

November 14, 2021

We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character.
Romans 5:3–4

True Christian peace which calms the heart and brings contentment to the soul is not necessarily the accompaniment of a time when no misfortune is at hand, but it can come to men in the midst of misfortune, when all without is anything but peace. This is the difference between earthly peace and the peace of Christ.

Earthly peace arises from the removal of the external evils that have destroyed peace. When foes assemble before a city, there is no peace; but if the foes are removed, peace is restored. The same holds for poverty and sickness; when they press upon you, you are discontented. But when they are removed and you are rid of your misfortune, you once again enjoy external peace and quiet. Such an alteration of fortune does not necessarily change a man; after his troubles are gone, he can remain just as dejected as he was before their removal. The only difference is that he felt them and was disturbed by them when they were present.

Christian or spiritual peace brings about a change. Outwardly, misfortunes in the shape of enemies, sickness, poverty, sin, the devil and death can certainly continue to press upon you without intermission. In spite of all that, as a Christian you have peace, strength, and consolation inwardly in your heart. A Christian heart is never unduly disturbed by misfortune, and indeed, it is even more courageous and joyful in the face of misfortune than when the latter is absent. That is why it is called by St. Paul a peace which passes all understanding (Philippians 4:7).

PRAYER: Grant us your grace, heavenly Father, so that we may never waver in our faith but ever stand fast in the peace and hope secured for us and assigned to us in and through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

—Excerpt from *Luther for the Busy Man* daily devotional book, which follows the Church Year beginning with Advent. To be published by Ambassador Publications fall 2021.

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