

A Picture of Perfect Peace

Long ago, a man sought the perfect picture of peace. Not finding one that satisfied, he announced a contest to produce this masterpiece.

The challenge stirred the imagination of artists everywhere, and paintings arrived from far and wide. Finally, the great day of revelation arrived. The judges uncovered one peaceful scene after another, while the viewers clapped and cheered.

The tension grew. Only two paintings remained veiled

As a judge pulled the cover from one, a hush fell over the crowd.

A mirror-smooth lake reflected the lacy green birches under the soft blush of the evening sky. Along the grassy shore, a flock of sheep grazed undisturbed. Surely this was the winner.

The man with the vision uncovered the second painting himself, and the crowd gasped in surprise. Could this be peace?

A tumultuous waterfall cascaded down a rocky precipice; the crowd could almost feel its cold, penetrating spray. Stormy-gray clouds threatened to explode with lightning, wind and rain. In the midst of the thundering noises and bitter chill, a spindly tree clung to the rocks at the edge of the waterfall. One of its branches reached out in front of the torrential waters as if foolishly seeking to experience its full power.

A little bird had built a nest in the elbow of the branch. Content and undisturbed in her stormy surroundings, she rested on her eggs. With her eyes closed and her wings ready to cover her little ones, she manifested peace that transcends all earthly turmoil.

Perhaps you find yourself today in a world of disturbance, confusion and uncertainty. If so, you are not alone. It's called life. And we all desire to have peace.

Charles Wesley, an English leader of the Wesley movement, put it this way:

*I rest beneath the Almighty's shade,
My griefs expire, my troubles cease;
Thou, Lord, on whom my soul is stayed,
Wilt keep me still in perfect peace.*

The Bible has much to say about peace for the sojourner, including this verse quoting Jesus:

I have said these things to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world (John 16:33 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter