



Channels of Peace

THE PEACE OF GOD THAT PASSES ALL
UNDERSTANDING . . .

How we long for peace—peace in our lives—peace in our homes—peace in our church—peace in our country—peace in our world.

The late Dr. Joseph Sittler, one of our Lutheran Church's renowned theologians, writes of two dimensions of peace. On the one hand peace is a most desirable personal state of well-being. It is *rest* from the turmoil of personal living in a turbulent society and conflicted world. In this sense *peace* is a gift from God that enables us to live above the din that oppresses us and transcend the stresses, trials and struggles of life. God's gift of peace lifts us out of the reach of these tentacles and we are safe. Our spirits can be at rest rather than distraught.

This restful peace in the midst of turmoil is truly a spiritual gift available to each of us. We need only to ask for it and be open to receive it.

The second dimension of peace according to Sittler is the extension of this personal peace. It is an active outreach into our homes, societies and entire world, extending that same transcendent gift that brings a sense of well being to all people. It was this of which the angel spoke: "Peace on earth and good will among all people". Peace is more than a pleasant concept. It is a potent power that issues from God.

How can this peace become a reality for us? How do we get involved and enable peace to reign?

In a prayer Francis of Assisi gives us helpful words to ponder. "Make me a channel of your peace". That is how peace happens! It is God's gift that flows into us then through us into all the cracks and crevasses of the world.

Alas, the present construct of the world as we have shaped it militates against peace. Too many people in power benefit from war, conflict, poverty, ignorance and strife. The *lust for power* is the original sin and remains the root cause of all evil today.

The eternal struggle between good and evil is waged specifically between *peace* and *lust for power*. *Lust for power* uses fear as its tool, while *peace* uses love, acceptance, and forgiveness. We have far too many peddlers of fear today. The airwaves are clogged with their wares.

We know as God's people which side will ultimately win this battle. For this reason we should never become involved in the use of fear in any relationship, nor let fear control our thoughts and actions. Fear is devastating and demonic.

On the other hand, peace is healing. Furthermore, peace is not something to be won by propaganda or battle. Rather it comes through openness to God's wish to change our attitude. Yes—*our* attitude. Not someone else's—*ours*.

Some years ago I had a T-shirt that expressed a significant message. *Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.* We are the very ones God uses to help give birth to peace. In a sense we are the midwives. We do not create peace but we do assist in giving it birth. It comes not as a victory, but as a gift.



Make me a channel of your peace. Make this your daily prayer.