conversation with her husband. He, however, remained calm. Why should he be otherwise? Had not God told him to be careful for nothing? But, seeing his wife’s trouble, he said to her one day, “My dear, leave all the worrying to me.” “There’ll be none of it done then” was the reply.

“Casting all your care upon Him.” Do you know the One who says this? In the same epistle there is a verse that precedes the one we are considering and must precede it, too, in our own experience. It is found in 1. Peter 3:18: “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” This deals with the sin question, which must be dealt with before the care question. But the latter is not overlooked, for what we are invited to do when we are brought to God is to cast all our care upon Him. If God has laid your sins upon Christ, you may lay all your care upon God. And the reason is given why we may: “He careth for you.” Christ once suffered for your sins and bore them, and He now wants you to let Him bear your care.

Here, then, is the answer to the unbelief that thinks God allows the world to drift on and has left it to take care of itself. This is as untrue as every other lie of which Satan is the source. Those words “He careth” and that invitation to “cast all our care upon Him” come to us with the very stamp of truth. It would be fiendish to mock us with such words. Ah, mockery cannot coin such words as those. They tell their own tale, that behind them there is a heart we may well trust.

They are words, too, that appeal to all, for who does not know care? The other day, having to wait outside a West End office, we had the opportunity of watching the faces of people in a crowded London thoroughfare. Hundreds passed us, among them different classes and creeds and nationalities, but in one respect they were all alike — there was more or less of care depicted in every countenance. Their cares were not alike, yet there was one remedy for all. How many knew that they might have the peace of God, which passes all understanding? How many could look up and say, “He cares for me”?

---

*Angels in White — OR — Words to the Worried. P. 19*