

The Watford Word

www.watfordchurchofchrist.org

What's on

Sunday 18 May: 10:30 AM.

Tunde & Charl speaking

Sunday 25 May: 10:30 AM.

Malcolm speaking

Sunday 01 June: 10:30 AM.

Stefan speaking

Monday 02 June: Mentoring training (**NOTE change of date**)

Sunday 08 June: 10:30 AM. International Service

Sunday 15 June: 10:30 AM. Malcolm speaking

Sunday 22 June: 10:30 AM. Malcolm speaking

Sunday 29 June: 10:30 AM. Church service

Sunday 06 July: Outdoor service hosted by the Thames Valley churches of Christ

Monday 7th July: Mentoring training

Sunday 20 July: 10:30 AM. Dr Rolan Monje is our visiting speaker from the Manila ICOC.

Monday 1st September: Mentoring training
3-5 October: Young Professionals' retreat



How to embrace both the peace of Christ *and* his suffering.

Jesus & Paul

Jesus said, "*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives*" (John 14:27). Yet this same Jesus walked straight into betrayal, mockery, torture, and crucifixion. For Christians, this raises a tension: How do we reconcile the peace of Christ with a life that includes suffering, trials, and constant pressure?

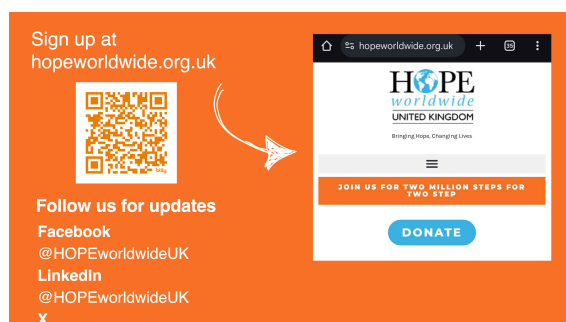
Paul deepens the paradox. Shipwrecked, flogged, imprisoned, and sleepless (2 Corinthians 11:23–28), he also wrote, "*I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation*" (Philippians 4:12). Paul's peace wasn't the absence of hardship; it was Christ present *in* hardship. But we must be careful with Paul. Was he *describing* his personal calling or *prescribing* a universal standard for Christian peace and suffering? That distinction matters.

Peace in our time?

In our 21st-century context, the pressure to do more, achieve more, and sacrifice more can become its own idol. We risk defining faithfulness by exhaustion, as if effort and discipline could substitute for the grace of God. For many in our community, the temptation isn't laziness—it's trying to earn righteousness through commitment. That's not new. Israel did the same. God said, "*I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings*" (Hosea 6:6).

There is a difference between the rhythms we *choose* and the trials God *allows*. Paul didn't seek out beatings; he accepted them in obedience to his unique calling. Today's fast pace is different. In the first century, limitations like daylight, seasons, and travel forced built-in rest. That

HOPE Sponsored Walk



The Paradox of Peace and Suffering in the Christian Life

I have been reading and studying about the concept of Sabbath, and, more broadly, rest. It seems there is a paradox in the Christian life.

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The Three Counties Churches of Christ

didn't make life easier, just differently structured. We are often tempted to override those limitations, chasing productivity, and calling it faithfulness.

Let's go deeper

God is not against sacrifice—but He wants something deeper first: Obedience (1 Samuel 15:22), justice (Proverbs 21:3), mercy (Matthew 9:13), and a heart that knows Him. The question is not just *what* we do, but *why*. Is our labour driven by grace or by a need to prove ourselves?

Christ's own life models this balance. He withdrew to pray. He said "no" to crowds. He rested. Yet He also walked into suffering, not for its own sake, but for the joy set before Him (Hebrews 12:2). His suffering brought peace—not just for Himself, but for us.

Paul echoes this: *"Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ... we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance"* (Romans 5:1–3). Peace and suffering aren't opposites in the Christian life—they coexist. But only when our suffering is grounded in obedience, not in performance.

Reflection

So we ask ourselves: Are we labouring *from* grace or striving *for* it? Do we know the peace of Christ even in hardship, or are we trying to earn peace through it? In following Jesus, we find rest *and* the cross—but always in that order.

Your brother, Malcolm

Watford Contribution Details

Church bank account: Three Counties churches of Christ HSBC

Sort Code: 401915

Account Number: 04759613

This Week's Quiz

Any ideas what this is and its significance for the message of the gospel?

Answers next week.



Answers to last week's quiz

This is one of Nebuchadnezzar II's cylinders—like ancient plaques — buried under temples he built or restored in Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar II is a *huge* figure in the Bible (think: destruction of Jerusalem, exile of the Jews — 2 Kings 24–25, Jeremiah, Daniel). A lot of Nebuchadnezzar's surviving inscriptions are about construction, which also fits with the Bible. Daniel 4:30 mentions him bragging, *"Is not this the great Babylon I have built..."*. In Daniel, God allows Nebuchadnezzar to succeed but later humbles him for not recognising the true God's sovereignty.



Archaeology cannot prove that the Bible is from God, but it repeatedly confirms the Bible as a reliable historical document.

Watford Media

