

# Peace Amidst the Battle

#0306

Study by W. D. Frazee—April 8, 1977

Holy quietness. Sweet assurance in my soul.

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” John 14:27.

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” John 16:33.

Tonight I want to study with you, for a little while, about peace in the midst of the battle. I suppose looking at the words we might say they are mutually exclusive. Peace and battle. Peace and war. They are what,, in a good English class we would call “antonyms.” Wouldn’t we? Opposites. But this is the peace I want to study with you tonight, peace in the midst of the battle.

Some years ago, I heard about an experience where several artists were asked to paint their concept of peace. One painted a beautiful meadow scene with a little stream through the middle of it, cows grazing peacefully in the pasture, a bright day. That was peace. And it is peace, isn’t it?

But the other painted a picture of a roaring cataract, and in the sky, you could see the tempest gathering. Above this mountain cataract roaring down the canyon with these tempest clouds all about, the artist had painted a little nest hung in a bough arching over the cataract, and there a little mother bird sang. There she was in that nest. That was peace.

I suppose we all like the green pastures and the still waters. But my dear friends, to be very practical, to be very realistic unless we learn the secret of peace in the midst of the storm, peace with conflict all around us, we are destined to spend a good deal of our time in uncertainty or worry. Aren’t we? Yes.

In Acts the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter and the 22 verse, we find Paul passing over the ground of the different cities where he had raised up churches:

“Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” Acts 14:22.

Do you want to enter in? Well, the way is through much tribulation.

“Oh, I don’t like that.”

Well, nobody enjoys tribulation; if he did, it wouldn't be tribulation, would it? No. But there is something about it that has a definite part in the development of our characters. Peace in the midst of trouble, peace in the midst of storm, peace in the midst of battle.

You know the battle is on, don't you? Every now and then, I get some fresh evidence of it. There are some unexpected problem bursts like a bomb explodes. Yes, the battle is on. The answer is not an armistice. This is not a cold war; it is a hot war. It is the war that began in Heaven six thousand years ago. And it will never be finished, my dear friends, until the one who caused all the trouble is gone. Thank God, he knows his time is short. But he is making—I was about to say—good use of what little time he has left. You know what I mean.

The prophet John heard voices in heaven, saying:

“Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time” Revelation 12:12.

He is throwing everything that he has into this last battle. God is too. You and I are called to stand with God in giving Him all we have: our time, our money, our strength, our life, our all. Is it worth it? Oh yes! Yes, it is. It is worth it.

But God doesn't want us, dear ones, to get nervous breakdowns, or ulcers, or high blood pressure, or heart attack because of the stress and strain of the battle. Don't misunderstand me. It would be worth all of those and worse to win the battle. Fifty million martyrs send us the word from the Dark Ages, “It is worth it if it takes your life!”

And all the martyrs are not those that were burned at the stake. James White died a martyr. Because other people wouldn't carry loads, he carried them, and He did three men's work, and he died at 60 years of age—a martyr.

But I repeat, friends, what God is looking for is the opportunity to teach you and me how to do our best and leave the rest with Him. He wants to give us peace in the midst of the conflict. He wants to teach us, not merely a philosophy of life, but an experience with Him that enables us to suffer the most and yet still keep on.

At the heart of the cyclone tearing the sky,  
and flinging the clouds and the towers by,  
Is a place of central calm.

So here in the roar of mortal things,  
I have a place where my spirit sings,  
In the hollow of God's palm.  
By Edwin Markham

Are you in the center of God's will? Are you in the center of this storm? If you are, there is a peace even though conflict and storm and tempest are all about you. This is the experience God is calling you to.

This is not some supernatural endowment that enables us to work 24 hours a day, or at least 20 and still, never get sleepy. No. The God who made the laws of nature, the laws of health and life, is the one who has called us to peace. And sleep is a part of His program. Outdoor exercise is a part of His program. And oh what a wonderful peace comes when we can, even for a few moments, leave things in the kitchen, or leave things at the office desk, or leave things wherever they seem to be in a mess, and mingle with the birds, the flowers, the trees, the garden, the orchard, the woods, and let Jesus speak to our hearts. He set us an example in this, didn't He? That's right.

Another great blessing that God wants to give to people is the blessing of finding at home a retreat, a haven. I want to spend just a few moments on this. I want to read you about an experience that happened 95 years ago in Battle Creek, Michigan. There was a man there called Goodloe Bell—Professor Bell. He was an educational pioneer. A very thorough man. Exacting, some people thought. Strict, but he was beloved of the Lord. He was a pioneer in Seventh-day Adventist education.

I want to read you some things that the prophet to the remnant said about the experience that he went through there in Battle Creek. I am reading from a little document called *Testimony for the Battle Creek Church*. It was published in Oakland at the Pacific Press in 1882. And what I am reading is on page 30 and 31:

“Brother Bell has had trials of which many know little. A man's energy and success, as well as his happiness, depends to a great degree upon the character of his home. If a right influence is found there, he can bravely encounter trials and discouragements without. His home is his haven of rest. But if there is discord at home, the tired nerves find no relief. The mind is subject to a constant tension to preserve calmness and self-control. A man without the blessings of a happy home is deprived of an influence that would stimulate and strengthen him”  
*Testimony for the Battle Creek Church*, pages 30–31.

I have read this tonight, dear friends, to appeal to everybody here to study and pray how to lift the load of others, especially in the home you are a member of.

Now, if it happens that there is somebody here that is in a home with only one member in it, then really, you are close to the person that you need to encourage. Aren't you? If there are only two of you in the home, again, you are really close to the person that you need to encourage. But whatever the number, whether it is one or two, or a half a dozen or more, do you gather, as I read this, something of the inspiration that comes of how you can be a part of a haven of rest for somebody else?

Oh, my friends, the world is cold and cruel. The battle of life goes hard. Make up your mind that for everybody in the home where you live, whether there are just a few or more, you are going to be on the credit side instead of the debit side. You are

going to be on the cheery side instead of the downcast, depressed side. You are going to make that place where you live a place of light instead of darkness.

You are going to make that home a little Heaven on earth to go to Heaven in. Heaven and haven aren't very far apart, are they? No. And you can have a haven, a little Heaven, to help get you ready and to get others ready. Oh, I know that many here are experiencing this both on the giving and the receiving side. I just wanted to encourage you with it, friends. We can't keep away from the battle outside, but let's have a place to recharge our batteries inside. What do you say? Let every Christian home be thus.

I sometimes think if we are not careful, we do the opposite. We treat the worst those who love us the best.

Somebody says, "That's just letting your hair down."

Well, whatever name you give it, in the light of what I have studied, we are not going to do that anymore, are we friends? We are going to cheer and encourage one another.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive" Acts 20:35.

"he that watereth shall be watered also himself"  
Proverbs 11:25.

The banks through which the river runs are always green. And if you and I will be channels of blessing in our homes, we are ourselves will be blessed.

But now, I have said all that to say this: this is not something we can manufacture or put on as a mask. This is an experience that must be in our own hearts. We must know the Christ who came from Heaven hunting us, who died for us, who lives to make intercession for us. We must have an experience, my dear friends, so that even if the battle outside comes inside, and everything around us is tempest tossed, we still reach up our hand individually to Jesus and say, "Dear Lord, hold my hand."

Christ Himself went through these experiences in the Nazareth home. There He was, his human mother, the man who filled the place of a father on earth to Him, at least four stepbrothers, several stepsisters, all older than He. They didn't understand Him. Read the story in *Desire of Ages*.

But speaking of the problems that He went through in that home, the prophet says:

"He lived above these difficulties, as if in the light of God's countenance" *Desire of Ages*, page 89.

Isn't that beautiful?

“He lived above these difficulties, as if in the light of God’s countenance” *Ibid.*

He got the blessing just the same way you and I can get it. He was as dependent on His Father for help as you and I are dependent. He went alone in prayer and in the study of the Scriptures and in communion with nature, and there He asked His Father to help Him to be kind, to help Him to have peace, to help Him to show love. And God answered His prayer, and the same God will answer that same prayer for you and me. This is the secret of this inner peace which is manifested in the midst of the conflict. This is the secret of the certainty that keeps us going even when things look dark.

You know it is a law of the mind that we develop most those areas of thought that we express the most. The One who knows as told us:

“Talk doubt, and you will find plenty of doubt. Talk darkness and you will find plenty of darkness” *Sermons and Talks*, Volume 1, page 208.

“According to the seed sown will be the harvest” *Signs of the Times*, October 20, 1887.

The apostle Paul looking over the great panorama of Christian experience, said:

“Now abide faith, hope, love, these three”  
1 Corinthians 13:13 (*New King James Version*).

God wants us to cherish these three great motive powers of the soul: faith, hope, and love. And one of the secrets of having peace in the midst of the battle is to express thoughts of faith rather than doubt. To express thoughts of courage rather than of discouragement. Sister White made it a rule never to express one thought of discouragement. There were times when she had to battle with her human feelings just the same as you and I do. She was not lifted supernaturally above the weaknesses of humanity any more than you and I are. But thank God, she learned, taught by Jesus, to express faith rather than to express doubt.

I want to learn that lesson fully. Don’t you, friends?

I will not doubt though all my ships at sea  
Come drifting home with broken masts and sails.

I will believe the hand which never fails  
From seeming evil worketh good for me.

And though I weep because those sails are tattered still will  
I cry while my best hopes lie shattered, I trust in Thee.

I will not doubt though all my prayers return  
Unanswered from the still white realm above.

I will believe it is an all wise love  
Which has refused these things for which I yearn.

And though, at times I cannot keep from grieving,  
Yet the poor pure ardor of my fixed believing undimmed shall burn.

I will not doubt.

Well anchored is this faith like some staunch ship  
My soul braves every gale.

So strong its courage that it will not quail  
To breast the mighty unknown sea of death.

Oh may I cry, though body parts with spirit, I do not doubt!  
So listening worlds may hear it with my last breath.  
"Faith" By Ella Wheeler Wilcox

Today, 1946 years ago, the greatest battle of eternity took place as Jesus hung upon the cross, the Devil urges every argument of hell and brought all the darkness of the pit to Golgotha as he tried to get Christ to yield and not go through with the plan of salvation. And part of the plan was that God should remain hidden in the darkness.

The Father was there, suffering with His Son, but no ray of light pierced the gloom that surrounded the heart and mind of Jesus. Alone, He trod the winepress.

And what did He do, my friends? He kept right on with His faith anchored in His Father. He would not yield to the foe. He would not give up His quest to save you and me. He died the death of a conqueror. By faith, He planted His banner on the heights of triumph and said, "It is finished. Father, into Thy hands I commit my spirit" (John 19:30; Luke 46). And while you and I will never be called upon to go through all that Jesus did: in our little Gethsemane, in our tiny Calvary, as we hang upon the cross of self-denial, and self-sacrifice, thank God we too can say, "Father into Thy hands I commit my spirit. I will not yield to the taunting foe. I will rest my case in God. I will have peace in the midst of the battle. Peace in the midst of the storm."

May we bow together?

Heavenly Father, we thank Thee this vesper hour for the memories of Calvary. We thank Thee for the great battle that was won by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We thank Thee that He kept His faith anchored in Thee, in Thy promises, Thy pledged word, that He was willing to die that Thy plan might be carried out and that we might be saved.

Tonight our Father, lift us above the petty problems, the little trials that harass, and chase, and fret the soul. Anchor us with our hope fixed within the veil where Jesus, our Forerunner, has gone and lives to make intercession for us. Shut us in with Thee in the secret place of communion, the inner room of calm assurance that

even though we die, our life is hid with Christ in God. That even though we should have our heads taken as John the Baptist and Paul that it is alright because we are linked with Thee in a life that shall never end.

God bless each one here tonight, especially those who are at the moment fighting a hand to hand conflict with the powers of darkness. Oh, I pray, dear Lord, for Thy lifting hand, Thy encouraging words, Thy tender love to be revealed to each one. And we thank Thee. I know Thou dost hear us and answer, because we ask in Jesus' name, amen.

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