

Peace for Troubled Hearts

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[0 : 0 0] We're going to read scripture, the passage that Corey is going to preach from this morning. I'm going to invite Lizzie up, who's going to come and read for us. John, chapter 14.

Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am, you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going.

Thomas said to him, Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way? Jesus said to him, I am the way and the truth and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on, you do know him and have seen him. Philip said to him, Lord, show us the Father and it is enough for us.

[1 : 0 3] Jesus said to him, have I been with you so long and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, show us the Father?

Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you, I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works.

Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves. These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you.

But the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you.

My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled. Neither let them be afraid. We read that very famous passage from John 14.

[2 : 0 4] And we're going to focus on verses 1 to 7 especially. But I want to read to you the bookends of the text one more time. And the bookends of the text are verse 1 and then down to verse 27.

And so we read here, Let not your hearts be troubled. And then verse 27. Jesus says, My peace I leave to you. My peace I give to you.

Let not your hearts be troubled. Neither be afraid. So Jesus at the beginning and the end says, Don't let your heart be troubled. And then he says the solution to that, the counter to that, is peace.

The peace. He says, My peace I give to you. Therefore, let not your hearts be troubled. So Jesus says here that at Christmas, he comes to give the gift of peace.

And that gift of peace is altogether different from the peace that the world has to offer. Now peace is not peace the most important quest for which the human soul embarks upon.

[3 : 0 7] Getting a peaceful inner life is the most significant thing that you can achieve in the whole of the human life. And it's the opposite of a troubled heart, he tells us.

A troubled heart is our great enemy. It removes all the joy out of life. So Jesus is saying here today, this Christmas, that you can have a peaceful heart, not a troubled heart. And there's a world of difference between the two of them.

It's a restless heart versus a heart at rest. And the reason why this is so important is a heart at peace is a ship that rides every single storm, no matter what the waves, no matter what the circumstances are doing in your life.

If you have a healthy inner life, a peaceful inner life, you can ride out every storm. But if your inner life is in turmoil, if your heart is in turmoil, if your heart is troubled, then you're taking water on.

And eventually the circumstances of your life are going to pull you all the way under. And are going to sink you. And what Jesus is offering in this very famous moment, this upper room discourse, is the difference between a life that can withstand anything because your inner life is so full of peace.

[4 : 16] Versus a life that lacks resilience, that will break eventually because your inner life is always taking on water as the circumstances get worse and worse.

Now, 700 years before this moment, 700 years before Jesus says these words, in Isaiah chapter 9, verse 6, there's a prophecy about the Christmas child that was to come.

And we're given there four titles. He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. And we've been in a series looking at how that prophecy about Jesus is fulfilled in the ways Jesus is wonderful counselor to us.

And the way he brings supernatural wisdom, supernatural comfort, the best counselor to the human heart. And here we've got this, what is really the most universalized way of talking about all the troubles of the inner life, the troubled heart.

And so far we've looked at shame, disappointment, fear. And here he comes to address everything, all that's wrong with the heart. And in one phrase, the troubled heart.

[5 : 26] And the offer he makes is peace, his peace, the gift of peace that only he can bring. Notice in Isaiah 9 that when the text tells us he is Wonderful Counselor, the very last title that's given is he is also Prince of Peace.

And then when you come to the end of his life at John 14, the Wonderful Counselor is standing saying, in the midst of a troubled life, I want to offer you peace. The Prince of Peace, the Wonderful Counselor, gives the gift of peace.

And so let's think about that together. Is there anything that you want for Christmas more this year than a peaceful heart? A life of peace.

So first, let's think about the troubled heart, the peaceful heart, how to get his peace, and then how he gives that peace. All right, so first, the troubled heart.

All right, the disciples, we know in this passage, are troubled. We know that because Jesus says, let not your hearts be troubled. And the reason they're troubled is because in the paragraph just before this moment, Jesus had said to them, I am leaving you.

[6 : 31] And Peter turns around and says, you can't leave us, but if you do leave us, I'll go wherever you're going and I will die with you if I have to. And then he turns and says, don't let your hearts be troubled.

So they're troubled. They're living in turmoil because he said that he's leaving them. Now, we stand on the other side of the resurrection. And so we know as the reader that his departure is the very source that's going to bring them peace.

But you've got to, for a second, put yourself into their shoes and realize that they had given their, they had quit their day jobs to follow him. They had been walking with him for three years. They had given their whole lives away for him.

They've staked everything on their idea of his personal presence, his physical presence being with them. And so when he says, I'm departing from you, that is their world collapsing.

And that's why in verse 18, he says, I won't leave you as orphans. He's saying that because they clearly felt like orphans. They believed they were being treated like orphans in this moment.

[7 : 31] And so then he says, let not your hearts be troubled. And in verse 27, let not your hearts be troubled, neither be afraid. And so Jesus makes this very slight distinction between a troubled heart and a fearful heart.

And the distinction is found in the words that he picks. They're not the most common words for a troubled heart or a heart full of fear. And so the word that he uses in Greek for troubled is a word that if you were to take it in its most literal form would mean to agitate water with a stick.

So if you've ever been down near a body of water and you take a stick and you stir it and it causes ripples to move outward, that is the Greek word that he chooses here.

It reminds me of that moment in the Fellowship of the Ring when Aragorn says to the little hobbits, do not disturb the water. There's a nasty beast lurking just underneath the surface.

And this is the same idea. The heart, a troubled heart is a heart that's been agitated, disturbed. And so it's constantly producing ups and downs. And so what does he mean by that?

[8 : 40] What he means by that is something like a restlessness, a disturbed soul, an uneasy soul, an anxious soul. Probably anxiety is another way to translate it.

So it's a situation, a heart where you're never quiet internally. And therefore, when he says, let not your heart be full of agitation, he says, neither be afraid.

And this is not the most typical word for fear. The most typical word for fear is the word that we use for phobia. It refers more to an instance of being afraid. Like if you're crossing the street, the bus is coming too quickly.

You're afraid. You should be. If you don't fear, you're going to get hit by the bus. And so you move across very quickly. But this is a different word. And it's a word that refers more to something like timidity, a state of timidity.

In other words, what he's saying is when you have an inner life full of trouble or turmoil, agitated, up and down all the time, never quiet, never settled, never at rest, it's going to produce in your life a state of timidity where the fear.

[9 : 45] Fear, what does he mean by fear? He means always expecting something bad to happen. So it's where you wake up every day and you're always thinking, what is going to be, what's coming? What is about to approach my life that's going to destroy me today?

So it's a constant state of restlessness that produces a life of timidity. And I wonder what you think. I think we could say that the troubled heart is perhaps the greatest problem our culture faces.

We live in an age where we've never been more comfortable, yet we've never been more troubled. And I wonder if a peaceful heart is not the greatest gift that anybody could possess this Christmas season.

And Jesus' peace here, what he promises, what he offers, is not very careful. It's not first the promise of a good circumstance. It's not a life without ups and downs.

It's not a life without waves that are constantly battering the ship. And instead, what he's talking about is the difference that theologians have pointed out for a couple thousand years now.

[10 : 59] And that's the difference between emotions and affection. And what's that difference? Emotions, you can have an emotion of fear. You can be crossing the street and the bus is coming a little bit too fast.

And so you get nervous. You get afraid. You get scared. That's an emotion that strikes you in a moment. And when you get to the other side and you're okay, your body's going to calm back down. You're going to be okay.

That's an emotion. But an affection is slightly different. An affection is a state. It's a bedrock. It's a foundation. So you can have emotions that are going up and down all the time because of circumstances.

But what Jesus is talking about here is the problem of the affection of trouble. And an affection is when you, in your steady state, your bedrock, are living in turmoil in your heart.

Versus the affection of peace. So you can have peace in your life as the bedrock, the foundation. And yet, be a person who's getting nervous, who's getting afraid, who's getting scared, who's getting stressed.

[12 : 00] Of course, because you live in a broken world. See, there's a big difference between emotion and affection. And what Jesus is saying is, in a world where you are being brought up and down all the times on the waves of the ocean, He comes to gift you an affection of peace.

A steadiness that can ride out all the emotions that are going up and down throughout your life. You see, He's not offering here an absence of trouble. He's offering, He's not offering freedom from bad circumstances.

He's saying that He's offering us steadiness. Being okay, no matter what happens in our lives. Now, let me just give you one instance of proof and we'll move to the second point.

Think about these men that He's talking to here. Think about Peter. Peter, boy, you read the rest of the story of the Gospels and you know that Peter is a man who's troubled in his heart. He's got turmoil.

He's the one who has just said in the paragraph before this moment, Jesus, if you go and leave us, I will go with you. I'll go anywhere you go. And we know that later on, he is so timid.

[13 : 08] He's so troubled in his heart that when a young girl says to him, Don't you know Jesus? Book of Acts. Peter is afraid of nothing. You know, these men that he's talking to, they're going to be sawn in two.

They're going to be cut limb from limb, some of them. He's going to be crucified. They're going to face the worst possible circumstances. And yet, when you transition from this moment to the book of Acts, all of a sudden there's a holy boldness.

Why? They've moved from a place of trouble to a place of peace. They've moved from a place of being up and down all the time to a place of steadiness. Their hearts have become rocks.

And Jesus is saying, you can have that too. That can be yours as well. So secondly, the peaceful heart. What is this peaceful heart exactly? Now, we know that in the first century, for a Jewish person, it's very common to use the word, the Hebrew word shalom as a greeting.

So behind this Greek text probably is the Hebrew word that Jesus would have used, and that's shalom. And shalom was a way of saying hello and goodbye.

[14 : 14] So in the same way that we might today come to somebody, maybe some of you, I think I do this sometimes, and you say, peace out. You know, that's a way of saying, I'm leaving, goodbye. In the same way, you would use peace as a greeting and a departure, a way of saying that.

Now, we know that he's not simply saying, I'm departing from you, so peace out. Shalom. It's certainly far more than that, far deeper than that.

And the reason we know that is because he says, my peace I give to you as I go, not the peace that the world gives. So this is not peace that can be had from the normal rhythms of any culture.

And it's important to note that John, when he says, not the peace the world gives, at the end of the passage, the word world is used in lots of different ways throughout John's gospel.

But here, it's fairly clear that this instance means the way a culture constructs its gifts of peace in the midst of sin.

[15 : 16] In other words, it's the fact that we earthly creatures are living in nations, cultures, subcultures of sin. And so he's saying, within that subculture of a bunch of sinners creating a nation, creating a city, creating a society, the peace that the world gives is altogether different from what I'm offering you today.

And what is that peace? So what is he contrasting the peace that he does with the peace that the world offers? And it's something that's so simple, so obvious, I think all of us know it very well.

One commentator says, this is the world's peace. It's the offer of transitory pleasures that distract us from the love of God. So it's, in other words, it's the attempt of achieving peace by way of competition, achievement, self-interest, control, and it's peace that comes primarily externally.

So in other words, it's a peace where you think, I can control my circumstances, and in this life achieve the peace, the comfort that I'm longing for. And it's, in other words, it's peace dependent upon favorable external conditions sought by achievement and luck.

It's health, wealth, security, stability, the absence of conflict. And we all know that that can never work, that that doesn't ultimately last.

[16 : 34] And so what does the world do? What is the world's peace? When that doesn't work, when it fails, the world, the culture offers a spectrum of a couple things. On the one hand, escapism. And so how do you achieve peace when you know your circumstances are going to be bad?

Well, escapism is one method. And escapism says, I'm going to go to the comforts that I love and try to medicate myself out of the problems that I'm experiencing.

Or it could be an escapism of merely wishful thinking. On the far other end of the spectrum, the world's peace is stoicism. So it says, of course you can't control your circumstances.

Of course your circumstances are going to be horrible. And so what you've got to do is you've got to have the resolution in your heart to train your emotions to never feel those circumstances. And you see on both sides of it, one is control by way of comfort.

The other is control by way of self-will. Being able to control your own emotions. And both are fleeting strategies. Both fail to work. And Jesus is coming and saying, the world offers peace in lots of different ways.

[17 : 37] But every one of those types of peace is going to go away. It's not going to work. It's going to be fleeting. It's going to run away from you. Jesus Christ, the wonderful counselor, comes and he's saying to us, we are not fit for our problems.

We cannot bring peace, the security of the inner life fully, into our own lives. We can't do it. In other words, when he says, I've come to give you my peace, he's saying it's a gift.

Peace has to be a gift. The peace of God, the peace of Christ this Christmas can only come into your life as a gift. It's not something that you can achieve. And so we know that he's not offering anything cheap here because as much as he says, let not your hearts be troubled, he also says, take up your cross and follow me.

As much as he says, do not be afraid, he also says, in this life you're going to have so much tribulation. And so there's nothing cheap about this offer of peace. Instead, it's the offer of peace that comes right in the midst of the recognition of reality.

You see, the world's peace is wishful thinking. It's to say, everything's going to be all right. And Jesus doesn't do that. The peace of Christ does not do that. He comes in and says, in the midst of the fact that everything is not all right, he comes and says, I want to offer you a gift that cannot be had from within the world.

[18 : 57] And so thirdly, how do we get it? How do we get this peace of Christ? Now, notice if you scan your eyes across the passage for a moment, you'll notice how everything Jesus says about getting peace in this passage is a direct response to one of the three men that have troubled hearts.

So we didn't print the paragraph just before chapter 14. But in chapter 13, Peter says to Jesus, you can't leave us. If you leave us, I will go where you go.

And then Jesus directly responds by saying, let not your heart be troubled. And he directly responds to Thomas. He directly responds to Philip. So he's responding throughout this passage to men who have very troubled and anxious hearts.

And what does he say to them? And the first thing he says is to Peter, and every single time you're going to see the same pattern. What does Jesus do? He's going to offer himself. That's the key thing. He offers himself.

And Jesus says, I'm leaving. And Peter says, if you go, I will go with you. I'll even die for you. Later on, there's a similar conversation where Peter says something almost like that.

[20 : 10] But that time he says, even if all of these disciples leave, I will never leave you. And when he says that, we learn the real reason that Peter's committing himself to Jesus verbally.

And that's that he's competitive. He says, even if every one of these people fall away, I will never leave you. And he wants everybody at the table. And the moment Jesus says, I'm going to die for you, he wants them to know, I am better than the rest of you.

And so I'm more committed. I will go wherever you go. And that means that even the reason that Peter is following Jesus is self-interest. It's competition. He's using his own life as a disciple to compete with the other disciples.

And it's right into that that Jesus responds. You see, that's the paragraph just before chapter 14. And when you come to chapter 14, Jesus then says, let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in me.

Trust in me as you trust in God the Father. And then he offers, especially responding to Peter, something very specific. And what does he say? And you'll find it in verse 2. He says, in my Father's house are many rooms.

[21 : 16] If it were not so, what I have told you, I will go and prepare a place for you. Now look, right in the heart of Peter's self-interest and competition, he turns around and he says, I want to give you something that you cannot get from within this world.

It's the true source of peace. He says, you need, Peter, the rest of the disciples, you need a place. You need, what you need to have peace is you need home, true home.

So he says, I go to prepare a place for you and that place is your true home. If you have been around St. Columbus for any amount of time when you come in for worship, it's probably the case that you have a seat that you like to sit in.

And when somebody, when you come in on a Sunday and somebody else is sitting in that seat, you feel disoriented. You feel like your world is collapsing a little bit. Why is that?

Why is it that when we go into spaces, we pick seats? Why is it that when you take a course in the university, you tend to sit in the same desk every single time you go?

[22 : 24] There's a great desire in the bottom of the human heart for place, for home. When you have consistency of place, it's a bit like participating in the quiet rest that is home.

When Peter comes completely confused, completely self-interested, completely competitive with the rest of the disciples, Jesus says, what you need to be quiet and what you need is to believe that as I go, I'm going to secure home for you.

And home is to be with the Father. There are many rooms there. And I'm leaving you so I can give you that gift. It is the only way that you're ever going to have peace is to realize that you are not at home unless you're at home with God.

And so to Peter, he says, in other words, you have made the universe centered upon yourself. You're not made for self-glory.

You will not find peace in your life until you realize that you were made for God. And home with God is the only place you can actually find peace. Now then Thomas steps in. And Thomas in verse 5 to 7 says, but Lord, we don't know where you're going.

[23 : 35] How can we know the way? Thomas, oh boy, his question. He's thinking there in physical, literal ways. So when Jesus says, I go to prepare a place for you, Thomas is thinking, of course, he means he's going to Hebron.

He's going to the next town over to prepare a place for us. And Thomas is here, is asking for something incredibly literal in the midst of Jesus' spiritual category that he's talking about.

I go to prepare a place, a home for you. Thomas wants a road map. He wants an exact location where Jesus is heading. And Jesus has just said to him, I go to prepare a place I give you myself.

And Thomas said, well, tell us exactly the location. Pinpoint it for me on Google Maps. And Thomas is troubled by skepticism. He's troubled by literalism throughout the Gospels.

He is information hungry. He is not relationship hungry. And so what he thinks Jesus is saying is that I'm going to literally pave a road to a great city for you when what Jesus has actually said is, I'm leaving so I can give you myself.

[24 : 43] And Thomas is completely blind to it. So Jesus has said, I go to prepare a home with the Father. And that home with the Father is me giving you my own self. And Thomas is blind to it by his skepticism.

And Jesus' response here, I think this is the most famous, verse 6, the most famous, one of the most famous statements in all the Gospels. Jesus says, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

And you've got to see that that is a direct statement corresponding to Thomas' question. Where are you going? We need a road map. We need you to tell us the pinpoint location. And he says, I am the way.

See, the way is the primary idea. In other words, he's saying, Thomas, you're missing it. I am the road. I am also the destination. And if you're looking for a place to go, it's me.

I am the way. I am the road. I am the destination. If you're looking for the truth, the revelation of the Father, it's me. I'm standing right in front of you. If you're looking for life, the life of peace, the blessed life, it's attaching yourself to me.

[25 : 45] It's enmeshing yourself with me. And you see, every one of these moments, Jesus interacts with Thomas, with Peter, and we can't cover it, but with Philip just after this. He's giving himself.

He's offering himself. And Jesus is doing something here that is totally contrary to the world's peace. And he's saying, I am your peace. If you want peace in your life, you've got to enmesh yourself with me.

You've got to connect yourself with me. Do you see it? What is the great problem that brings trouble to the human heart? Turmoil, anxiousness, discontentment, restlessness.

And when you look at the passage carefully, you read it in the light of the rest of the Gospels, you realize the problem, the problem is self. The problem is the self.

It is us putting ourselves at the center of the universe. And Jesus is coming and saying, peace can only be had when you displace yourself from the center and realize that God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit is the center, and that your life exists to revolve around him, for him, with him.

[26 : 56] Where he says, I've come to give you place, home, purpose, meaning, destiny. In other words, he's saying that Christmas peace can only come to us when we realize that God is the point of our lives.

Another way to say it is that if you chase peace in this life, if you chase happiness in this life, then you're probably never going to find it.

You're going to seek it through comforts or stoicism or some other method. And what Jesus is saying here is that the only way you can actually get peace is to receive it as a byproduct. So you can't make peace your purpose.

Instead, what you've got to do is make God your purpose, God your goal, God your home, God your heart, God your meaning, Christ himself, the point of your life. And then peace comes, and it comes as a byproduct of pursuing him, of making him the ultimate point, of seeing he is the way, he is the truth, he is the life, it's himself that he's put on offer in this passage.

Now let me finish with this, how Christ gives us peace. How does he do it? How does he actually offer this to us? How can he? And the key is realizing several times in this passage, he says, I must go and prepare a place for you.

[28 : 14] In John 13, he told them, it's necessary that I leave. And then here he says, I go to prepare a place for you. He's going to say on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24, was it not necessary that I went to prepare a place for you?

So he says he must do this, he must go, he must leave. And this is what the disciples can't see in the moment. They can't understand what we can see as the reader on the other side, and that's that Jesus' departure is their peace.

Now how do we know this? Three times in John's gospel, Jesus says, I am troubled. The word that's used here. Two times, even in the upper room discourse, Jesus says, I am troubled.

So how is it that Jesus can come to us today, to these disciples in this moment, and say, let not your hearts be troubled. Let not your hearts be restless, and agitated, and disturbed, and anxious.

And then three separate times in the gospel, it says, Jesus says of himself, I am troubled. And it's found in the fact that he says, I must go and prepare a place for you.

[29 : 28] See what's happening? When Jesus, this is the upper room, this is the night before he's going to be crucified. When Jesus says, in the garden of Gethsemane, my heart is greatly disturbed, greatly troubled.

He takes on this word. And why? And it's because he became us as he went to the cross. You see what it's saying?

When he says, I am troubled, it's saying that Jesus Christ took in himself the trouble of our human hearts in order to give us peace. The Prince of Peace became the troubled one.

The Prince of Peace became the most agitated, the most disturbed. He, the Prince of Peace, took on every bit of the trouble that we have in our hearts, that we deserve.

In order to gift us peace. And so what this means is that when he says, I go to prepare a place for you, they couldn't see it, but we can. That he's saying, I'm going to achieve for you peace with God.

[30 : 26] And he's telling us today that we, apart from him, are at war with God. And until we see that he took on all of our trouble by going to the cross, the Prince of Peace, to give us peace, we remain at war with God.

You can't have the peace, you can't have the peace of God in your heart this Christmas season unless you have peace with God. You see, you've got to realize that his cross means peace with God if you're ever going to have the peace of God.

And that's why this is a peace that the world cannot give. This is a peace that's supernatural. It can only come from the outside. Only peace with God can secure the peace of God. And this is the stunning paradox of the passage.

If he does not leave, if he does not go to die, if he does not go to be troubled in the garden, then he cannot be your peace. But he did, and he has.

And so he can. And so this Christmas, because there is peace with God, you can have the peace of God. And so let me conclude with just a couple thoughts on how to take this in for a second.

[31 : 33] Notice that he says, let not your heart be troubled. Do not let your heart be troubled. It's a command. And then down at the very bottom of the passage in 25 to 27, he tells them, I'm sending my spirit, the comforter, could be translated the counselor, to give you this peace.

And so in this passage, he says, on the one hand, the way that you get the peace of God through peace with God is by him sending the counselor, the spirit. You see, the wonderful counselor sends the wonderful counselor to be your counselor.

The wonderful counselor, Jesus, sends the wonderful counselor, the spirit, to point you back to the counselor himself, Jesus. And what that means is that he's saying that when the spirit comes into your life as a believer, you receive the gift of the peace of Christ.

You have peace with Christ, therefore, you can receive the gift of the peace of Christ and, and, do not let your hearts be troubled. It's a command. You see, it's a gift and it's a command.

He says, you need, you need the spirit in your life to receive this gift, yet, do not let your hearts be troubled. And how do you do that? And there's the line in verse one, believe in me. So he's both telling you that this peace comes from the outside.

[32 : 50] It's a gift upon your life and, don't let your hearts be troubled. Fight the turmoil, the anxiousness, the discontentment, the restlessness of your heart by what?

And he says, believe, and that's a word for trust. John Calvin says, the answer for the troubled heart is not the world's peace but going deeper into trust.

It's not achievement but it's going deeper into new levels of trust, of rest in your life. And so, he's telling us that because you have peace with God this Christmas, will you, will you take on deeper levels of trust?

When anxiousness and discontentment and restlessness and that turmoil heart overtake you, let not your hearts be troubled. Listen, it's a command. It's a command because it's already a gift.

You've got the peace of God in your life. Lean into it. Trust him. Believe what he says. He says, believe in me like you believe in the Father. Trust me. The purpose of peace.

[33 : 56] Hudson Taylor, at the end of his life when he died, Hudson Taylor was a famous missionary he was 51 years in China with the China Inland Mission and when he died they found in his Bible a piece of paper that he would use as his daily prayer and also as a bookmark that he would slide into books and this is what he wrote on it.

He said, Lord Jesus today make thyself to me a living bright reality more present to faith's vision keen than any other outward object seen more near more intimately nigh than even the sweetest earthly tie.

Alright, let's translate that to modern English. What's the prayer? Lord, make yourself real to me today. Help me to believe that you are far more real to me. Your peace is far more with me than even the physical objects I see all around me.

That was Hudson Taylor's prayer. Listen to Jesus as we finish. Jesus says, my peace I give to you. My peace I leave with you.

Don't let your hearts be troubled. Believe in him so that you need not be afraid. Let us pray. Father, we do pray for that Christmas peace and we long for our anxious, troubled, discontent, restless, turmoiled, agitated hearts to find a gift that seems nigh impossible.

[35 : 21] So we hear Hudson Taylor's words here, this prayer, Lord Jesus, make yourself to us a living, bright reality, more real, more precious, more keen than even the physical objects all around us.

Lord, we want that. We want Christmas peace. We feel, it feels so far from us so often and so we ask today that you would bless us with this gift of the Spirit and yet teach us what it means to lean into the command to not let our hearts be troubled.

So Lord, as we sing, as we close, speak this peace into our lives all by the power of the cross and resurrection. Peace with you, peace from you, the peace of Christ.

We long for it, we ask for it and we pray that in Jesus' name. Amen.