

## Title: “When Peace Like a River”

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Hab. 1:1–4; 2:1–4  
& Psalm 62

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### Overview:

*This is our world and like a raging river our world, our nation, and our lives have been swept up and are being cast against the stones of materialism, lust, and godlessness and every one of us search for a rock in which we can anchor our lives. We yearn for an escape from the water and for the safety of the dry shore and as even as we try to convince ourselves that our own efforts will save us, we know that we are drowning, and our only hope is a savior.*

### Lesson:

We are drowning in a river of chaos and our rock, our salvation is found only in Christ. Through faith and the work of the Holy Spirit, we are attached to Him and are called to share this peace with the world.

### Message:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

We live in a world of chaos. A world where countries are engaged in battle and others are poised for one. Where leaders of nations propel threats to each other with reckless abandon to any consequence and where thoughtful diplomacy has gone extinct.

And we live in nation of chaos. A world where we value the right of an individual over the life of an individual. Where we protect the freedoms of choice but withdraw those same protections for the unborn. Where personal truth claims supersede biblical ones and where the proclamation of a living God is suppressed at every turn.

We live in a world where the morality of the nation, and the morality of the world, has been offered up on the altar of capitalism and greed. And the smoke that rises is a displeasing aroma to God. A world where the very moral fabric has not just been torn but completely shredded and all that remains is a deteriorating remnant that continues to decay towards non-existence.

We live in communities of relativism where truth claims are as shifting as a seashore but imposed upon us as settled fact. And where participating in society requires subscription to these ideologies.

We live in a world of people who see the invisible promise of wealth and power but are blind to the promise of the visible and powerful living God.

<pause>

But it is not just the world that is in chaos. It is us, too. We live in families that run from one activity to another to yet another, where meals come from paper bags and are served with a small side of relationships. Where the value of family is measured by the ink on a weekly schedule and where experiences have replaced time with family and time with God.

And added to all of this are the unexpected events that strain the very stability of our lives. We are just one paycheck away from financial disaster; one diagnosis away from emotional and physical destruction.

Like a raging river our world, our nation, and our lives have been swept up and are being cast against the stones of materialism, lust, and godlessness and every one of us search for a rock, an anchor where we can ride out the storm. We attach ourselves to work, to family, to money, ... to anything - and each one of these, at its core, is the same anchor: control. We believe that controlling our lives and our situations is the best anchor we can have. But we also know that the anchor we cling to is pulling us deeper under the water; we are drowning, and our only hope is a savior.

But it is comforting to know that we are not unique in turning inward for stability in our lives, for we see examples throughout the Bible. We see where others tried to anchor their lives to themselves and failed. But, we also see a reattachment to Jesus as their real anchor.

- *“Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, ‘Lord, save me.’”* He had let go of his rock and immediately found himself sinking. He found his rock in the hand of Jesus.
- The disciples, after a long day found themselves in a sinking boat in the middle of a terrible storm. They let go of their rock of faith and replaced it with fear. They found their rock in their master’s voice as he rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!”
- Jonah was drowning in the sea of disobedience. He had run from the command of God and was in search of a new rock to use as an anchor; He found it the stomach of a large fish.

We find in these accounts people who have let go of the rock of Christ only to be plunged into the river of chaos and turmoil. We find in these accounts how letting go of God meant letting go of stability, and safety, and peace: how letting go of God meant drowning.

But we also find in them a reminder so powerful it calms our turbulent sea and anchors us to peace eternal:

You can’t find peace until you find Jesus. And since Jesus has already found you, you have already found peace.

You see, 2000 years ago, he plunged Himself into our waters of chaos and sin, but He never let go of God and clung to Him in perfect faith and obedience. And on the cross, he drowned in our place and suffered the consequences of our sins so that we would be saved. And after His work was complete, He didn’t turn his back on the rivers of this world but instead walked into the middle of it to become our rock, our anchor, our salvation. And He stands there today with arms out wide to gather us to Himself and attach us to him through faith and by the work of the Holy Spirit.

So you see, we already have peace because we have been attached to Jesus.

It may not look like it at the moment. I'm sure Jonah would disagree that he had found peace through Christ as he was being swallowed up - but it was God, who came to Jonah in his time of need, who sent the fish to him and saved his life. It was through the work of God that Jonah became reattached to the anchor of Christ and found peace.

Please don't mistake my point: peace is not the destination that we aim for while we are here on Earth. It's not the goal of our lives. Peace is the artifact, the effect, of our being connected to Him. The Peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, is what reminds us that we are children of God, and it motivates us to share this same offer of peace to everyone we meet.

We find peace in Christ *so that* we too can stand in the midst of a sea of worldly turbulence, suffering, and injustice, and have the strength to reach out to others who are drowning and show them the anchor and the peace that is in Jesus, our Savior.

This. This is stewardship. It is recognizing that even though we still stand in the raging river we are anchored and have peace. And because we have peace, we can bring peace to others. It is participating in the various ministries of this church. It is serving food to the hungry or welcoming visitors before service. It is joining the choir or teaching the children. It is any number of different things but the single thing they all have in common is peace. We bring the peace of God to others through our service.

And this is an honor. God could clam the sea at any moment, but he doesn't. Instead, he invites us to participate, to take part in bringing His peace to all the world. And we should be honored that he chose us, sinful, imperfect people to participate in his sinless, perfect plan.

It is an honor to be attached to Christ. It is an honor to serve. It is an honor to experience peace like a river.

Let us pray.

I would like to read the first verses from Psalm 62 as our prayer.

- <sup>1</sup> Truly my soul finds rest in God;  
my salvation comes from him.
- <sup>2</sup> Truly he is my rock and my salvation;  
he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.
- <sup>3</sup> How long will you assault me?  
Would all of you throw me down—  
this leaning wall, this tottering fence?
- <sup>4</sup> Surely they intend to topple me  
from my lofty place;

they take delight in lies.

With their mouths they bless,

but in their hearts they curse.<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Yes, my soul, find rest in God;

my hope comes from him.

<sup>6</sup>Truly he is my rock and my salvation;

he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.

<sup>7</sup>My salvation and my honor depend on God<sup>[a]</sup>;

he is my mighty rock, my refuge.

<sup>8</sup>Trust in him at all times, you people;

pour out your hearts to him,

for God is our refuge.

Amen.