



“My Peace I Give unto You”

“Peace can come to an individual only by an unconditional surrender—surrender to him who is the Prince of peace, who has the power to confer peace.”

From the Life of Howard W. Hunter

One of President Howard W. Hunter’s associates in the Quorum of the Twelve described him as a man of “extraordinary patience that comes from great inner peace.”¹ President Hunter spoke often about inner peace, teaching that a person can receive it only by turning to God—by trusting Him, exercising faith, and striving to do His will. Such peace helped sustain him through many difficult times.

In late 1975 a doctor recommended brain surgery for President Hunter’s wife, Claire. President Hunter agonized over whether the surgery was in Claire’s best interest, since it would strain her fragile body and might not improve her condition. He went to the temple, counseled with family members, and soon felt that the surgery offered the best hope for giving Claire some relief. Describing his feelings on the day of the operation, he wrote:

“I went with her as far as the doors to the operating room, gave her a kiss, and she was taken on through the doors. As time went by, I waited and wondered. . . . Suddenly the tense anxiety turned into a feeling of peace. I knew the right decision had been made and that my prayers had been answered.”²

In 1989, President Hunter had another experience during which he felt peace in a troubling time. He was in Jerusalem to dedicate the Brigham Young University Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies. Several groups had protested the Church’s presence in Jerusalem, and some had threatened violence. One of the speakers at the dedication was Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve, who later related this incident:



We must “fix our eyes on Jesus” and never “turn away our eyes from him in whom we must believe.”

“As I was speaking, there was some excitement in the back of the hall. Men in military uniforms had entered the room. They sent a note to President Hunter. I turned and asked for instructions. He said, ‘There’s been a bomb threat. Are you afraid?’ I said, ‘No.’ He said, ‘Neither am I; finish your talk.’”³ The dedication services proceeded without incident; there was no bomb.

In situations like these, President Hunter trusted in this promise of peace from the Savior, which he often quoted: “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” (John 14:27).

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### **Jesus Christ is our source of true peace.**

In foretelling the birth of Christ more than 700 years before it occurred, the prophet Isaiah used titles expressing great admiration. . . . One of these titles that is of particular interest in our present world is “Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6). “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end,” Isaiah declared (v. 7). What a thrilling hope for a war-weary, sin-laden world!<sup>4</sup>

The peace for which the world longs is a time of suspended hostilities; but men do not realize that peace is a state of existence that comes to man only upon the terms and conditions set by God, and in no other way.

In a psalm in the Book of Isaiah are these words: “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.” (Isa. 26:3.) This perfect peace mentioned by Isaiah comes to one only through a belief in God. This is not understood by an unbelieving world.

On the last occasion that Jesus had supper with the Twelve, he washed their feet, broke bread for them, and passed them the cup; then, after Judas had left their midst, the Master spoke to them at some length. Among other things, he told of his impending death and of the legacy he left for each of them. He had accumulated no goods, property, nor wealth. The record tells us of no possessions

other than the clothing he wore, and on the next day after the crucifixion this would be divided by the soldiers, who would cast lots for his coat. His bequest was given to his disciples in these simple yet profound words: “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.” (John 14:27.)

He used the Jewish form of salutation and benediction: “My peace I give unto you.” This salutation and bequest was not to be taken by them in the usual sense, for he said, “. . . not as the world giveth, give I unto you.” Not empty wishes, not just polite ceremony, as the people of the world use the words as matters of custom; but as the author and Prince of peace, he gave it to them. He bestowed it upon them and said, “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” Within a few hours they would be subjected to trouble, but with his peace they could overcome fear and stand firm.

His last statement to them before the closing prayer on that memorable evening was this: “. . . in the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33.)<sup>5</sup>



### **We cultivate peace as we live the principles of the gospel.**

There is but one guiding hand in the universe, only one truly infallible light, one unflinching beacon to the world. That light is Jesus Christ, the light and life of the world, the light which one Book of Mormon prophet described as “a light that is endless, that can never be darkened.” (Mosiah 16:9.)

As we search for the shore of safety and peace, whether we be individual women and men, families, communities, or nations, Christ is the only beacon on which we can ultimately rely. He is the one who said of his mission, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” (John 14:6.) . . .

Consider, for example, this instruction from Christ to his disciples. He said, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” (Matt. 5:44.)

Think of what this admonition alone would do in your neighborhood and mine, in the communities in which you and your children live, in the nations which make up our great global family. I realize this doctrine poses a significant challenge, but surely it is a more agreeable challenge than the terrible tasks posed for us by the war and poverty and pain the world continues to face.<sup>6</sup>

When we try to help those who have offended us, when we pray for those who have unrighteously used us, our lives can be beautiful. We can have peace when we come into a unity with the Spirit and with each other as we serve the Lord and keep his commandments.<sup>7</sup>

The world in which we live, whether close to home or far away, needs the gospel of Jesus Christ. It provides the only way the world will ever know peace. . . . We need a more peaceful world, growing out of more peaceful families and neighborhoods and communities. To secure and cultivate such peace, “we must love others, even our enemies as well as our friends” [*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 393]. . . . We need to extend the hand of friendship. We need to be kinder, more gentle, more forgiving, and slower to anger.<sup>8</sup>

God’s chief way of acting is by persuasion and patience and long-suffering, not by coercion and stark confrontation. He acts by gentle solicitation and by sweet enticement.<sup>9</sup>

There is no promise of peace to those who reject God, to those who will not keep his commandments, or to those who violate his laws. The Prophet Isaiah spoke of the decadence and corruption of leaders and then continued in his admonitions by saying: “But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.” (Isa. 57:20–21.) . . .

. . . Indifference to the Savior or failure to keep the commandments of God brings about insecurity, inner turmoil, and contention. These are the opposite of peace. Peace can come to an individual only by an unconditional surrender—surrender to him who is the Prince of peace, who has the power to confer peace.<sup>10</sup>

The troubles of the world often expressed in screaming headlines should remind us to seek for the peace that comes from living the simple principles of the gospel of Christ. The vociferous minorities will not unsettle our peace of soul if we love our fellowmen and have faith in the atoning sacrifice of the Savior and the quiet assurance he gives of life everlasting. Where do we find such faith in a troubled world? The Lord said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." (Luke 11:9-10.)<sup>11</sup>

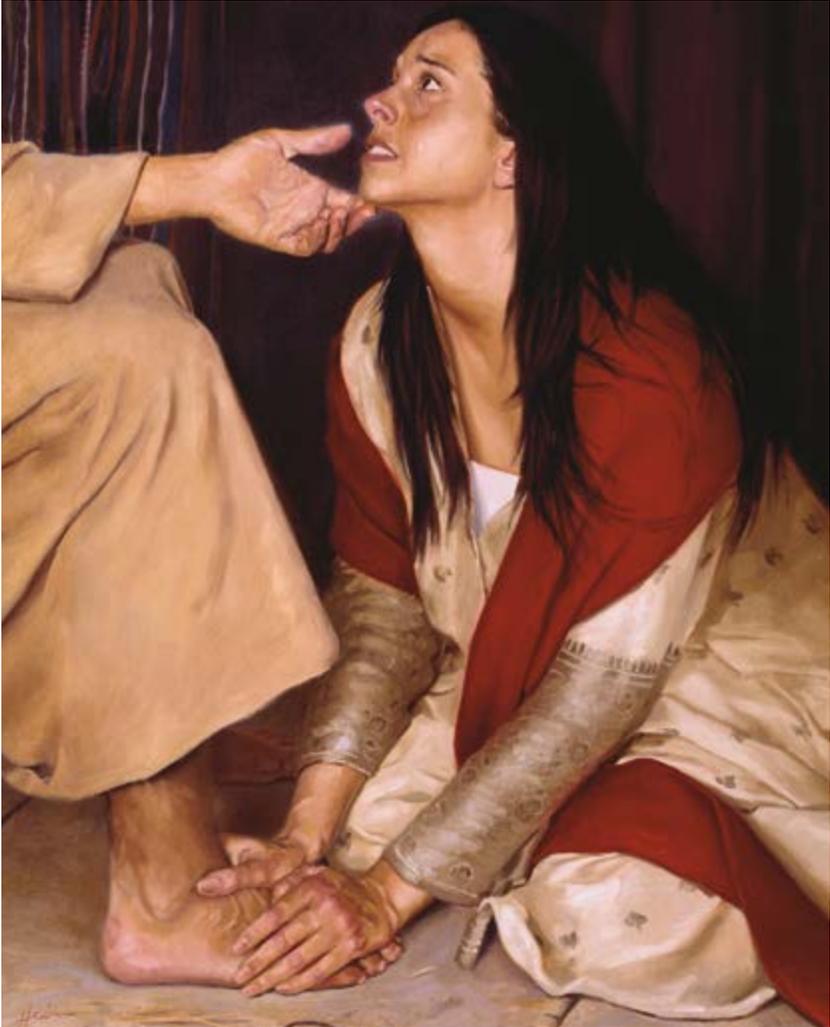
It seems that two eternal truths must be accepted by all if we are to find peace in this world and eternal life in the world to come. (1) That Jesus is the Christ, the very eternal son of our Heavenly Father, who came to earth for the express purpose of redeeming mankind from sin and the grave, and that he lives to bring us back to the presence of the Father. (2) That Joseph Smith was his prophet, raised up in this latter-day to restore the truth which had been lost to mankind because of transgression. If all men would accept and live these two fundamental truths, peace would be brought to the world.<sup>12</sup>

If you, yourself, resist . . . temptations and determine to pay the daily price, to live the Law of the Harvest by clean, moral thoughts and practices, by upright, honest dealings, by integrity and conscientiousness in your studies, by fasting, prayer, and worship, you will reap the harvest of freedom and inner peace and prosperity.<sup>13</sup>

A life filled with unselfish service will also be filled with peace that surpasses understanding. . . . This peace can come only through living the principles of the gospel. These principles constitute the program of the Prince of Peace.<sup>14</sup>

So much in our world is calculated to destroy . . . personal peace through sins and temptations of a thousand kinds. We pray that the lives of the Saints will be lived in harmony with the ideal set before us by Jesus of Nazareth.

We pray that Satan's efforts will be thwarted, that personal lives can be peaceful and calm, that families can be close and concerned with every member, that wards and stakes, branches and districts



*“A life filled with unselfish service will also be filled with peace that surpasses understanding.”*

can form the great body of Christ, meeting every need, soothing every hurt, healing every wound until the whole world, as Nephi pleaded, will “press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. . . .

“My beloved brethren,” continued Nephi, “this is the way; and there is none other way.” (2 Nephi 31:20–21.)<sup>15</sup>

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### **The Savior can help us find peace regardless of the turmoil around us.**

Jesus was not spared grief and pain and anguish and buffeting. No tongue can speak the unutterable burden he carried, nor have we the wisdom to understand the prophet Isaiah's description of him as "a man of sorrows." (Isa. 53:3.) His ship was tossed most of his life, and, at least to mortal eyes, it crashed fatally on the rocky coast of Calvary. We are asked not to look on life with mortal eyes; with spiritual vision we know something quite different was happening upon the cross.

Peace was on the lips and in the heart of the Savior no matter how fiercely the tempest was raging. May it so be with us—in our own hearts, in our own homes, in our nations of the world, and even in the buffetings faced from time to time by the Church. We should not expect to get through life individually or collectively without some opposition.<sup>16</sup>

One may live in beautiful and peaceful surroundings but, because of inner dissension and discord, be in a state of constant turmoil. On the other hand, one may be in the midst of utter destruction and the bloodshed of war and yet have the serenity of unspeakable peace. If we look to man and the ways of the world, we will find turmoil and confusion. If we will but turn to God, we will find peace for the restless soul. This was made clear by the words of the Savior: "In the world ye shall have tribulation" (John 16:33); and in his bequest to the Twelve and to all mankind, he said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth. . . ." (John 14:27.)

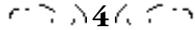
We can find this peace now in a world of conflict if we will but accept his great gift and his further invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"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." (Matt. 11:28–29.)

This peace shelters us from the worldly turmoil. The knowledge that God lives, that we are his children, and that he loves us soothes

the troubled heart. The answer to the quest lies in faith in God and in his Son, Jesus Christ. This will bring peace to us now and in the eternity to follow.<sup>17</sup>

In this world of confusion and rushing, temporal progress, we need to return to the simplicity of Christ. . . . We need to study the simple fundamentals of the truths taught by the Master and eliminate the controversial. Our faith in God needs to be real and not speculative. The restored gospel of Jesus Christ can be a dynamic, moving influence, and true acceptance gives us a meaningful, religious experience. One of the great strengths of the Mormon religion is this translation of belief into daily thinking and conduct. This replaces turmoil and confusion with peace and tranquility.<sup>18</sup>



**By fixing our eyes on Jesus, we can triumph  
over elements that would destroy peace.**

Let me recall one of the great stories of Christ's triumph over that which seems to test us and try us and bring fear to our hearts. As Christ's disciples had set out on one of their frequent journeys across the Sea of Galilee, the night was dark and the elements were strong and contrary. The waves were boisterous and the wind was bold, and these mortal, frail men were frightened. Unfortunately there was no one with them to calm and save them, for Jesus had been left alone upon the shore.

As always, he was watching over them. He loved them and cared for them. In their moment of greatest extremity they looked and saw in the darkness an image in a fluttering robe, walking toward them on the ridges of the sea. They cried out in terror at the sight, thinking that it was a phantom that walked upon the waves. And through the storm and darkness to them—as so often to us, when, amid the darkneses of life, the ocean seems so great and our little boats so small—there came the ultimate and reassuring voice of peace with this simple declaration, “It is I; be not afraid.” Peter exclaimed, “Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.” And Christ's answer to him was the same as to all of us: “Come.”

Peter sprang over the vessel's side and into the troubled waves, and while his eyes were fixed upon the Lord, the wind might toss

his hair and the spray might drench his robes, but all was well. Only when with wavering faith he removed his glance from the Master to look at the furious waves and the black gulf beneath him, only then did he begin to sink. Again, like most of us, he cried, “Lord, save me.” Nor did Jesus fail him. He stretched out his hand and grasped the drowning disciple with the gentle rebuke, “O thou of little faith, [why] didst thou doubt?”

Then safely aboard their little craft, they saw the wind fall and the crash of the waves become a ripple. Soon they were at their haven, their safe port, where all would one day hope to be. The crew as well as his disciples were filled with deep amazement. Some of them addressed him by a title which I declare today: “Truly thou art the Son of God.” (Adapted from Farrar, *The Life of Christ*, pp. 310–13; see Matt. 14:22–33.)

It is my firm belief that if as individual people, as families, communities, and nations, we could, like Peter, fix our eyes on Jesus, we too might walk triumphantly over “the swelling waves of disbelief” and remain “unterrified amid the rising winds of doubt.” But if we turn away our eyes from him in whom we must believe, as it is so easy to do and the world is so much tempted to do, if we look to the power and fury of those terrible and destructive elements around us rather than to him who can help and save us, then we shall inevitably sink in a sea of conflict and sorrow and despair.

At such times when we feel the floods are threatening to drown us and the deep is going to swallow up the tossed vessel of our faith, I pray we may always hear amid the storm and the darkness that sweet utterance of the Savior of the world: “Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.” (Matt. 14:27.)<sup>19</sup>

## Suggestions for Study and Teaching

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### Questions

- President Hunter teaches that Jesus Christ is the source of true peace (see section 1). What experiences have helped you come to know this truth? How can we receive the peace that Jesus offers?

- How does loving others bring us peace? (See section 2.) How does living the gospel help us have peace? Why is “unconditional surrender” to the Savior necessary for us to have peace?
- Review President Hunter’s teachings in section 3. How have you experienced the fulfillment of the Savior’s promise to “give you rest” from your burdens as you come unto Him?
- Reflect on President Hunter’s account of Peter walking on water (see section 4). What can you learn from this account about how to find peace in times of trouble? How has the Savior helped you to “be of good cheer” and “be not afraid” in difficult times?

### *Related Scriptures*

Psalms 46:10; 85:8; Isaiah 32:17; Mark 4:36–40; Romans 8:6; Galatians 5:22–23; Philippians 4:9; Mosiah 4:3; D&C 19:23; 59:23; 88:125

### *Teaching Help*

Invite class members to select one of the sections in the chapter they would like to discuss and to form a group with others who chose the same section. Encourage each group to discuss the related question at the end of the chapter.

### **Notes**

1. In Eleanor Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter* (1994), 185.
2. In Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter*, 266.
3. Boyd K. Packer, “President Howard W. Hunter—He Endured to the End,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1995, 29.
4. “The Gifts of Christmas,” *Ensign*, Dec. 2002, 16.
5. In Conference Report, Oct. 1966, 15–16.
6. “The Beacon in the Harbor of Peace,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 18.
7. *The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, ed. Clyde J. Williams (1997), 40.
8. “A More Excellent Way,” *Ensign*, May 1992, 61, 63.
9. “The Golden Thread of Choice,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 18.
10. In Conference Report, Oct. 1966, 16.
11. In Conference Report, Oct. 1969, 113.
12. *The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, 172–73.
13. *The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, 73–74.
14. “The Gifts of Christmas,” 19.
15. In Conference Report, Apr. 1976, 157.
16. “Master, the Tempest Is Raging,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 35.
17. In Conference Report, Oct. 1966, 16–17.
18. In Conference Report, Oct. 1970, 131–32.
19. “The Beacon in the Harbor of Peace,” 19.