



PEACE

FEELING PEACE IN THE MIDST OF CHAOS

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

JOHN 14:27 (NIV)



CHAOS

As parents of children with special needs, so many of us experience chaos and crisis all too often. Maybe it's a medical emergency, maybe it's a bad report from your child's school or adult day program, maybe it's that the insurance didn't approve a treatment or therapy that you know your child needs. Whatever it is, it hits you sideways and sends you spinning until somehow you can regain your balance again.

Constant chaos like this brings with it a high level of stress and even trauma. Our bodies were not created to sustain this for very long without damage being done. Studies show that chronic stress can cause insomnia, fatigue, headaches, hypertension, and gastrointestinal (GI) issues as well as other physical effects. It can also cause depression and anxiety and become trauma leading to frequent trauma responses in the form of flight, fight, freeze, or fawn. So, what are we to do if our life is full of chaos beyond our control? Is peace even possible in the midst of all the chaos?

PEACE IN THE MIDST OF CHAOS

Yes, peace is possible in the midst of chaos. However, we won't find it by simply pulling up our bootstraps. It isn't something we can simply get by just making it happen. In scripture we see again and again that God is our source of peace.

Philippians 4:6-7 says, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”[1]

Jesus himself said, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble, But take heart! I have overcome the world.”[2]

Jesus has shown us the path to peace and it is through him. This is not some sort of sugar-coated feel-good sentiment quickly stated by a passer-by, as you find yourself caught up in yet another storm of this life, either. It is a real and abiding peace from a personal and loving God, who enters into the storm and chaos and brings calm in the midst.

[1] Philippians 4:6-7 - New International Version (NIV)

[2] John 16:33 - NIV

JESUS CALMS THE STORM

One day Jesus instructed his disciples to row their boat to the other side of the lake where they had been. As they rowed Jesus fell asleep. Suddenly a fierce storm came and the boat began to fill with water. The disciples woke Jesus and called out to him saying, “Master, Master, we’re going to drown!”[3]. Jesus woke up and called out to the wind and waves and the storm “subsided, and all was calm”. Then “in fear and amazement” scripture says, the disciples asked each other, “Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him.”[4]

Something of great importance also occurred in this story. Just after Jesus calmed the storm, he asked his disciples, “Where is your faith?”. We don’t know with what tone he said this, but we know that the disciples were feeling fear and amazement at what he had just done in that moment and that Jesus was asking where their faith was. The likely conclusion – because Jesus had already been with the disciples for some time and shown them many miracles – is that he wondered why they didn’t show faith in him in that moment. Yet they suddenly seemed to get it, as they marveled at who he must be to have such power over the wind and waves.

We often struggle in the same way. The source of our peace is there in front of us and yet we struggle to have faith in him and in the peace he can so easily give us. It’s understandable of course, as we are human and prone to fear what is staring us in the face circumstantially. The beauty of this story is that Jesus knows that about us and lovingly calls us to remember who we have our faith anchored in and from whom our peace can readily come.

When our daughter Abbey was little, she was full of lots of anxiety, and I used to read a rhyming story book version of this bible story to her. It went something like this:

“Jesus said be calm be still oh wind and sea, and it was calm immediately.
Do not worry and do not fear, have faith in God he’s always near.”

Then I would add this little quote I coined just for her:

“If He can calm the wind and sea, surely He can calm the storm inside of you and me”
- Christen Freund (Abbey’s mom)

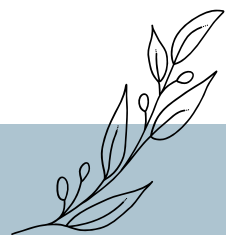
May this quote be a blessing to you today as I know it has been for our family.

[3] Luke 8:24b (NIV)

[4] Luke 8:25b (NIV)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read Luke 8:22-25. Share your thoughts about this story.



- 2.** Read Philippians 4:6-7, John 16:33, and John 14:27. Focusing on the action verbs in each of these verses what is the phrase that stands out to you? What do these verses say about what God knows of us? What do they say about God's promises to us?
- 3.** Have you ever struggled to find peace in the midst of chaos? What has helped you to get to a place of peace in the midst of those hard circumstances?



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