
What Is Peace?

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*
by the Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler,
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip**

Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.-Philippians 4.6-9

The six o'clock news will mention peace every now and then in its broadcast. But the headlines will not be that old fictitious joke, "Peace breaks out in the Middle East!" Usually another war, another skirmish, another violent incident, has broken out somewhere. It is a few days later that the headlines will mention that someone, or some group, is seeking some peaceful accord.

But I wonder if anyone is actually watching the six o'clock news anymore. (I admit I watched the six thirty news one night last week; I, too, wanted to see what Katie Couric would look like at that hour of the day.) But for many of us, six o'clock has become one of the most unpeaceful times of the day.

What are we doing at six o'clock? It was an era long ago that Dad came strolling in, ready to relax while the children quietly did their homework. Today, Dad and Mom are still quite busy at that hour of the day. One of them is still at work. Another of them is picking up one child from one after-school activity. Another of them is picking up the other child. Another of them is preparing supper. The other parent is doing the laundry. Still another is the only one who has time to sit down and watch the news. All of them are still waiting for peace to break out among the children. (And, yes, every household needs six parents now).

Did I say "sit down?" Since when was it that any of us actually sat down to watch the news? Usually, the news is what is on the television while we are throwing that dinner in the microwave. It is what comes on the radio while we are in traffic. It is another dramatic injection of anxiety into our lives. It is what puts some of us to sleep at night.

Is there any peace? What is peace in today's environment, with war everywhere from the carpool line to the Middle East?

I submit the lines that I have printed above. They have become my companions in my own frenetic and harried world. Yes, there is much to upset me. Where is my focus? What should I concentrate on? In whatever predicament I find myself, I look for one of the six features of Paul's fourth chapter to the Philippians. Saint Paul said to think about whatever is "true, honorable, just, pure, pleasing, or commendable." "If there is anything excellent there, think about these things."

There will be some occasion in the near future which causes you unrest. There will be some social disorder. There may even be an international incident, something that makes us yearn for peace. In whatever situation arises, look for the truth, do the honorable thing, think about what is just. Look for the pure and for what is genuinely pleasing. Think about what you can commend. Find what is excellent, said Saint Paul, "and the God of peace will be with you."

Sam Candler signature



The Very Rev. Sam Candler

© *The Cathedral of St. Philip. All rights reserved.*