



# prayer *life!*

## Weekly Prayer Focus

November 11, 2018

### Peace on Earth

*Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. —Romans 12:17-21*

One hundred years ago, things were a lot like they are today. A precarious system of alliances kept the peace—barely. All the nations of Europe had arranged to “have each other’s backs” if any one of them became too aggressive. England promised to back Belgium, and Germany supported Austria, etc. If one country attacked another, a big neighbor would step up and settle the matter. This system had kept the peace for nearly a century since the destructive conquests of Napoleon.

Also much like in our time, there were aggrieved minorities, like Serbia, who had to submit to the arrangements made by the great powers. Naturally, the great powers arranged things to their advantage, and the smaller groups had to make do. So be it. The arrangement kept the peace and served the greater good. This state of affairs is not unlike today—with different names.

Then one day—June 28, 1914 to be exact—and angry Serbian named Gavrilo Princip stepped up the motorcade of the Archduke of Austria and shot him dead. All hell broke loose.

That expression is more literally true than we think. War on an industrial scale took over 10 million lives and left the world staggering—wondering what had gone wrong—and how to fix it.

The problem was that the great powers were more interested in fixing the blame than fixing the problem. Vengeance was on their hearts and in the air. Since Germany had lost, the blame fell on them, along with whatever punishment that the victors determined. The military and economic restrictions strangled the nation, which was already depleted by four years of the most intense warfare the world had ever seen.

Resentment increased, and Germany groaned under the boot of world vengeance. Inflation soared and it took a wagonload of money to buy a loaf of bread. And human vengeance achieved its usual result. Germany bided its time until the opportunity for revenge presented itself, and another aggrieved man came on the scene—Adolf Hitler—and another 50 to 70 million people were slaughtered.

The horrors of war are not a failure on God’s part. They’re the outworking of the best-laid plans of men. Only God’s grace holds us back from our headlong pursuit of human justice and its horrific consequences. The things that make for peace are not in humanity. That’s why we pray.

Something happened after the Second World War that made a difference in world affairs. Decisions were made for rebuilding instead of revenge, and grace was extended to the offending powers. Enemies became trade partners and allies. World conflict turned toward world enterprise and relative stability.

No, peace does not reign on earth. It never will until the Prince of Peace—the Holy Infant whose birth we’ll soon celebrate—returns to rule this world, which belongs to Him by right of Creation and Redemption. Peace is still uneasy, but we live under the protection of divine grace that operates on earth by the power of God, who works in the world through His people, the Church—US.

And we access God’s power through prayer. The truth of God’s Word comes to life in our lives through prayer. The grace the world needs starts in our hearts and homes and daily relationships, by the power of God alone and to the praise of His glory above all.

## Grace in Life

Not by technology, education, or human ingenuity. Not by democracy, elections, or some ideal system of government. Peace comes to earth by God’s grace alone. Grace in the homes and relationships of God’s people goes on display before our neighbors and colleagues, and invites them to partake.

God’s grace doesn’t make His people passive or allow evil to go unchecked. It corrects our motives and makes them constructive instead of hurtful. It directs our actions to help rather than harm. It trains us to trust the Lord to bring justice, not by punishing sinners but by turning them into saints.

Grace enables citizens to trust God with our rights and frees us from the need to obtain them at the expense of others. Grace stills the lust to harm in the name of justice and delivers us from the lie that getting our “pound of flesh” brings justice. What good is a pound of flesh, anyway?

Grace enables us to turn our focus from the sins and offenses of others—even great atrocities—to examine our own hearts for the same evil lurking within ourselves. Then it frees us to confess our sin and receive the forgiveness and cleansing Christ bought for us on the cross.

According to Paul’s words in Romans 12, *to do what is honorable in the sight of all* means ...

- Doing everything in our power to live peacefully with others
- Never avenging ourselves
- Leaving payback to God. Only He deserves vengeance and enacts perfect justice.
- Rejoicing in God’s justice without delighting in the hurt of others
- Doing good instead of evil to your enemy
- Refusing to let evil and the thirst for revenge control us
- Overcoming evil with good

## Prayer for Northpoint

Pray for God’s transforming grace to reign in your own heart and in our church body.

1. **Our Pastors and Directors:** Scott Williams, Tony Chute, Terilyn Brown, Geoff Grant, Taylor Mendoza, and Marti Wiegman.
2. **Our Lay Elders:** Tim East, Steve Flood, Mark Kiker, Mike Russell, and Vinoj Zechariah.
3. **Our Church Staff:** Michelle Balga, Bob Brown, Andria Brucks, Jacob Williams, Carolee Jefferson, Amber McEwen, Mark Norland, Corie Saunders, and Teri Vaughn.

## Prayer Record

Note when and how God answers your prayers. It will help you to see that He really is paying attention.

Date	Request	Date	Answer

*For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. —John 1:16*