

# Maintaining Peace of Mind (Go To Meeting)

Roger Kendall—December 4, 2021

It is clear that we are living in a time of growing turmoil and uncertainty in the world. All we have to do is look around and the experience of this last year or two, and we know that is true.

As God's people we're not just fighting a spiritual battle, but also one that involves **psychological, biological and informational warfare!** It's a battle between

- good *vs* evil
- light *and* darkness
- truth *and* lies and deception

We're in a time now where even our own governments have become our enemy, and they're making war against us, the people. What words would you use to describe the state of the world at the end of 2021, as we see time progressing? *How about:*

- alarming
- dangerous
- unprecedented
- fearful
- chaotic
- prophetic

As we consider the prophecies of the Bible being fulfilled. We're seeing that happening. All these terms would seem to fit to one degree or another.

Are we living in the time of the end, the time of sorrows and Jacob's trouble that Christ mentioned in Matt. 24. Here was a very key prophecy that Christ gave:

Matthew 24:6: "And you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars. See *that* you do not let *these things* disturb you.... [or cause you fear and trepidation] ...For it is necessary *that* all *these things* take place, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in *different* places. Now, all these *things are* the beginning of sorrows" (vs 6-8).

This is like reading out of today's news reports. We're seeing these things happening and we know that it's ongoing.

*The Apostle Paul made it very clear when he tells us in 2-Timothy 3:1: "Know this also, that in the last days **perilous times shall come.**"*

Here we are, almost beginning to start 2022. The end of this age—the Church Age—where we have had relatively smooth sailing, and that's

passing by. The book of Revelation clearly reveals to us that we are approaching a time of great turmoil and woe that is coming upon the whole earth.

The world that we live in is being changed **by the evil forces of:**

- artificial intelligence (AI)
- genetic engineering
- quantum computer technology
- robotics
- nanotechnology

And, of course, *the fear of the Covid pandemic*, or spandemic—whatever you want to call it. We're in a time where governments are working to shutdown and control our very lives.

The vaccination program being pushed and forced upon people by the government and the establishments is for the purpose of controlling all aspects of our lives, ultimately. And for the purpose of removing and eliminating the God-given freedoms that we have guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution. Many governments around the world have modeled that same model of freedom that we have here in the United States.

Our governmental system, our judges, our judicial system, educational institutes, financial systems and even the mainstream media **all have been totally corrupted through their lies, deception and fraud!**

Where is all this leading? ***It's for the purpose of destroying the United States of America as it now stands!*** Satan knows—and he's the 'god of this world'—and is driving all of this turmoil. Satan knows that he has to take down this country, the United States of America, before he can introduce the new world order ***under the Beast Power*** (Rev. 13).

These are things we need to think about as we look at what's happening in the world today. We can't be certain of the timing of events and whatnot, but as we see events happening, we can 'connect the dots.' We can then understand greater and clearer the things that are happening.

There's great division in our country today and in all parts of the world as we see people out on the streets protesting the lockdowns and diabolical and draconian efforts that the governments are forcing upon the people. We are on the verge of civil unrest, and maybe even civil war.

Our financial system is on the verge of collapsing. What's keeping it together is a wonder! We're looking at food shortages and also shortages of items that are very essential to our everyday life. We just mentioned before when we were talking that there's a shortage of a key ingredient in diesel fuel. If the trucks can't run how are we going supplied?

**America has truly lost the pride of its power!** It appears very clearly that the curses of Deut. 28 are truly upon the nation, and to a certain degree upon the world, the Israelite nations.

You should read all of Deut. 28, and you can see and outlay the blessings and cursings. But the cursings we can finalize:

Deuteronomy 28:43: "The stranger *dwelling* among you shall get up above you very high, and you shall come down very low. He shall loan to you, and you shall not loan to him...." (vs 43-44).

Isn't this a reversal of things over the last 20-30 years?

"...He shall be the head, and you shall be the tail. And all these curses shall come on you, and shall pursue you and overtake you, until you are destroyed **because you did not obey the voice of the LORD your God to keep His commandments and His statutes, which He commanded you**" (vs 44-45).

The true God has been rejected and is very much being removed from our society today. The sins of the wicked men under the handles and control of Satan the devil, reaching to much higher heights than we have ever thought about, more than ever before:

- abortions
- homosexuality
- sex and child trafficking (and the numbers are huge)
- transgenderism and the whole element that Satan is moving to change the very nature of life on this planet

Someone has called it the **transferring, the manipulation of our society** to the point that it isn't recognizable anymore!

The book of Isaiah describes very clearly what's happening in our nation today. A sinful world that has truly forsaken the Creator God.

Isaiah 1:4: "Ah, sinful nation, a people burdened *with* iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! **They have forsaken the LORD; they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger**; they have gone away backward."

Isaiah 59:4: "None calls for justice, nor does

anyone plead for Truth; they trust in vanity and speak lies. They conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity. They hatch adders' eggs and weave the spider's web; he who eats their eggs dies, and that which is crushed breaks out into a viper. Their webs shall not become clothing, nor shall they cover themselves with their works; their works *are* works of iniquity, and the acts of violence *are* in their hands. Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood; their thoughts *are* thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction *are* in their paths. They have not known the way of peace, and *there is* no justice in their ways. They have made crooked paths for themselves; whoever goes therein shall not know peace" (vs 4-8).

If we just look at the state of America, and around the world, what I just read is absolutely happening today.

Verse 14: "And justice is driven backward..."

Even the Supreme Court is not carrying out the mandated laws of the land. They have corrupted themselves. The courts and judges are being paid off.

"...and righteousness stands afar off; for truth has fallen in the street, and uprightness cannot enter. Yea, truth fails; and **he who departs from evil makes himself a prey**...." (vs 14-15).

We've seen this, people who have stepped forth to tell the truth about a matter—scientific on the vaccine or mandate—many times they are eliminated, taken out, attacked, because they're trying to bring the truth.

"...And the LORD saw, and it was evil in His eyes that *there was* no justice" (v 15).

We're living in a time now where truth and critical thinking have vanished. People are now blindly trusting the government in the medical establishment. Current event surrounding the Covid Vacs program shows that most people, many people, are not willing to give up personal freedoms for the sake of a false sense of security and safety.

- Who are you going to believe out there about this so-called Covid pandemic?
- Who are you going to believe?
- Where's the truth?

*The truth has been hidden from the people!*

The majority of people seem to be unaware that their society and lives are slowly being taken apart. The new corrupt normal being developed will rise to total governmental control and the loss of all personal freedom.

If you've ever read the book *1984* this is what happened there. It was kind of an interesting side book at the time, but reflecting on what's happening today.

1-Thessalonians 5:1: "Now then, concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, there is no need that I [Paul] write to you; for you yourselves understand perfectly that the Day of *the* Lord will come exactly as a thief *comes* by night. For when they say, 'Peace and security,' then sudden destruction will come upon them, as travail *comes* upon a woman who is with child; and they shall by no means escape" (vs 1-3).

Is this what's on the horizon? *Yes!* I think we're entering into a time of uncertainty, and also a time when we see the erosion of personal freedom and even our Christian beliefs being attacked in a way that's never happened before.

What's on the horizon? With the introduction of a new financial system based on digital currency and computer technology, which is just around the corner, then they shall be able to track and control all buying and selling, and all your movements, as well. They will know every where you are and where you go. They can actually do that now with your cell phones.

The plan now to replace all religions, including Christianity, with the new world religion, will be to destroy the Bible their attempts will be to bring on severe persecution of Christians.

The future will lead the world to depopulation, a new age of transhumanism, and computer brain interactions, interconnections to the 'cloud'; that computer system in the sky where all the information is being stored. We're seeing reality as we know it being transformed where normal human communication and inner actions will be replaced by a virtual computer world in the Internet of things.

It's interesting to note that a whistleblower recently reported that under the new super quantum computer programs that they're working on, they can now control your emotions and read your very thoughts. They are now working out how the brain works, able to get analogs to be able to convert mental electronic messages in the brain to a language that they can read. It's incredible what they are able to do now; it's beyond imagination and truly frightening to think about it!

I give you this introduction to day because we don't really know the depths of evil that are out there. But we know from what we can read and understand, that the days ahead are going to be very, very difficult, hard, and as Paul said, 'perils and difficult times are here.'

Is that causing us a lot of concern and worry? *Indeed, we're concerned, and my worry a bit!* Yet, recognize that if we stand strong with God, we don't have to be anxious and worried, and we can have peace of mind in the times of turmoil and uncertainty.

The world situation is very distressing to think about. Again, studies have shown that, as a fact, over 25% of adults now have serious mental, psychological and emotional problems. Many are turning to anti-depressant drugs and other street drugs, and alcohol to cope with the stress that they're under. **What about us in God's Church?**

- How are we coping?
- Are we coping with the things that are going on in the world?

Even in our own personal lives, the trials that we're facing, the difficulties that we run into and realize that trials and hardship are a part of life. Yet, we know that if God is with us, who can be against us?

We're being spiritually affected, but also emotionally affected in what's going on in our society. So, where do we find peace of mind in times of turmoil and hardships that are going on around us? *That's the purpose of my message!*

I'm going to review and remind, because I know you know these things; it's just a matter of being reminded and focusing on the Scriptures that we've read many times. ***The Bible shows us principles that will help us to eliminate fear, anxiety, discouragement, depression or negative emotions that may come upon us in the times that we are living!***

It's very clear that we live in the world, ***but we're not part of the world!*** We're not part of this world's goals, its purposes or way of life. Our citizenship is in heaven and we follow Jesus Christ and God the Father because they are the true source of peace, joy and love.

The world is fading away, and will soon be replaced by the glorious Kingdom of God. There we look ahead and see the future. We can truly rejoice in that.

***Our focus must not be on the things of this world to the point that it causing us distress, worry, anxiety and fear!*** But we should maintain a close, personal relationship with God our Father; ***a close, personal, one on one relationship with God the Father!*** In that way we can truly have peace of mind and not be caught up into the worry, anxiety and fears that are now swarming in the world today.

1-John 2:15: "Do not love the world, nor the things *that are* in the world. If anyone loves the

world, the love of the Father is not in him, because everything that *is* in the world... [because of Satan the devil, the god of this world; this is not God's world] ...the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pretentious pride of physical life—is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world and its lust is passing away, **but the one who does the will of God abides forever**" (vs 15-17).  
*Those who:*

- do the will of God
- love God
- obey His commandments
- walk in the way of righteousness and truth
- overcoming sin and striving to serve God

***God says that they're going to abide forever!*** What encouragement!

- watch world events
- keep track
- be alert
- be awake

***to what's happening, but our focus needs to be on our future in the Kingdom of God and on our relationship that we presently have with God the Father and Jesus Christ!***

We need to set our mind and our attention on Jesus Christ and what we need to doing to achieve the Kingdom of God, because we do have our part in that! We have to be actively pursuing the Kingdom of God.

***If*** we focus on God, focus on Christ, and on those elements that we need to be doing, ***then*** we're not going to be caught up into the worry, tension, turmoil and the evil workings of this world. We're separate from that! We're separate from the world in that sense. *Living in the world, but not part of that!*

Colossians 3:1: "Therefore, if you have been raised together with Christ..."—*through baptism, conversion; you're part of the Body of Christ!*

"...seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at *the* right hand of God" (v 1).

- Christ is our High Priest!
- Christ is our Intermediator!
- Christ is there to help, to lead and guide us
- Christ is our Source of hope and strength

Verse 2: "Set your affection on the things that are above, and not on the things that are on the earth. For you have died... [through water baptism] ...and your life has been hid together with Christ in God. **When** Christ, *Who is* our life... [His life is in us; His Holy Spirit] ...is manifested, **then you also shall be manifested with Him in glory**" (vs 1-4).

This is talking about the resurrection to eternal life! We don't know when that's going to be, but we do know that before Christ returns there's going to be much chaos, destruction. You can read it in the book of Revelation, even though it's very dark and frightful to read, but let's understand that these trials and difficulties that we might have to go through, we can live through them We can prosper according to God's will and purpose!

It won't be easy; I don't know exactly what things will be happening, but we do know that ***if God is for us, who can be against us!*** This let's us know that with God's help and His presence in our lives, we can get through the difficult days ahead; whatever is coming our way.

Do not fear, but have ***faith, trust, and confidence*** in God, in His Word, and in the workings of His Holy Spirit in our lives. We can look to Him in times of trials and stress and troubles. He will guide us and bring us through.

Proverbs 3:5: "**Trust in the LORD** with all your heart... [total trust] ...and **lean not to your own understanding**... [that can lead us astray] ...In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (vs 5-6).

We can draw strength and encouragement from God the Father and Jesus Christ; through His Word and His Holy Spirit, and through prayer and contact with Him.

Let's look to the very words of God that will encourage us and help us to realize that these are words of Truth, if we understand and really internalize them.

- Where is our fear?
- Where is our anxiety?

Psalms 27:1: "The LORD is my Light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, my enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though an army should encamp against me, my heart shall not be afraid; though war should rise against me, even then I will be confident. **One thing I have desired from the LORD, that I will seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life**, to behold the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in His Temple, **for in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion, in the secret place of His Tabernacle He shall hide me...**" (vs 1-5).

In a sense we can be living and walking in this world, but we can be hidden from the dangers and the things that are going on in the world. We've

seen that in the past; God can hide us, if that's His purpose and will!

"...He shall set me upon a Rock... [Who is Jesus Christ; a stable foundation that will never fail] ...And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies round about me; therefore, I will offer sacrifices with shouts of joy in His tabernacle. I will sing; yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD" (vs 5-6).

This is a tremendous Psalm for anyone to read, to be encouraged, to be lifted up so they could melt away the fears, anxieties and concerns that we have for our well being.

With Christ as our Rock and the promises of God's protection, and all the words that we can read in the Scriptures of God's protection and deliverance, we can stand firm in confidence and trusting in God, trusting in the Lord to bring us through any trials and hardship that we might face. ***hat's a bold statement! But do we believe it?***

Psalm 34:17: "The righteous cry, and the LORD hears..."

- Does God not hear our prayers?
- Does God not answer our prayers? *Maybe not according to our will, but according to His will, yes, He does!*

"...and delivers them out of **all** their troubles.... [not some or a few, but **all**] ...The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are of **a contrite spirit**" (vs 17-18)—*with humility and meekness!*

Realizing that *of ourselves* we are nothing, are weak and have no power! We go before Him, our Creator God and seek His help. He is swift to provide it.

Verse 19: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all.

Here's the answer to the one who is in distress or anxious, in turmoil or fearing about trials and difficulties, turn to God in heartfelt prayer with "...a humble and contrite spirit..." ***and He will hear and answer from hear from heaven and He will strengthen you and raise you up according to His will and purpose!***

He does have a purpose in your life, and you will pass away until that purpose has been fulfilled. Ask in prayer for the courage and the strength that you need when things become difficult.

God will hold us up and deliver you out of all of your troubles as long as we continue to believe in a conviction of faith that His promises are true and they cannot be broken.

- Where do we find Truth?
- Where do we find the strength and support?
- *In the Word of God, which is truly our encouragement and strength!*

It's clear that in the days ahead things are going happen that will surely try our faith, trust and confidence in God.

I don't know exactly what those will be, but I do know that there will be things happening that we will then struggle with the arguments against God. It will keep us off balance and we have to be stable in the Truth of God.

Satan wants to take away your peace, your joy, the hope that we have in God and His Word. He wants us to falter and have doubts and discouragement. Those are some of the tools and weapons that Satan uses against us.

Satan is the God of this world and he has deceived the world (Rev. 12:9). He's also the 'prince of the power of the air,' which means that he has the power and capability of transmitting thoughts and messages and ideas into the mind, ***even in our mind that will cause us to doubt God! Get us to thinking:***

- that somehow we're not important to God
- that God does not care for us
- that it's going to go badly for us

*All of these bad thoughts!*

Then what Satan does, of course, is offer relief. ***Do not be dragged into the web of lies that Satan is bringing upon the world.*** Instead, you know what we have to do: ***take on the full armor of God daily! Stand in the power of God's strength!***

Eph. 6—these Scriptures right here are so important that we pay attention and do this on a daily basis and should not leave home without the armor of God and the protection. These are the attributes to be able to protect us, not only from Satan's harm against us, but from wrong and discouraging thoughts that might be in our mind.

Ephesians 6:10: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in *the* Lord, and **in the might of His strength**.... [not ours, but **His**] ...Put on the whole armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (vs 10-11).

Verse 14: "Stand, therefore, having your loins girded about with Truth...

- the Truth of God's Word
- the Truth of the Gospel
- the Truth of the commandments

"...and wearing the breastplate of righteousness, and

having your feet shod with *the* preparation of the Gospel of Peace” (vs 14-15). *To walk in peace, to set that example!*

Verse 16: “Besides all *these*, take up the shield of the faith, with which you will have the power to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.”

Just what I said! Take up the shield of faith to destroy the **fiery doubts** that Satan is throwing at you.

Verse 17: “And put on the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; praying at all times with all prayer and supplication in *the* Spirit, and in this very thing being watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints” (vs 17-18).

Key information on how to protect ourselves so that we do not fall into discouragement and into the wiles of the devil!

If we do this daily in prayer, and studying the Word of God we can overcome Satan’s racket and attacks, and we can endure the troubling and difficult days that we are in.

The next important thing I want us to keep in mind is to always believe in **hope!** Hope is an essential virtue in our Christian lives that will help us to get through the toughest of times. Hope is a spiritual gift from God that gives us the strength and the courage when we are faced with distress, anxiety and doubts, as I’ve already explained.

Hope is more than wishful thinking! Peter refers to it as being a living hope. Why is that? *It is a powerful thing!* It gives the person real power to have a positive and optimistic view in the face of hardship. Trials, uncertainties, difficulties, whatever you may say, because hope really focuses on the future. Not something we have in our hands now, but it focuses on the future, and that future is bright for everyone of us ***if we stand firm in our conviction of faith!*** It really helps us to deal with:

- stressful conditions of the world
- the loss of a loved one
- loss of one’s job
- serious illnesses

1-Peter 1:3: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again **unto a living hope** through *the* resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

This is the hope that truly things are going to get better, because God loves us, cares for us, and He will provide for us!

Without hope, a person can become very negative, discouraged and lose hope. And we’re prone to look at ourselves as being a failure; not really stacking up to being the level at which God requires so that we can receive salvation.

Satan wants to wear us down, but let’s not let him do that. Hope from God can turn negative thoughts into positive expectations:

- sorrow into joy
- mental anguish into a peaceful mind

*That’s what hope can do! That hope is in Jesus Christ!*

1-Timothy 1:1: “Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ according to *the* commandment of God our Savior, and of **the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is our hope.**”

Jesus Christ is the center of our hope! He’s our Savior. He came and gave His life; shed His blood on the cross. Now He is our Intercessor and High Priest in heaven. He experienced it all! He knows! As we go to Him in prayer: He hears, He can empathize and He can truly reach down and give us the strength that we need to motivate us and keep on keeping on and not to lose faith, but to trust in Him. Of course, ***our hope is eternal life that He brings!***

Titus 1:1: “Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to *the* faith of God’s elect and *the* knowledge of *the* Truth that is according to Godliness; **in the hope of eternal life**, which God Who cannot lie promised before the ages of time” (vs 1-2).

God has given you absolute proof that you should never doubt Him, that He will bring your trial and hardship, according to His will and purpose to be in His Kingdom!

Hope is linked to faith. We know that to be true:

Hebrews 11:1: “Now, faith is *the* substance of *things* hoped for, *and the* conviction of things not seen.”

This hope is based on faith and trust in Christ and His promises, that we shall be victorious in the battles that we fight. In the end we shall receive *eternal life!* Not because of who we are or what we have accomplished in this life, but because of the love, the grace and the mercy of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 6:18: “So that by two immutable things, in which *it was* impossible *for* God to lie, we who have fled for refuge **might have strong encouragement to lay hold on the hope that has been set before us; which hope we have as an**

**anchor of the soul, both secure and steadfast, and which enters into the sanctuary within the veil"**  
(vs 18-19).

This is powerful stuff, brethren! This is the kind of hope that is like an anchor to a ship. That anchor holds that ship in times of turmoil of the sea and the rising waters. It holds is fast! Likewise, the hope that we have in Jesus Christ as being our High Priest enters into the veil:

Verse 20: "Where Jesus has entered for us as a forerunner, having become a High Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedec."

Be strong in the Lord! Always trust in that hope, ***and in His promises to protect, provide, comfort and lead you to victory!*** Hope is a proper response to God's promises, because His Word cannot be broken!

Jer. 17: 7—this is a very interesting picture of being compared to a tree:

Jeremiah 17:7: "Blessed *is* the man who **trusts in the LORD and whose hope is the LORD.** For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters; *it* sends out its roots by the river, and **it shall not fear when the heat comes,** but its foliage shall be green; and he is not worried in the year of drought, nor will it cease from yielding fruit" (vs 7-8).

This comparison is quite good. A tree puts down roots into the water and if the water is there and the soil is good, then it can still grow and produce fruit even in times of drought, as long as the water is there.

The water being for us representative of the Holy Spirit, which God intends to give us so that we continue to grow and produce fruit. What a tremendous analogy. Very good to meditate on! Even if we go through rough times, let's remember:

Romans 8:28: "And we know that **all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.**"

We have to hold on to that, believe that! We go through some bad times; yet, the bad times, the trials and the hardship we go through work for our good.

Hope and patience works together, kind of go hand-in-hand and work together to keep our mind on a positive attitude and look to the future.

The Hebrews word 'qawa' can be translated as *hope*, which give the connotation of meaning to wait, to be patient, to endure. These are the elements of *hope*. Yes, to able to endure!

When suffering is present, hope in a person's life is a manifestation of that person's willingness to wait patiently for God to deliver them.

Rom. 12 says to *rejoice in hope!* Be patient in tribulation. Be steadfast in continuing prayer. {inaudible} patience produces more hope, knowing that God's love will sustain us and give us victory in the end!

Patience in turn produces endurance. Sometimes *patience and endurance* the words can be interchanged in the Scriptures. If you're enduring you're being patience, and if you're patient you're enduring.

If you have endurance during a public trial means to:

- stand fast!
- have persistence
- keep on keeping on

*While waiting for God to turn things around!*

In the long run it means to have patience as we wait for the return of Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, in the ultimate time that we can be resurrection and be on the Sea of Glass. That's the gist of it!

James 5:7: "Therefore, brethren, be patient until the coming of the Lord. Consider the husbandman *who* waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient for it, until it has received *the* former and latter rains."

No farmer is going to go out one day and expect the next couple of days to see the plants coming up and producing fruit. No, he has to wait for the plant to grow, to develop the fruit and the maturity and all of that.

Likewise, James is saying that we have to be as patient as that farmer. So he says:

Verse 8: "You also be patient. Strengthen your hearts because the coming of the Lord has drawn near"

How do we do that? *By focusing on God and His promises!*

Romans 8:24: "For by hope we were saved; but hope that is seen is not hope; for why would anyone still be hoping for what he sees?"

If you've got it in your possession, it's no longer to be hoping for it.

Verse 25: "But if we hope for what we do not see, we ourselves wait for it with patience."

Patience is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit that we truly need to have along with hope and

endurance as we go forward and wait patiently for the return of Christ.

God's hope does not disappoint us!

Romans 5:3 (RSV): "More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing... [we have knowledge] ...that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us" (vs 3-5).

Here we see a lot of these terms kind of coming together. We see the fact that with endurance, we can produce:

- character
- the righteousness of Christ
- the very nature of God

Through that character of God in us, *it produces hope*, because we believe in Him, we believe and have faith in the Word of God. God's love does not disappoint us, because of the Holy Spirit that has been poured out upon us.

Both the Apostles James and Peter really make this connection of rejoicing in our trials. This is a hard thing to do, as we all know.

James 1:2: "Consider *it* all joy, my brethren, when you are beset by various trials... [that's a tough one] ...knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance... [tie in Rom. 5] ...But let endurance have *its* perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete... [through trials we are perfected] ...not lacking in anything. However, if anyone lacks wisdom... ]or lacks patience, hope or anything one needs] ...**let him ask of God...**" (vs 2-5).

There it is! We go to God for those things that we know were lacking so that we can be embellished and strengthened.

"...Who gives to everyone freely and does not reproach *the one who asks*; and it shall be given to him. But let him ask in faith, **not doubting at all** because **the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven by the wind and tossed to and fro**" (vs 5-6).

Trials and suffering tests our faith, but as we continue to have trust and confidence in God and look to the hope of God to deliver and strengthen us, for His mercy, ***we can endure to the end and the hope of the resurrection to eternal life!***

Verse 12: "Blessed *is the* man who endures trials, because after **he has been proved**... [tested] ...**he shall receive a crown of life**, which the Lord

has promised to those who love Him."

God will test us to make sure that He is bringing someone in who is going to be a loyal, faithful, devoted, dedicated son of God. All of this is working for our good!

The same thing is being expressed in 1-Peter; I just want to emphasize this thing of the trials and hardships that we go through, because of this present evil world that we're living in.

1-Peter 1:6: "In this you yourselves greatly rejoice; though for the present, if it is necessary, you are in distress for a little while by various trials,... [suffering, difficulty, hardship] ...in order that the proving of your faith, which is much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is being tested by fire, may be found unto praise and honor and glory at *the* revelation of Jesus Christ; Whom, not having seen, **you love**; in Whom, *though* at the present time you do not see Him, **you believe**, and rejoice with unspeakable joy, and filled with glory; *and are* receiving the end of your faith—*even the* salvation of *your* lives" (vs 6-9).

Powerful Scriptures that truly help us to bear up under the trials and hardship and suffering, because we know that it's producing a good result! Learning to have *joy* and *rejoice* in times of suffering is not easy to do. But it does represent an important tool in the toolbox for coming discouragement so that we can maintain a mind of peace in times of trial and difficulties.

Count it joy is a gift of God and is a powerful shield. The joy that protects us from negative thinking. As we endure the difficulties and hardship that goes hand-in-hand with hope. Christ gives us of this joy.

John 15:11: "These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you..."

Is not joy a gift of the Holy Spirit, a fruit of the Holy Spirit? ***God gives us of His joy so that we in turn can produce joy!***

"...and that your joy may be full" (v 11).

Paul went through many trials and hardships (Philip. and 2-Cor. 11). He went through some amazing difficult trials being beaten, shipwrecked and close to dying in many, many cases. Yet, let's see what he says while he was in prison in Rome.

Philippians 4:4: "Rejoice in *the* Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your moderation be known to all men; the Lord *is* near. Do not be anxious about anything; **but by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God in everything...**" (vs 4-6).



We see a link between the power of God, the armor of God and prayer, seeking the Holy Spirit and strength that comes through prayer, which gives us the hope and encouragement that we need.

Verse 7: **“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.”**

It protects our thoughts and our mind from being discouraged, negative and down!

Verse 11: “I am not saying *this* in respect to being destitute...”

He was, he was in prison. Probably not eating properly and cold.

“...for I have learned *that* in whatever *circumstances* I am, to be content” (v 11).

Why is that? *Paul did not let the circumstances of the outside disturb the contentment on the inside!* Clearly, he was content because he knew God was with him and God would bring him through his trials and help him fulfill the purpose for which he was called.

Fervent, heartfelt prayers to God, begin thankful for His many blessings, Christ will lift the many heavy burdens that we bear and grant us peace and comfort.

With this, our worries, anxieties, fears and discouragement should melt away. Our hearts should be filled with absolute joy, and our mind with pleasant thoughts.

We can see that the true Godly joy is not based on outer circumstances, but is based upon God’s presence in our lives. Because of His promises, we can rejoice and be glad no matter what is happening.

David—a man after God’s own heart—expressed joy through the closeness that he felt to God.

Psalms 16:8: “I have set the LORD always before me.... [God was close at hand as far as David was concerned, as close as his knees were to the floor] ...Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore, My heart is glad, and My glory rejoices; My flesh also shall rest in safety” (vs 8-9).

Verse 11: “You will make known to Me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy. At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

David trusted God, and found joy in God’s protection, as well.

Psalms 5:11: “But let all who put their trust

in You rejoice; let them always shout for joy because You defend them. And let those who love Your name exult... [be extremely joyful] ...in You, for You, O LORD, will bless the righteous; with favor You will surround him as with a shield” (vs 11-12).

- Do we believe?
- Do we understand what David was telling us?

We understand that God is both the Source and the Object of our joy. God gives us joy, which is a Divine emotion of delight and gladness, for those who truly:

- know Him
- love Him
- keep His commandments and
- walk in His way

Joy also is the natural outcome from us in worshipping Him in Spirit and in Truth, and having true fellowship with Him, especially on the Sabbath Day. Oh how much a joyful delight this Sabbath Day is.

- we delight in God’s Sabbath and Holy Days.
- we take delight in His laws and commandments
- we rejoice in His Word
- we rejoice in His loving kindness
- we rejoice in His salvation
- we have joy in answered prayer

Do we not delight when we know that God has heard and answers our prayers?

Christ tells us in the Beatitudes or Sermon on the Mount that we are to rejoice in persecution as God’s people. Rejoicing in our trials!

Matthew 5:10: “Blessed... [happy] ...*are* those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when they shall reproach you, and shall persecute you, and shall falsely say every wicked thing against you, for My sake. **Rejoice and be filled with joy, for great is your reward in heaven;** for in this same manner they persecuted the prophets who *were* before you” (vs 10-12).

The greatest joy that we will feel is when we enter into the Kingdom of God as His appointed sons and daughters. That will be a tremendous thing!

1-John 4:18: “There is no fear in the love *of* God; rather, **perfect love casts out fear**... [all dread, anxiety, depression and discouragement] ...because fear has torment. And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love *of* God.”

As we grow in the love of God and perfect that love of God, we shall then cast out all fear, because we know that God is love, and we are going to become like He is.

Romans 8:31: “What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us?”

- Who can overcome us?
- Who can take us down?

**No one**, because God is with us, and God is on our side, because we’re on His side!

Verse 35: “What shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? Accordingly, it is written, ‘For Your sake we are killed all the day long; we are reckoned as sheep for the slaughter.’ But in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us. For **I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God,** which *is* in Christ Jesus our Lord” (vs 35-39).

Let us understand that it is in God’s love that we can have perfect peace of mind in times of turmoil and uncertainty.

To be spiritually prepared, we need to be emotionally prepared as well. I hope this message will help us to accomplish that to realize that the Word of God and the principles that He lays down to us, that we can have full conviction of faith. That we do not need to fear, worry, have anxiety or tremble before the things going on in this world.

God is with us, God is for us; who can be against us? We can be emotionally stable as we come to know God’s love through trust in Him and believe in His promises. Peace of mind is a result of having a ***living, active faith*** that leads to enduring hope and everlasting joy in what God has in store for us in the future.

With this in mind, let us look forward with great joy and anticipation of standing on the Sea of Glass and seeing the face of God, seeing Jesus Christ and also when we hear the words that the Father will say:

Matthew 25:21<sup>[transcriber’s correction]</sup>: “...Well done, good and faithful servant! *Because* you were faithful over a few things, I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.”

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*  
(except where noted: Revised Standard Version)

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 24:6-8
- 2) 2 Timothy 3:1
- 3) Deuteronomy 28:43-45
- 4) Isaiah 1:4
- 5) Isaiah 59:4-8, 14-15
- 6) 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3
- 7) 1 John 2:15-17
- 8) Colossians 3:1-4
- 9) Proverbs 3:5-6
- 10) Psalm 27:1-6
- 11) Psalm 34:17-19
- 12) Ephesians 6:10-11, 14-18
- 13) 1 Peter 1:3
- 14) 1 Timothy 1:1
- 15) Titus 1:1-2
- 16) Hebrews 11:1
- 17) Hebrews 6:18-20
- 18) Jeremiah 17:7-8
- 19) Romans 8:28
- 20) James 5:7-8
- 21) Romans 8:24-25
- 22) Romans 5:3-5
- 23) James 1:2-6, 12
- 24) 1 Peter 1:6-9
- 25) John 15:11
- 26) Philippians 4:4-7, 11
- 27) Psalm 16:8-9, 11
- 28) Psalm 5:11-12
- 29) Matthew 5:10-12
- 30) 1 John 4:18
- 31) Romans 8:31, 35-39
- 32) Matthew 25:21

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 13, 12:9
- Romans 12
- 2 Corinthians 11

RK:bo  
Transcribed: 1/31/22

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