

Yet this I call to mind,
and therefore I have hope...
Lamentations 3:1-24 (NIV)

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WHERE DOES MY HOPE COME FROM?

My family was caught up in the partition struggle between India and Pakistan 70 years ago during which more than a million people died and 14 million were displaced. My aunt took a terrifying train journey at the time: a young lady wearing six sets of clothes, carrying one suitcase with all her belongings. Many didn't arrive.

We see world conflicts today which are deeply established, between strong minded opponents, resourced by powerful nations, that affect millions of innocent people. Many of us wonder how these situations can change. But wars do end; conflicts do cease.

In the Bible, the author of Lamentations – traditionally thought to be Jeremiah – describes a person who faced God's anger. It was a hopeless situation. There was nothing he could do. Yet he called to mind God's love, and so had hope. Picture Jesus facing God's anger on our behalf.

We may not understand why God allows great conflicts in our world. There are no easy answers. But we can choose to focus on God's mercy and love, and have hope.

My aunt died a few years ago, living in her own home, having enjoyed many years with her children as well as four grandchildren. Starting that train journey 70 years earlier she wouldn't have imagined that one day she'd enjoy summer afternoons with her grandchildren. And yet in time she did.



PRAYER

Heavenly Father, in ourselves we are not able to bring peace or hope to this world. But thank you that you have not forgotten us. We pray for your mercy on our world, our cities and our towns. Give us peace we pray. In Jesus' name.

ACTION

Visit older neighbours or relations and ask them to share memories where they've been caught up in conflict situations. If appropriate, offer to pray with them, asking Jesus to give them peace, and sooth any painful memories. Remember to pray for them afterwards.

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.

Revelation 21:4 (NKJV)

Rachel Rounds is head of Media and Communications at Bible Society.

HOPE IN DESPAIR

Hope comes in the early hours of the morning when I creep into my little boy's room and watch him sleeping. His face is utterly at peace and, to me, he is utterly beautiful. I remember the despair over lost babies and the days when all hope failed. I remember too lying in a hospital bed at 24 weeks – somehow knowing that, despite the fear and uncertainty, he was meant to be. Then I remember Hannah – her prayer and the weeping; and Sarah – her despair and the laughter. Hope does remain

in the midst of despair: it is a gift from God – it tells us that despite our own fears, he never lets go and he hears us. Hope is still here, breathing softly and snuffling next to a teddy. Thank you for my son, Tanoa Isaac – my 'vessel of laughter' – whose name reminds me, every day, of that promise.

PRAYER

Dear Lord, thank you for the gift of hope. Thank you too that however much we may despair, you never let go. Amen

He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'
2 Corinthians 12:9 (NIV)

Katie Kyle is a military wife, mummy to three children, and a desert-dweller (due to current posting).

GOD'S POWER IN OUR WEAKNESS

One of the times I felt weakest in my life was when I had two babies and my husband was in Afghanistan. Sleepless nights and non-stop days left me feeling broken, physically and emotionally. Strangely, it was a time punctuated by happy moments. A postman promising to get my Christmas present to Afghanistan when I stood crying at the till, the children unwrapping Sellotape by my feet. A nanny scooping the children up for a day at her farm. A rat-catcher making it his mission to expel the rats from our

garden. The same Bible verse appeared repeatedly. During that time, God showed me that his grace is sufficient, sending rays of peace and hope to shine through the clouds.

PRAYER

We pray for all military families during times of separation. We pray for marriages that are tested and children who may encounter uncomfortable emotions. May they know your grace and peace especially in times of weakness. Amen

17
OCTOBER
26 DAYS

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.
Ephesians 2:14 (NIV)

Rebecca – a wife, a mother, and a member of the Mothers' Union in South Sudan.

PAIN TURNED TO BEAUTY

About four years ago, 22 of my friends were raped and murdered in my church compound. We buried husband and I prayed for him for nine years before anything happened. But Jesus has changed us both and brought peace into our home. It's not a perfect peace, but it makes a powerful difference.

PRAYER
This week, Father, we pray that you would show us where we can restore hope for peace – in our families, communities, nations and in our relationships with you.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:7 (GNT)

Ricky Bain works for CVM, a Christian men's movement. His is married to Joanne and a father of five.

ULTIMATE PEACE

The Charter of the United Nations was signed in 1945. It states: 'We the peoples of the United Nations have determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind ... and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security ... have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims; As we look around us, we see the world is still a battleground. Mankind still seeks

power, money and control; the enemy of our souls is out to destroy the human race. Only through our relationship with Jesus, having the mind of Christ, will we have peace that the world does not understand.

PRAYER
Blessed are the peacemakers: I pray for unity in the Church, that we will all be peacemakers who look for the gold in each other.

19
OCTOBER
24 DAYS

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:7 (NIV)

Lance Corporal Patrick Steen is a serving soldier in the Queen's Royal Hussars. He joined the army in 2011 and became a Christian in 2012.

WHEN HOPE FINDS YOU

While on exercise halfway through my time in basic training at ATFC Winchester, I had a tangible and very real experience of the peace of God. I was finding the exercise rather challenging: it was cold and wet, and I was wondering whether I had made the correct decision in joining the Army. One night, whilst on sentry duty, I found myself alone thinking these thoughts. Yet in an instant, I felt a calming and reassuring presence that brought peace to my situation.

PRAYER
Pray for all those who are weary and burdened that they may find rest and peace. For those who carry loads that seem too great for them that their load will be lightened.

Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.
Proverbs 3:17 (KJV)

Rev Ian Kemp is an Army Chaplain who is currently serving with The Second Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment.

A FORETASTE OF PEACE

God's promised future for our world is the subject of Cecil Spring-Rice's second verse in his hymn: 'I Vow To Thee My Country'. Written ten years after the original in 1918 and in response to a world transformed through war, it contrasts the hardness of war with the gentleness of peace – the Christian hope for the future. Peace had been won at great cost but Spring-Rice knew that true peace could not be won through the violence of humanity and would not come in its fullness in this world. That

peace was a taste of what is to come and a sign that God's kingdom is near. War had ruled for four long years but peace would win out in the end. So too God has won.

PRAYER
Heavenly Father, we thank you for your promise of true peace. Give to us, your servants, that peace which the world cannot give; that we may offer a foretaste of your peace to those we meet in both our words and actions. Amen