

The Daily Amen Devotional #1 – Peace

How much peace have you experienced in the last 24 hours?

I don't mean to sound bossy or imposing, but if you glossed over that question without actually *answering* it, will you shift your eyes back to the top and start over?

(Sorry about that. I just know my own tendency to skim these things.) So now that I've made things awkward, let's move on.

Jesus said, "*Peace I leave you. My peace I give to you;
I don't give it to you as the world gives.
Don't let your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid.*" (John 14:27)

We like to slap that verse on coffee cups and framed art, but the setting in which Jesus pledged his own peace to the disciples was far from cute and comfortable.

For the record, Jesus made this promise to his 12 closest followers on the most agonizing night of his life. He knew the cross was his near future, so this peace he promised was evidently the kind that is unaffected by circumstances.

But don't miss this: the very next thing Jesus says is, "...*don't let your hearts be troubled.*" Which means that despite the fact that Jesus is giving away his peace, fear is still an option we can choose.

When life stirs up an opportunity for fear and anxiety, it's our responsibility to accept Jesus promised. *Or* we can choose to stress about the impossibility of the current situation & our inability to fix it. (This normally doesn't work out that well for us, which is why our hearts get all troubled, and our nerves get out of sorts.)

But is accepting Jesus' peace really all that easy?

So like...my greatest fear comes to life (a terminal health diagnosis for my child, a terrorist attack, a major loss of income, or insert your own worst nightmare) - and I'm supposed to shake hands with it and walk away singing because I've got peace like a river in my soul?

Or...major traumatic events aside, is Jesus' peace really supposed to make a difference in everyday complications like marriage and parenting and career issues?

It doesn't seem as easy as saying, "Wow, Jesus. Thanks for that peace. I'll take you up on it. Doesn't change a thing, but it sure helps...I guess."

The men seated at the table when Jesus made this promise must have had a similar attitude. They clearly didn't take Jesus' gift of peace to heart because as soon as the deadly drama unfolded later that evening, they scattered. *And they scattered because they were scared.* (Which isn't exactly the picture of serenity, mind you.)

They looked at the situation and responded in fear because they didn't believe Jesus had power to fix it, change it, or deliver them from it. So they ran and hid to save themselves.

We do the same.

We either think Jesus isn't capable or He isn't willing to intervene. We look at the impossibility of our circumstances and believe our chances of escape are greater if we do things ourselves instead of trust Jesus to show up for us. (Busted.)

But fast forward 3 days from that night when the disciples bolted in fear. When all hope seemed dead, Jesus walked straight out of the grave and proved his power to keep his promises.

Those same men who initially doubted now believed so fully that they risked their lives to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ...*because they were convinced Jesus was able and trustworthy to do what he said he would do.*

Write this down. Screen shot it. Whatever you have to do to remember it:

**Believing Jesus over what we see is the *only way*
we will experience the peace he promised.**

When I flip out in fear, or get all tangled up in a tight stress wad, it's because I've looked at the problem at hand without factoring Jesus into the picture. Either that, or I've decided my way of fixing The Thing is better than Jesus' way. (And take it from someone whose chosen the My Way option too many times: that route will leave you in a bigger mess than the one you started with.)

So maybe next time you find yourself in an Impossible Situation, ask yourself:

**“How many times have I raised someone from the dead?”
If the answer is ZERO, then you've got a better chance believing Jesus on this one.**

(That's a promise.)

Peace,

Amy