

A DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

It Is Well With My Soul

The Eschatological Grammar of Christian Peace

Romans 8:38–39 • Hebrews 11:6 • Romans 14:8

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life... will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

THE AWAKENING

There are moments in a life when everything that seemed solid dissolves. The phone call comes. The diagnosis arrives. The marriage ends. The casket is lowered. And in that moment, the faith we declared so easily in settled circumstances is tested to its core.

Horatio Spafford knew that moment. In November 1873, his four daughters drowned in the Atlantic when the *Ville du Havre* collided with an iron sailing ship. He sailed to meet his grief-stricken wife, and as his ship passed near the site of the wreck, he wrote what became one of the most enduring confessions of Christian faith ever set to music. But the hymn he wrote is not merely a record of personal resilience. It is a theological architecture — a structured declaration of how the Gospel transforms the grammar of suffering.

The fourth stanza stands as the hymn’s eschatological climax. After three stanzas addressing present peace — despite sin’s guilt, Satan’s attacks, and the sovereignty of a God who allows suffering — Spafford lifts his eyes toward the horizon of history: “And Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight.” It is here that the full weight of the confession lands. And at the center of that landing is a single two-word phrase that contains everything: “even so.”

THE FOUNDATIONAL TEXT

Stanza 4 — “It Is Well With My Soul” (Horatio Spafford, 1873)

*“And Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
Even so, it is well with my soul.”*

Romans 8:38–39

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Romans 14:8

“If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.”

Hebrews 11:6

“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”

WHAT THE TEXT REVEALS

1. The Hymn Is a Complete Theological Cycle

The four stanzas of “It Is Well” are not arbitrary verses. They trace the full architecture of Christian confidence through four dimensions of adversity:

- Stanza 1: Present peace despite sin’s burden — “my sin, not in part but the whole, is nailed to the cross”
- Stanza 2: Present peace despite Satan’s attacks — “Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come”
- Stanza 3: Present peace in light of divine sovereignty — “My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought”
- Stanza 4: Future hope at the horizon of history — “Haste the day when my faith shall be sight”

Together they present what Spafford could not have articulated without the Gospel: peace in the present because of Christ’s finished work, and confident hope for the future because of Christ’s promised return. The hymn moves from justification to sanctification to glorification — the entire *ordo salutis* in verse form.

2. “Even So” Is the Most Theologically Dense Phrase in the Hymn

The phrase “even so” is deceptively small. It carries the weight of every unresolved grief, every inexplicable loss, every prayer that seemed to go unanswered. It means: “despite this,” “nevertheless,” “in the face of all of this.” For Spafford it contained immense personal weight:

The Weight of “Even So”

Even though I buried my four daughters in the Atlantic
Even though I do not understand God’s timing
Even though faith is hard and sight would be easier
Even though the trumpet means judgment as well as joy
Even though cosmic upheaval is terrifying
EVEN SO — it is well with my soul.

“Even so” is not optimism. It is not denial. It is not positive thinking. It is the deliberate grammatical decision of a man who has counted the cost of faith and chosen it anyway — not because circumstances improved, but because the object of his faith is immovable.

3. The Fourth Stanza Is Eschatologically Grounded

The imagery of stanza four is drawn directly from the New Testament’s language of the Second Coming. “Faith shall be sight” echoes 2 Corinthians 5:7 and 1 Corinthians 13:12. “The clouds be rolled back as a scroll” draws on Revelation 6:14 and Isaiah 34:4. “The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend” quotes nearly verbatim from 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

Spafford is not writing poetry. He is writing theology. His peace is not rooted in how things feel today; it is rooted in how things end. The end is certain. The Lord will descend. Faith will become sight. And that eschatological certainty — not emotional relief, not restored circumstances — is what makes it possible to say “it is well” in the present tense.

THE BIBLICAL ARCHITECTURE

The hymn encodes a pattern that runs through the entire biblical narrative: comprehensive confidence is always eschatologically grounded. It is not enough to declare peace in the present. Paul in Philippians 4 declares peace “in every situation” — but he grounds it in “the Lord is near” (v. 5). Peter instructs a persecuted church to “set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed” (1 Peter 1:13). The Revelation is given not to frighten but to anchor: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End” (22:13).

This is the shape of authentic Christian peace: it is not contingent on circumstances because it is anchored beyond history. The storms of stanzas one through three — guilt, spiritual warfare, incomprehensible suffering — do not destroy the soul that is moored to the eschatological certainty of stanza four. They cannot, because the anchor holds beyond the reach of any storm.

There is also a critical epistemological structure here. Paul’s “I am convinced” in Romans 8:38 is not wish-fulfillment. The Greek verb πεπεισμαι (perfect passive) means “I have been persuaded and remain persuaded.” It is not a daily mood. It is a settled conviction reached by theological reasoning. Spafford’s “even so” has the same structure: it is the fruit of a mind that has worked through the logic of the Gospel and arrived at a resting place that circumstances cannot dislodge.

The hymn also embeds the twin eschatological realities that make the “even so” possible. The trump that sounds carries both judgment and joy: judgment for those outside of Christ, joy for those who belong to Him. Spafford can say “it is well” at the thought of the trumpet precisely because Romans 8:1 has already been resolved: “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” The very day that terrifies the world is the day for which the believer longs.

CORE THESIS

“Even So”

Christian peace is not the absence of unresolved grief, incomprehensible loss, or unanswered questions. It is the decision—grounded in the finished work of Christ and the certain hope of His return—to confess that because of Jesus, and in the face of everything, it is well with my soul.

THE QUESTION THAT MATTERS MOST

If you stood today at the precise intersection of your deepest unresolved grief and the certain hope of Christ’s return — the place where Horatio Spafford stood above those Atlantic waters — could you say “even so”?

If not, what specific Gospel truth — not circumstance, not feeling — would need to become more real to you than it currently is?

A PRAYER FROM THE AWAKENING

Father, we confess that our peace is too often contingent. We are well when things go well, and undone when they do not. We have confused comfort with faith and emotional stability with spiritual depth. Forgive us.

We stand before you with losses we do not understand, questions we cannot resolve, and griefs we have not yet named. We do not ask you to make it feel easy. We ask you to make the Gospel more real than the grief — not by minimizing the grief, but by magnifying the Christ who swallowed death and rose.

Teach us the grammar of “even so.” Make us people who can say it honestly, not as a performance of faith but as a settled conviction rooted in Your finished work and Your certain return. Let the trumpet in the distance be not a source of terror but a source of courage for everything we face between now and then.

Lord, haste the day. And until it comes — even so — it is well. In the name of Jesus, who is our peace. Amen.

SCRIPTURE TREASURY

Category	Reference	Scripture
<i>Eschatological Certainty</i>	1 Thessalonians 4:16–17	<i>“For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.”</i>
<i>Eschatological Certainty</i>	Revelation 21:4	<i>“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”</i>
<i>Present Peace</i>	Romans 8:1	<i>“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”</i>
<i>Present Peace</i>	Philippians 4:7	<i>“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”</i>
<i>Faith Under Suffering</i>	2 Corinthians 4:17–18	<i>“For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen.”</i>
<i>Faith Under Suffering</i>	Romans 5:3–5	<i>“We also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame.”</i>
<i>Belonging to God</i>	Romans 14:8	<i>“If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.”</i>
<i>Inseparable Love</i>	Romans 8:38–39	<i>“Neither death nor life... nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”</i>
<i>Faith Pleasing to God</i>	Hebrews 11:6	<i>“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”</i>
<i>Faith Pleasing to God</i>	Hebrews 11:1	<i>“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”</i>