

December 2024

Dear friends,

It has been over 2,000 years since Jesus, the Prince of Peace, came into this world. Before departing He said this to His followers, *"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you."* – John 14:27. I pray that this letter finds you experiencing the peace of God today.

The world pushes the idea that to have peace we must alter our circumstances by: slowing down our pace, changing our place, avoiding certain people, eliminating pressure, improving our financial position, etc. These things might produce something that feels like peace, but when the circumstances change, so does the feeling. The peace of God on the other hand is lasting and unshakable.

The peace of God comes not from the absence of conflict or trouble, but from the personal presence of Christ on our life. This is a peace the world cannot give us, nor can the world take it from us.

Because my work with Mars Hill is worldwide, I regularly take in global news sources, and as I see what is happening in the world, all is not well. While most news venues in the U.S. continue to focus on the battle between the left and the right, the rest of the world is imploding and exploding, both figuratively and literally. The serpent of old is spreading chaos and destruction on an unprecedented scale. And, as in Genesis 6:6, I believe that God is grieved in His heart.

It may seem that the world is out of control, but God is in complete control. It is like looking at the backside of a needlepoint. What you see is a messy confused web of crisscross stitching. However, when you look at the other side, it all makes sense, and can even be quite beautiful.

God is orchestrating everything to accomplish His purposes, for you, for me and for the entire world. His purpose for this present world is not to make it a better place in which people can simply pursue their own earthly dreams. God's purpose in this present season of man is to draw people from every tongue, tribe and nation to Himself that they may know life as it was meant to be, forever. God's plan for this present world is actually found in 2 Peter 3:10, *"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up."*

Peter goes on to write, *"¹¹Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹²looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! ¹³But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells."*

As I read this verse, I ask myself . . . What sort of person ought I to be? Is my life aligned with God's purposes? Do I look for (even long for) the coming of that day when He brings about a new heaven and earth in which righteousness dwells, or am I more preoccupied with my own earthly dreams? Finally,

what am I doing to help hasten the coming of that day? Because God's word has been written to every Christ follower, I believe these are questions we should all be asking.

To be clear, we cannot hasten that day in the absolute sense, for the day is fixed with our Father and only He knows it. However, we can participate in the hastening of that day. I believe we do that by helping to address our Father's desire, "*not wishing that any should perish*" - 2 Peter 3:9. We do that by fulfilling our unique God-given role in the Great Commission.

That is why we do what we do at Mars Hill. That is why:

- We are constantly working on new translations of **The HOPE, *The Story of God's Promise for All People***
- We host a website to give visitors from around the world the opportunity to view **The HOPE** and use **The HOPE Study Guide** in their own language
- We are putting so much time and effort into the completion of **PG Studio™**, our mobile app for translating scripture and movies like **The HOPE** and the **JESUS Film**.

We are so very grateful for all those who, through their prayers and their giving, help us continue our work. This kind of support is a tangible example of "hastening the coming of the day."

Thank You for taking the time to read this letter and to think about what it means to fulfill your role in the Great Commission. May you have a Christ-filled Christmas, and may you continually experience the peace of God!

In His Love and Mine,

Fred Carpenter

President

