



#2965 0822 21A

*Just when we need Him, Jesus is near; Just when we falter; Just when we fear. Ready to help me; ready to cheer; Just when we need Him most. We all need Jesus—more today than ever. With the world in such turmoil, unrest, fear, and uncertainty—we are fortunate as believers in Jesus, that we have an eternal hope of seeing [Christopher] our loved one again.*

We have to *claim* the peace that is promised to us. John 14:27 *“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”* Jesus loves this young boy—even more than we do—and God gladly accepts those we place in His hands.

We keep *hope* and *peace* in our heart, by keeping our *faith* and *trust* in Jesus. Romans 5:1-2 *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”* It is a living *hope* by a continuing *faith* in Jesus—our loved one is safe in His hands.

Jesus promised John 14:3 *“I will return and take you to be with me.”* The *hope* we have, then, is

the *promise* given by God—a promise given to all who trust Him through every trial and test. Our children will be welcomed into His kingdom, as we keep our faith on the shed Blood of Christ.

The apostle spoke of faith in *Christ* that leads to eternity in *Heaven*. It was Titus 1:1-2 *“According to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.”*

Jesus gives *this* hope—John 14:1 *“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.”* It is that divine *promise* that gives us an inner *peace*—a place for all our loved ones is being made ready for them.

God has kept all past *promises*—He *surely* will keep *future* ones. It is our trust in what Jesus accomplished that enables us to *have* this inner peace and living hope. As difficult as the loss is, the eternal reward for holding on to our faith in Christ—is worth it—seeing our loved ones again. James 1:12 *“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”*

God has *promised* peace and Paradise. Hebrews 10:23 *“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)”* We have the privilege of *claiming* God's peace during these times *When we need Him most*—and this family, especially, needs God's *peace*; His *comfort*; and His *guidance*—and all three: *peace*, *comfort*, and *guidance*, are only a prayer away.

Everyone needs hope, and through faith in the atoning Blood of Christ, it is a *living* hope of being re-united with our children, our parents, and all we held dear in this life. The believer's

hope is *certain* and *sure*, as it is based on a *never-changing* God Malachi 3:6.

As we keep our faith in the One who promised the Kingdom—the Lord Jesus—*doubts* are turned to *belief*. 1 Thessalonians 4:14 *“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.”*

Our thoughts and our fervent prayers are for God's peace to be with these parents; the children; and the entire church community—all who knew and loved Christopher, a much-loved young boy. Only God can take the place of this dear child; and only God can fill our hearts with His peace.

Although very sad in *heart*, we are assured by the *Word*, that God's love for this child is even greater than *our* love for him. Jesus said Matthew 19:14; Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16 *“Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. 17 Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.”*

Holding to the Word of God and keeping the promises of God in our heart—gives that living hope of seeing our loved ones again—we have God's Word on it. 1 Thessalonians 4:14 *“For if we believe that Jesus has died and risen again, we also believe that, through Jesus, God will bring with Him those who shall have passed away.”*

God has promised to explain *why* things take place in our life; He promises to show *why* everything that happened has happened. Daniel said Daniel 2:23 *“I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.”*

We are so saddened by the loss; but we can all *claim* God's *peace*—let us *not* surrender any Atonement right to the devil. No matter how difficult the *circumstance* may be; no matter how

difficult the *loss* that is felt; we can *claim divine peace*. The Master said Matthew 11:29 “*Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*”

On the night before the cross—when Jesus would pay the terrible cost for the sins of the world—the disciples were *anxious*; *fearful*; and *doubtful*—they did *not* understand God’s plan; they could *not* see how anything good could come from what would soon take place.

Jesus knew their thoughts and explained the choice we have John 14:1 “*Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*” And He promised to return.

He explained how to get to where He is 6 “*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*” It is a faith in Jesus that does *not* falter; *never* gives up; and *keeps on* believing until Jesus returns.

With all the uncertainty; wickedness, and evil in the world, our only hope is our continuing *trust in God*—holding to our *faith in Christ*, because Hebrews 10:37 “*For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.*”

There is hope for *tomorrow*; there is a promise for the *future*—we just have to keep our faith in the One who died on the cross to *give us* that hope and that future. John 16:4 “*These things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was [still] with you. 5 But now I go my way to him that sent me.*”

So let us press toward the goal—knowing that God fulfills every promise, through the resurrection power of His Son, and by the enlightenment of His Holy Spirit. John 11:25 Jesus said “*I am*

*the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.*”

It would be foolish to go through life unprepared for what is *sure* to come. This life is a *temporary* residence—it is the *beginning of forever!* Our time here is so short, that it is called a *wisp of smoke, fleeting as a shadow* Job 8:9, “*A mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes*” James 4:14. Compared to eternity, this life is a mere blip on the screen. We will not be here long.

We will all spend eternity on the other side. Today is just a *practice*; the *warm-up*; *learned lessons* and being *prepared* for the real thing. In light of eternity, every situation—every trial, test and loss, takes on a new spiritual *meaning*. God is working on our spiritual *heart attitude*—He is *training* us and *coaching* us to be ready for His kingdom.

Things that once seemed so *important*, now seem so *unimportant*. Spiritual concerns that were 2<sup>nd</sup> place, are *now* are in 1<sup>st</sup> place—they are a priority! In comparison to “*What Christ has done*”—of paying for our sins on the cross—everything else seemed of *no value* to the apostle Philippians 3:7 “*What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.*”

Jesus tells us *not* to mourn—because we have a living hope; and He tells us *not* to be fearful—because there is nothing to fear. And He tells us *not* to doubt—because He is “*preparing a room*” John 14 for believers. That promise is given by the One who gave His life—to pay our debt.

A glimpse of our new home is given: Revelation 7:11 “*All the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, 12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.*”

Life has two parts. The first part is always getting *longer*, and the second part is always getting *shorter*. What we do *now*, and who we trust *today*, makes all the difference! What we do with the *time* we have left, can make the *second part* the *best*—leading to God’s eternal kingdom.

The response we *make* to the difficult moments in our life—all the trials and tests, are connected to receiving what Jesus died to give us—an *eternal dwelling place*. That is a promise from the only One who *can* give us peace and hope.

Four candles are burning brightly—they are named *Faith, Hope, Love, and Peace!* *Faith*—because so many today have no faith and do not trust God for anything. *Hope*—because everyone needs hope to keep going and to keep trusting God.

*Love*—because all too many times and all too often, we forget to love those right next to us. *Peace*—because there is so much anger, strife, hatred and bitterness in the world. Three candles—Faith, Love, and Peace, soon burned low, flickered, and went out!

But the candle called HOPE—perpetually glowing brightly, said: *Do not fear. While I am still burning, I can re-light the other three—Faith, Love, and Peace!* *Hope* is still alive! God promises!



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