

A wooden pier extends from the foreground into the ocean. The pier is made of dark wood and has a railing on both sides. Waves are crashing against the pier, creating a large splash of white water in the center. The sky is overcast with grey clouds, and the water is a deep blue-grey color. The overall mood is dramatic and powerful.

*It is Well with My Soul*

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# *It Is Well with My Soul*

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# It Is Well with My Soul...When There Is No Peace

Roby Ellis

Text: Jeremiah 6:10–15 (NKJV)

- <sup>10</sup> To whom shall I speak and give warning,  
That they may hear?  
Indeed their ear *is* uncircumcised,  
And they cannot give heed.  
Behold, the word of the LORD is a reproach to them;  
They have no delight in it.
- <sup>11</sup> Therefore I am full of the fury of the LORD.  
I am weary of holding *it* in.  
“I will pour it out on the children outside,  
And on the assembly of young men together;  
For even the husband shall be taken with the wife,  
The aged with *him who is* full of days.
- <sup>12</sup> And their houses shall be turned over to others,  
Fields and wives together;  
For I will stretch out My hand  
Against the inhabitants of the land,” says the LORD.
- <sup>13</sup> “Because from the least of them even to the greatest of them,  
Everyone *is* given to covetousness;  
And from the prophet even to the priest,  
Everyone deals falsely.
- <sup>14</sup> They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly,  
Saying, ‘Peace, peace!’  
**When *there is* no peace.**
- <sup>15</sup> Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination?  
No! They were not at all ashamed;  
Nor did they know how to blush.  
Therefore they shall fall among those who fall;  
At the time I punish them,  
They shall be cast down,” says the LORD.

## Introduction

- I. We live in a time of great conflict.
  - A. Many minority groups feel that they are being unmercifully oppressed by groups who have greater representation, greater opportunity, or greater strength.
  - B. The left is at war with the right, and anyone who dares to cross the line between the two on any issue is likely to become a target of attack.

- II. We are constantly being reminded that our world is in crisis.
  - A. The national debt currently exceeds \$21 trillion, more than \$177,000 per taxpayer, and total liabilities total \$115 trillion, almost \$1 million apiece.
  - B. But if debt doesn't get us before the oceans cover the earth, we are sure to be annihilated either in biological war or a nuclear holocaust.
- III. With all of these ills plaguing this world, how can anyone who is in their right mind honestly say, "It is well with my soul"?

### Discussion

- I. Jeremiah lived in a time when peace seemed like an impossible dream.
  - A. Judah was teetering at the brink of absolute destruction.
    - 1. Disaster was coming from the north (Jer. 6:1).
    - 2. The enemy may have looked harmless, but they were set on destruction (vv 2–5).
    - 3. If she did not amend her ways, Jerusalem would be punished for her sins (vv 6–9).
  - B. There were proclamations of peace, but it was a counterfeit peace.
    - 1. There were prophets preaching a message of peace (v 14).
    - 2. This was far more welcome than Jeremiah's gloom and destruction (vv 10–13).
    - 3. This counterfeit peace only emboldened Judah to continue in her sins (vv 15–19).
  - C. God made an offer to them of genuine peace, but Judah refused it.
    - 1. He promised that He would forgive if she would return to Him (4:1–2).
    - 2. When the first captives were taken, God promised to bring them back in time if they would humble themselves (46:27–28).
    - 3. Unlike the bogus peace that the false prophets were peddling, God's peace was something of substance that could help bring them through the trials ahead.
- II. How can you be at peace when there is no peace?
  - A. Paul always seemed at peace in times of trouble.
    - 1. He was at peace while adrift on the Mediterranean (Acts 27:22–25).
    - 2. Even locked away in Rome, all was well with his soul (Php. 1:12–14; 4:4–6).
    - 3. Was he just naïve? Was he unaware of potential dangers? Did he have his head in the sand? No, he had sound reason to believe God would deliver him (2 Tim. 4:16–18).

- B. Jesus wanted His disciples to have peace in time of trouble.
1. When Jesus told the disciples, “Let not your heart be troubled” (John 14:1), He had just given them a lot of troubling news (13:21, 33, 38).
  2. Jesus knew the dangers ahead of them all too well (15:18–25), but He wanted to give them peace (14:27; 16:20–22, 33).
- C. Our peace can bring us through the worst of calamities.
1. The hymn “It Is Well with My Soul” was born out of personal tragedy, and it stands as a testament to the peace that nothing in this world can ever take away from us:  

When peace like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to know  
It is well, it is well, with my soul.
  2. Without God’s assurance, words like these make no sense, but with it, these words express the peace that can carry us through any tragedy or sorrow.

### Conclusion

- I. The world often confuses peace with things like financial security, civil rights, constitutional liberty, or even cessation of hostilities, but all of these things are fragile and can be taken from us quickly and suddenly.
- II. To get us through the storms of life, we need a peace that doesn’t make any sense to the world, “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,” which alone has the power to “guard our minds and hearts through Christ Jesus” (Php. 4:7).

## It is Well with my Soul...In Conflict

Dennis Pierce

Text: Luke 21:7–19 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> So they asked Him, saying, “Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign will there be when these things are about to take place?”

<sup>8</sup> And He said: “Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am He,’ and, ‘The time has drawn near.’ Therefore do not go after them. <sup>9</sup> But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately.”

<sup>10</sup> Then He said to them, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. <sup>11</sup> And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. <sup>12</sup> But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name’s sake. <sup>13</sup> But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. <sup>14</sup> Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; <sup>15</sup> for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. <sup>16</sup> You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. <sup>17</sup> And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. <sup>18</sup> But not a hair of your head shall be lost. <sup>19</sup> By your patience possess your souls.

### Introduction

- I. Wellness of soul is a quality of life, taught in scripture, available to all people and enjoyed by following Jesus Christ (Matthew 11:28-30).
  - A. The soul that has this quality experiences life much differently than the one without it.
    1. Joy, contentment, peace, optimism, etc. are themes found in the Bible to describe this way of life (1John1:4; Philippians 4:7,11,13; 1Corinthians 13:7).
    2. Wellness of soul is often misunderstood to be completely dependent upon physical circumstances rather than upon a relationship with Christ.
    3. Without Christ, man is described as having no hope and without God in the world (Ephesians 2:12).
- II. The Bible provides encouraging statements such as not letting your heart be troubled, John 14:1, or not to worry about your life, Matthew 6:33-34.
  - A. This seems to be easier said than done.

1. How do we come to the place in life where we do not focus upon food and drink more than we should?
2. How can we stop worrying?
3. How do we know that God understands everything in our life and is concerned about what happens to us?

B. In troubled times and even in life-threatening circumstances, our souls can be well.

III. The news reports every day tell just how dark and dismal the world is all around us.

A. Threats of war and rumors of war seem never ending.

1. There are more than 40 active conflicts around the world today.
2. Twenty-two of them could erupt into major military conflicts.

B. The environment, we are told, is being destroyed rapidly and if something doesn't change, the planet will not last much longer.

1. According to many, climate change is the biggest threat we face.
2. Earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, etc. happen so often that we never know what's coming next.

C. The national debt continues to rise at an alarming rate.

1. The 2018 Social Security Report concludes that Social Security will run out of money by 2034.

IV. Matthew, Mark and Luke all record the words of Jesus concerning times of hardship that were to come (Mt. 24:1-35; Mk. 13:1-31; Lk. 21:5-32).

A. Comments from His disciples about the magnificent beauty of the stones and buildings in the temple prompted Jesus to say, "Not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down." (Mt. 24:2)

1. The disciples wanted to know more, and Jesus follows with a thorough explanation of future events.
2. While the fulfillment of the events Jesus describes would occur during the lives of His audience, (Lk. 21:32) we learn valuable truths, to be prepared for the conflicts we encounter.

B. One definition of conflict is "mental struggle resulting from external or internal demands."

1. Everyone experiences some degree of conflict, but when demands trouble us to the point of doubting God we need to be very concerned.



- C. Conflicts can overwhelm anyone who is not prepared.
1. Paul practiced self-discipline because of the danger of becoming disqualified (1 Cor. 9:27).
  2. Events can happen quickly and without warning, and then, if not prepared, survival will be difficult.
  3. Jesus so loved His disciples and wanted to give them all they needed to endure conflicts when they came.
  4. He loves each of us just as much and has shown us what to avoid so we can always say, "It is well with my soul."
  5. From Luke 21:7-19, we learn not to be deceived, not to be terrified and not to lose patience.

### Discussion

- I. Do not be deceived (Luke 21:8).
- A. Deceit is easily accomplished during times of mental struggle.
1. The disciples are concerned about the time when the destruction of the temple would take place (Lk. 21:7).
  2. The first thing Jesus says in response is, "Take heed that you not be deceived."
    - a. The English Standard reads, "See that you are not led astray."
  3. It is only natural, when some danger is approaching, to want to know all we can about it and to know what to look for.
    - a. We want answers so the pain of anguish will go away.
    - b. It is here, more than ever, we listen to the word of God (Psalm 119:105).
- B. Truth is compromised and can be lost when deception occurs.
1. One cannot over emphasize the value of truth (John 8:32).
    - a. Proverbs 23:23 admonishes us to "buy the truth and sell it not."
    - b. Jesus is truth, John 14:6, therefore, anyone or any doctrine that contradicts Him is to be rejected.
    - c. Scripture will make us wise to salvation (2 Tim.3:15).
  2. Jesus warns of deception by those who would come claiming to be Him (Luke 21:8).

- a. This kind of claim is seldom heard today, yet many advocate to have miraculous revelation from the Holy Spirit.
  3. Paul cautions the Ephesian elders about those who would speak perverse things, to draw away disciples after themselves (Acts 20:30).
  4. He also warns in 2 Timothy 4:3-5, of those who will turn away from truth to fables and says, “But you be watchful in all things...”
- C. Today we have access to an abundance of information.
1. We google anything and everything and often have no knowledge of the source for the advice we accept.
  2. Not everyone is out to deceive and lead us in the wrong direction, yet some are.
  3. When face to face with conflict the best place to go for help is the word of God and the next is to a trusted Christian friend (Proverbs 3:5-6; 1 Thessalonians 5:11).
  4. ***“It is well with my soul,”*** when I rely on God’s truth and avoid the deceptive advice of the world.

## II. Do not be terrified (Luke 21:9).

### A. Fear is an enemy to calmness of soul.

1. In Matthew 24:6 and Mark. 13:7, the word “troubled” is found.
2. Fear, anxiety or worry are all closely related.
3. Research has shown that 40% of the things we worry about never happen, 30% are in the past, 12% involve the affairs of others and 10% relate to sickness, either real or imagined.
  - a. This leaves only 8% of the things we worry about likely to happen.
4. The context of Luke 21, describes the fear as occurring based upon the hearing of wars and commotions.
5. He does not say these would not come, but that they must come (vs. 9).
6. Therefore, we are not to be terrified or troubled even when an inevitable conflict is coming.
7. Whether the impending conflict is war, economic troubles, family problems, etc. we can face it with calmness of soul.

B. Bible verses abound with the need to avoid fear and worry.

1. Philippians 4:6 says, “Be anxious for nothing.”
2. “Do not worry about tomorrow.” (Mt. 6:34).
3. “Let not your heart be troubled.” (John 14:1)

C. “How?” is the question.

1. Fear and anxiety, that take away from being well in our souls, can be overcome.
2. It is only natural to experience anxiety to some extent in the everyday affairs of living.
3. We are concerned with anxiety that causes depression, sadness and loss of joy that all Christians should have (1 John 1:4).
4. Praying to God is essential (1 Thess. 5:17-18; Rom. 12:12; Col. 4:2; 1 Jo. 5:14).
5. Get involved in a good work.
  - a. Some because of health cannot do this, but for so many there is fear and anxiety because of a lack of productive activity.
  - b. Ecclesiastes 5:12, “The sleep of a laboring man *is* sweet, whether he eats little or much; But the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep.”
  - c. Colossians 3:23, “And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men.”
  - d. Whatever fears and worries we have should be faced head on and not with fear (Philippians 4:13).
6. Conflicts can be an opportunity to teach.
  - a. Jesus said in Luke 21:13, “But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony.”
  - b. The disciples are told of earthquakes, famines and pestilences, the times when they will be persecuted and brought before rulers (Lk. 21:10-12).
  - c. When the world is in conflict around us, it is a time others are facing worry and anxiety and in need of answers.
  - d. It is a perfect opportunity to share the gospel so they can also say, “***It is well with my soul.***”

### III. Do not lose patience (Luke 21:19).

#### A. The last words in our text are, “By your patience possess your souls.”

1. Patience is needed in so many areas of life, but perhaps nowhere is it more needed than in conflict.
2. Jesus, in these verses, has described nations at war, imprisonment, betrayal by family, being hated by everyone, and even death.
3. Patience is the key to face all of this and still conclude, ***“It is well with my soul.”***

#### B. Patience can come from conflict.

1. “And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope” (Rom. 5:3-4).
2. Romans 12:12 says, “Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer.”

#### C. One need only to consider the patience of God to find the perfect example of patience.

1. “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9).

#### D. Parents and grandparents have learned the value of patience for the well-being of children.

1. Patience is not developed overnight, so be patient developing patience.
2. If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him (Mt. 7:11)!

### Conclusion

#### I. Perhaps the greatest motivation for maintaining wellness of soul, even in conflict, is the inheritance which is reserved in heaven for us.

##### A. 1 Peter 1:6-9 mentions a great rejoicing; a joy that is inexpressible and full of glory.

1. Even though trials bring grief now, it is only for a little while, and then...

#### II. Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say, “It is well with my soul.”

# **It Is Well with My Soul...In Poverty**

Moisés Pinedo

Text: Job 1:20-21

## Introduction

- I. This series of lessons is based on the beloved song, “It Is Well with My Soul.”
- II. What comes to your mind when you hear the expression, “It is well with my soul”?
- III. Few people in the world would attach the word “poverty” to this expression.
- IV. Jesus presented the common worldview on the subject in His parable of a rich man (Luke 12:16-19).

## Discussion

- I. Why is poverty well with my soul?
  - A. Because it was well with my Lord.
    1. Of all the things our Lord could have chosen to become, He chose to be poor for our sakes (2 Corinthians 8:9).
    2. He became as poor as anyone can be (Matthew 8:20).
    3. His mission included preaching the Gospel to the poor (Luke 4:16-21).
  - B. Because it was well with God’s servants.
    1. Job blessed the name of the Lord in poverty (Job 1:20-21).
    2. Lazarus was faithful to God throughout a life of physical misery (Luke 16:19-25).
    3. The apostle Paul learned to live in poverty (Philippians 4:10-13).
  - C. Because it is well with Christianity.
    1. The Founder of Christianity was born among the poor, lived among the poor, was received among the poor, worked among the poor, commissioned the poor, and died as a poor man.
    2. In the first century, Christianity was welcomed among the poor (1 Corinthians 1:26-29).
    3. Reaching and helping the poor is one of the missions of Christianity (Galatians 2:9-10).

- II. What can “true poverty” (non-dependence on the material) do for you?
  - A. It can help you be content (1 Timothy 6:7-9).
  - B. It can help you see your real value (Genesis 1:27).
  - C. It can help you see the real value of others (Proverbs 22:2).
  - D. It can help you see the real needs of others (Acts 3:1-8).
  - E. It can help you see the real value of God and heaven (Matthew 5:3).

### Conclusion

- I. Is poverty well with your soul?
- II. Not only can you answer this question, but you must answer!

# **It Is Well with My Soul...In Sickness**

Bill Haywood

Text: James 1:1–12

## Introduction

- I. James said in the midst of trials to “count it all joy.” How can we say, “it is well” in the midst of chronic pain and illness?
- II. What do you do when the doctor says that you or a loved one has cancer or some other dreaded illness? How do you go on when you are constantly in pain or when you can’t enjoy any of the things that you used to enjoy?
- III. Paul was familiar with trials, yet he would write, “Rejoice in the Lord always” (Philippians 4:4). Is that just a good suggestion? The Holy Spirit makes a clear declaration; we are to “Rejoice always” (1 Thessalonians 5:16). How do we face the realities of a chronic illness without falling into hopelessness?
- IV. Paul, speaking of his work as a minister of God, said he was “sorrowful, yet always rejoicing” (2 Corinthians 6:10). Likewise, in the midst of chronic pain, we can be “sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.”

## Discussion

- I. In the midst of chronic sickness, we can say, “It is well with my soul” because God is faithful (James 1:5f; 1 John 1:4; Hebrews 10:23; 2 Timothy 2:13; 1 Peter 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Corinthians 1:3–4).
  - A. In James 1:5 we are assured that God is there for us.
  - B. C.S. Lewis spoke of the emptiness and confusion that accompanies great suffering.

Meanwhile, where is God? This is one of the most disquieting symptoms. When you are happy, so happy that you have no sense of needing Him, so happy that you are tempted to feel His claims upon you as an interruption, if you remember yourself and turn to Him with gratitude and praise, you will be—or so it feels—welcomed with open arms. But go to Him when your need is desperate, when all other help is vain, and what do you find? A door slammed in your

face, and a sound of bolting and double bolting on the inside. After that, silence. You may as well turn away. The longer you wait, the more emphatic the silence will become.<sup>1</sup>

C. Harold Kushner wrote a book titled *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*. The book deals with the problem of suffering and he arrives at a flawed and inaccurate conclusion.

Kushner explains that he learned to accept God's love but question God's power. He came to believe that God is good, and hates to see us suffer, but simply is not powerful enough to straighten out the problems of this world—problems such as children with progeria. Suffering exists on this planet because “even God has a hard time keeping chaos in check,” and God is “a God of justice and not of power.” In other words, God is as outraged by the suffering on this planet as anyone, but his hands are tied.<sup>2</sup>

D. We live in age when we know EVERYTHING. Regarding our health, we can google all of our symptoms and find the diagnosis and treatment that suits us best. Spiritually, we can do the same, or so we think. We forget that we are limited and that God is unlimited.

E. Psalm 103:14 – “For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.”

F. C.S. Lewis asked,

“Can a mortal ask questions which God finds unanswerable? Quite easily, I should think. All nonsense questions are unanswerable. How many hours are there in a mile? Is yellow square or round? Probably half the questions we ask—half our great theological and metaphysical problems—are like that.”<sup>3</sup>

G. Job's friends were certain that Job's suffering was the just recompense for sin. Job was certain that he was getting a bad deal. In Job 38–41 God sets the record straight. While God welcomes our questions, our limitedness, disqualifies us from judging God.

II. In the midst of chronic sickness, we can say, “It is well with my soul” because we can be matured by chronic suffering (James 1:3).

A. In James 1:3 we read of the testing of our faith.

B. Pain can serve a noble purpose. Lewis wrote,

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<sup>1</sup> Lewis, C. S. *A Grief Observed (Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis)* (pp. 17-18). HarperOne. Kindle Edition.

<sup>2</sup> Philip Yancey. *Where Is God When It Hurts?* iBooks. <https://itunes.apple.com/us/book/where-is-god-when-it-hurts/id399004214?mt=11>

<sup>3</sup> Lewis, C. S. *A Grief Observed (Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis)* (pp. 81-82). HarperOne. Kindle Edition.



We can rest contentedly in our sins and in our stupidities; and anyone who has watched gluttons shovelling down the most exquisite foods as if they did not know what they were eating, will admit that we can ignore even pleasure. But pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world. A bad man, happy, is a man without the least inkling that his actions do not ‘answer’, that they are not in accord with the laws of the universe.<sup>4</sup>

- C. A faith that cannot be tested cannot be trusted. Elijah’s faith was tested in emotional despair and deepened in suffering (1 Kings 18–19). C.S. Lewis addressed the problem of broken heartedness.

Mental pain is less dramatic than physical pain, but it is more common and also more hard to bear. The frequent attempt to conceal mental pain increases the burden: it is easier to say ‘My tooth is aching’ than to say ‘My heart is broken’. Yet if the cause is accepted and faced, the conflict will strengthen and purify the character and in time the pain will usually pass. Sometimes, however, it persists and the effect is devastating; if the cause is not faced or not recognised, it produces the dreary state of the chronic neurotic.<sup>5</sup>

III. In the midst of chronic sickness, we can say, “It is well with my soul” because we are in the best possible world to produce the desired result (James 1:3–4).

- A. The nagging question in any suffering is, “Why am I in this situation?”
- B. In Matthew 22:34–40 the Lord revealed the great purpose of humanity.
- C. 2 Corinthians 12:7–10

IV. In the midst of chronic sickness, we can say, “It is well with my soul” because chronic suffering is temporary (James 1:9–11).

- A. James 4.13-14 – “Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit;’ whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.”
- B. 2 Corinthians 11.22-28

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<sup>4</sup> Lewis, C. S. *The Problem of Pain (Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis)* (pp. 91-92). HarperOne. Kindle Edition.

<sup>5</sup> Lewis, C. S. *The Problem of Pain (Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis)* (p. 161). HarperOne. Kindle Edition.

C. 2 Corinthians 4.8-18

D. Our perspective on suffering changes everything. Again C.S. Lewis addressed the importance of having an appropriate view of life.

Christ said it was difficult for “the rich” to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, referring, no doubt, to “riches” in the ordinary sense. But I think it really covers riches in every sense—good fortune, health, popularity and all the things one wants to have. All these things tend—just as money tends—to make you feel independent of God, because if you have them you are happy already and contented in this life. You don’t want to turn away to anything more, and so you try to rest in a shadowy happiness as if it could last for ever.

But God wants to give you a real and eternal happiness. Consequently He may have to take all these “riches” away from you: if He doesn’t, you will go on relying on them. It sounds cruel, doesn’t it? But I am beginning to find out that what people call the cruel doctrines are really the kindest ones in the long run. I used to think it was a “cruel” doctrine to say that troubles and sorrows were “punishments.” But I find in practice that when you are in trouble, the moment you regard it as a “punishment,” it becomes easier to bear. If you think of this world as a place intended simply for our happiness, you find it quite intolerable: think of it as a place of training and correction and it’s not so bad.

Imagine a set of people all living in the same building. Half of them think it is a hotel, the other half think it is a prison. Those who think it a hotel might regard it as quite intolerable, and those who thought it was a prison might decide that it was really surprisingly comfortable. So that what seems the ugly doctrine is one that comforts and strengthens you in the end. The people who try to hold an optimistic view of this world would become pessimists: the people who hold a pretty stern view of it become optimistic.<sup>6</sup>

V. In the midst of chronic sickness, we can say, “It is well with my soul” because we serve a compassionate master (James 1:5b).

A. James 1:5 - “...without reproach...”

B. There is suffering in this life, but for the child of God there is much assistance available (Hebrews 4:14–16).

C. There is suffering in this life, but for the child of God there is much comfort available. (Romans 8:28).

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<sup>6</sup> Lewis, C.S. *Readings for Meditation and Reflection* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), pp. 103–104.

## Conclusion

### I. My Jesus knows when I am lonely

He knows each pain; He sees each tear

He understands each lonely heartache

He understands and always cares.

My Jesus knows just what I need

O yes, He knows just what I need.

### II. James 1:12 – “Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”

# **It Is Well with My Soul...In the Valley of the Shadow of Death**

Tracy Dugger

Introduction: Ponder a Bible without this short Psalm!

- I. The Bible is not merely written like an encyclopedia. God speaks to us through the personal experience of humans just like ourselves. Thus, the Psalms speak to our heart. This psalm is the voice of *personal* experience.
- II. The specific occasion in which David wrote this inspired Psalm is not known. There were many occasions in which David's life was in danger. Suffice it that he knows what he speaks of when he refers to walking through the valley of the shadow of death and trusting in the Lord as his shepherd.
- III. This Psalm illustrates the complete trust David had in God. His faith pours out of every verse.
  - A. It was preserved for our application; it shows that we can have peace when we completely trust in God.
- IV. Three Simple Themes in this Psalm – Life (vv. 1-3), Death (vv. 4-5), Eternity (v. 6)
  - A. Are these not the three themes that should capture the attention of all people? And our understanding of them will have the most significant consequences. Are there more significant themes than these?

## Discussion

- I. LIFE (vv. 1-3)
  - A. The Psalm begins with the One who has the answers to questions about these three themes – The LORD
    1. “The LORD” - Jehovah; the Great name of God; absolute faithfulness to His people.
  - B. The Psalm reminds us of a quality of created beings – We are contingent beings; God is a no-contingent being (Psalm 50:12).
  - C. Shepherd – Leader, Guide, Protector, Provider
    1. The idea of the Lord being a Shepherd is a common theme (Psalm 74:1; 77:20; 78:52, 70ff; 79:13; 80:1; Isaiah 40:11; Jer. 31:10; Ezek. 34:12-14; Micah 5:4)
    2. NT – John 10; 1 Peter 5
    3. The reputation of a Palestinian Shepherd

D. Personal - “is *my* shepherd”

1. Human experience is speaking.
2. It is so personal that the shepherd will leave the 99 to seek the lost one (Luke 15).

E. I Shall Not Want – Provision of physical needs but especially spiritual needs.

1. The life He gives is an abundant life (John 10:10)!
2. Those needs are further elaborated on in verse 2 in his mention of “green pastures” and “still waters.”
  - a. This is the perfect scenario; a scene of spiritual and emotional rest and refreshment.
3. The Lord is All-Sufficient for our needs; like a Good Shepherd to his sheep; Heb. 13:5-6

F. He Restoreth My Soul

1. Restoreth – to bring back my soul; refresh; the idea is strengthening; reviving when weary.
2. He Leads Me in Paths of Righteousness – Leads us into right ways; will not misdirect us.

II. Death (vv. 4-5)

A. Death is a word that impacts our lives in ways we do not think about.

B. The Valley of the Shadow of Death – the darkest valley

1. Shadow – Not the real, but the threat of or the influence of its reality; the presence of death is near.
2. This phrase is not limited to only the facing of or experience of death. It also includes any threat to our life or any major crisis; suffering; physical and spiritual.
  - a. Fear, trials, and difficulties can cause us to doubt God’s goodness and care; to think we have been forsaken and forgotten. Isaiah 50:10 contains the answer to all doubt and fear.
3. To some, death is welcomed, not feared.

C. I Will Fear No Evil – A coming face-to-face with death and not letting it get the best of you.

1. Even in the face of death we are well supplied; I can have peace!

D. For Thou Art With Me

1. Study the lives of OT saints like Abraham and Jacob and Joseph to see the promises of God to be with them. This is how they sustained their faith!
2. Hebrews 13:5-6
3. Hebrews 2:9, 15

- E. A reason we do not fear is because the Lord has the keys to death and hades  
(Study Revelation 7:15-17; 6:18; 20:13-14; 1:18).
- F. The Lord's Protection and Guidance
  - 1. Thy Rod and Staff – the shepherd's crook
    - a. Moses' rod and staff – symbol of protection; a pilgrim's staff
- G. No Longer the Shepherd but a Generous Host
  - 1. The Table – Divine Fellowship
  - 2. Anointing with Oil – A courtesy shown guests at a banquet
  - 3. These two figures are suggestive of a banquet where one is greatly supplied and honored.

### III. ETERNITY (v. 6)

- A. He has but one goal here; one desire for the future – to dwell in the house of the Lord forever; to be in the presence of God for eternity; See Psalm 27:4.
  - 1. Our Journey to Eternity – Two Futures
    - a. Remainder of life here – Our Journey (“all the days of my life”)
    - b. Eternal Life – Our Destiny (“dwell in the house of the Lord forever”)
- B. Two Great Companions that follow us:
  - 1. God's Goodness
  - 2. God's Mercy

Conclusion: David looked to the end of life and to the home that awaits all faithful saints; a place where fellowship and association with the Lord is never ending. The same place Abraham looked for – Heb. 11:8-10.

- A. Can you say the Lord is my Shepherd?

# It Is Well with My Soul...In a World of Darkness

Eddy Craft

## Introduction

- I. We live in world that calls evil good and good evil (Isaiah 5:20). Our society has come not only to tolerate every sort of sin, but also to celebrate it.
- II. Are you worried about the world that our children and grandchildren will live in after we are gone? What will be state of America one generation from now?
- III. The good thing is we don't have to worry about the direction the world is headed. We are going in a very different direction, and we can have peace with our souls. We can learn this by looking at the world in which Noah lived (Genesis 6).

## Discussion

- I. It was well with Noah's soul.
  - A. God was grieved with the world in Noah's day. The generation in which Noah found himself is much like ours today, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it **grieved him** at his heart" (Genesis 6:5-6). The Hebrew word grieved here means to: hurt, vex, displeasure. It will be the same when Christ comes again (Matthew 24:37).
  - B. How did Noah find peace with his soul in such a wicked world? God's Grace of course was the answer. The only way Noah could have found peace with his soul was by accepting God's marvelous grace! "*But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord*" (Genesis 6:8). Grace taught Noah to do the will of God "*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world*" (Titus 2:11-12). It was well with his soul because he was a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5). Noah was a man of great faith, "*By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith*" (Hebrews 11:7).

- C. God's guidance (Genesis 6:13-22). "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he" (Genesis 6:22).

II. Some questions that we can ask.

- A. Am I living right if I should die tonight? (Luke 12:20). If so it is well with my soul.
- B. Have I lost my sin am I pure within? (Acts 2:38; I John 1:6-7). If so it is well with your soul.
- C. Do I praise the love of the one above? (Mark 12:30-31). If so it is well with my soul.  
(The preceding was taken from *Songs of the Church*, page 437).
- D. Am I ready to deny myself and take up my cross? (Matthew 16:24).
- E. Am I willing to stand against my family? (Matthew 10:36).
- F. Will I fear God rather than man? (Matthew 10:28).
- G. Will I worship Him in spirit and in truth? (John 4:24).
- H. Will I be a member of His Church? (Acts 2:47).
- I. I will honor Gods laws relative to the home as He designed it. (Genesis 2:24-15; Matthew 19:4-9).
- J. Am I seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness? (Matthew 6:33).

III. It is well with my souls when:

- A. God is the source of my life (Ephesians 2:1; John 10:10,28). If so it is well with my soul.
- B. God is the strength of my life (Philippians 4:13; Galatians 2:20). If so it is well with my soul.
- C. God is the satisfaction of my life (Philippians 4:11,19). If so it is well with my soul.
- D. God is the subject of my life (Acts 9:20). If so it is well with my soul.
- E. God is the standard of my life (I Corinthians 11:1). If so it is well with my soul.
- F. God is my shepherd (Psalm 23). If so it is well with my soul.
- G. God is my sacrifice (2 Corinthians 5:21). If so it is well with my soul.
- H. God saved by His blood (Hebrews 9:12). If so it is well with my soul.



IV. Have you obeyed Gods plan of salvation? If not what you do so now? You must:

- A. Hear - Romans 10:17.
- B. Believe - John 8:24.
- C. Repent – Luke 13:3.
- D. Confess – Matthew 10:32-33.
- E. Baptized – Mark 16:16.
- F. Be Faithful – Revelation 2:10.
- G. Erring Christian – Acts 8:22.

Conclusion

**IS IT WELL WITH YOUR SOUL?**

# **It Is Well with My Soul...In the Final Hour**

Tim Hall

Text: Ecclesiastes 12:1-8

## Introduction

- I. An atheist's prayer as he neared death: "O Lord, if there be a Lord, save my soul, if I have a soul." Is that how we wish to approach our final hour?
- II. 1 Kings 2:2 – David knew death was near. Could he be strong? How could he, or any of us, say "It is well with my soul" as we approach that hour?

## Discussion

- I. Man's Frantic Struggle With Death
  - A. Beautiful monuments to a fearful reality:
    1. Cemeteries in New Orleans are beautiful! But the reality inside each one is fearful.
    2. Ecclesiastes 12:1-8 – This passage is a beautiful monument to aging and death. But the reality is frightening!
  - B. Must we be terrified by death?
    1. 2 Kings 20:2,3 – King Hezekiah wept bitterly and prayed. God heard his prayer and saw his tears, and gave him more life. (But he was still mortal.)
    2. Job's meditations on death:
      - a. Job 14:14 – Will a man live again after death?
      - b. Job 19:25-27 – He knew that his Redeemer lived, and had a hope for life "after my skin is destroyed".
      - c. Job 30:23 – He knew his mortality all too well.
    3. "Thanatopsis" by William Cullen Bryant has comforted many. But is there any real substance upon which to rest that comfort?
  - C. Hebrews 9:27 – We all have an appointment with death (unless the Lord returns before that time). Only two in history have avoided death.

## II. It Is Well With My Soul In My Final Hour

A. Do any of us know when that final hour will arrive for us? How wise we are to make preparations in advance!

B. Assurance given by Christ:

1. Matthew 8:25,26 – The disciples' fears were calmed by Jesus' power over the storm. They were afraid because of their "little faith". Their fears were unnecessary.

2. Romans 6:8,9 – How can we have assurance of life after the grave? This passage gives the key.

3. John 11:23-26 – Jesus not only claimed to be "the resurrection and the life; He proved it by raising Lazarus from the dead.

C. The good news about death declared by Jesus:

1. 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 – The gospel (good news) is based on Jesus' own death, burial and resurrection.

2. 1 Corinthians 15:22,23 – What a difference it makes to be "in Christ"! Death is not the final chapter of a Christian's life.

3. 1 Corinthians 15:55-57 – Because of Christ, death has no victory, no sting, for the Christian.

4. 2 Timothy 1:10 – What Job hoped for has now been brought "to light through the gospel".

D. Revelation 14:13 – Death becomes a blessing for those who die in Christ.

### Conclusion

I. 2 Corinthians 5:4-8 – Aging can be painful and death can be frightening. But God "has prepared us for this very thing". To be away from the body is to be at home with God!

II. "For me, be it Christ, be it Christ hence to live: If Jordan above me shall roll,

No pang shall be mine, for in death as in life, Thou wilt whisper Thy peace to my soul."

III. In the final hour, if I am in Christ, it will be well with my soul!