

A Heart of Peace

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[0 : 00] So Isaiah 26 verse 3. You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast because they trust in you.!

I will not believe. A week later, his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, Peace be with you. Then he said to Thomas, Put your finger here, see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe. Thomas said to him, My Lord and my God.

Then Jesus told him, Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.

But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you have seen life in his name. Good morning, everyone.

[1 : 19] Thank you very much, Owen, for doing our reading this morning. In a way, you might think that they are two contrasting scriptures.

The one is a great promise of peace. And then the one about Thomas, really. We're taking Thomas this morning as an example that in our life, you know, we start off with peace when we come to know the Lord.

But often there's things in our life that can cause doubt to creep in. And we lose some of that peace. So Thomas is someone, as an example, that had that peace.

He lost some of his peace. He lost his peace. But he regained that peace again. So we're using Thomas as an example. And so, the verse this morning in Isaiah 26 and verse 3, it's a wonderful verse.

It's a verse that's part of a song, a song that was to be sung by the children of Israel. It's the promise for all believers of perfect peace.

[2 : 36] And the Hebrew words originally don't say perfect, but they call it shalom, shalom. Peace, peace.

A double peace. And Charles Spurgeon, he once said, God doesn't do anything by halves, but everything by doubles. And we're all looking for peace.

And so many of us, you know, we look in the wrong places. We look to the world for our peace. We look and think of finance. If we're financially secure, we're okay.

We look at having popularity. But peace is not found in these things. Peace is not found in the things that people strive after. Perfect peace is not found in the absence of trouble.

Because you can have perfect peace in the midst of trouble. And for the believer, perfect peace is not based on your performance. How many chapters of the Bible you read in the day.

[3 : 40] Perfect peace is only found in the presence of the Prince of Peace, the Lord Jesus Christ. Many years ago, many, many years ago, I spoke with a woman who said that when she came to Jesus, she found that peace.

And that peace flowed into all areas of her life. And around that time, she experienced severe trouble. Life and death proportions.

But she said that she had an inner peace. She said it was unbelievable peace. True and all, she trusted God. And she came out the other side. But she said, would you believe now that even, you know, things that aren't half as big as that seem to bother me and I don't have peace in it.

You know, perfect peace is based on God. Yet, we are the weak links. And what we take into our minds affects us. Our experience of peace may then vary.

So, perfect peace is our experience when we fix our mind on God, as the verse says. And let scripture flow from your mind into your heart.

[4 : 56] And trust God in all things. God is the provider, the verse tells us, of that peace. And he is the keeper of that peace. Perfect peace is peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 5 and 1. And that peace with God is foundational. It's solid. It cannot be moved. It depends totally on Christ.

And what he has done. And is anchored on the finished work of the cross. And the fact that he is risen, he is our peace. And the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our life is peace.

He produces peace in our life. Not only do we experience peace with God, but very importantly, we experience the overflow of that. The experience of the peace of God in our daily lives.

Even in the midst of big trouble. So, we're not to be conformed to the world. But to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. We need to fix our mind.

[6 : 01] And fellowship with God is very important. Prayer is important. Reading scripture and fellowship with believers are all part of that. That as we go through life, we're trusting the Lord with all our heart.

And we're not leaning on our own understanding of the way the world looks and things. In all our ways, we acknowledge him and he directs our paths. But I think the area that we're most vulnerable of all, of losing the peace that is ours, that God has given us, in our lives, is from our heart.

Because we see the world around us. You know, you've got to only turn on the television and you'll see what's going on in the world. And it's so disheartening. And it can affect your peace.

Because your heart does affect your peace. And your heart is a vulnerable area. And your heart will actually alter your thinking as well. If your mind isn't solid on what you believe, then your mind can be swayed by your heart.

I often see people on television programs buying a house or something like that. And they say, well, I know my head is telling me that not to buy that house.

[7 : 12] The wall is falling down over there. But my heart is telling me to buy it. And often, they make a decision based on their heart. I remember, I'll just give you an example of this.

I cringe as I do. But when I was going up with Shirley, boyfriend and girlfriend, we went down to the Gap of the Low. And Shirley loved horses.

Now, I don't mind a horse and looking at a horse at a cattle show when I'm up in the stand. But don't put me near a horse. And I knew in my mind I wasn't going to get up on a horse. So I went into a jaunting car.

And the fellow said, are you sure you won't go on the horse? I said, no. He tied the horse on the back. And off we went. And Shirley went off up the hill before us. And she was galloping away. And then she was joined by two fellows on horseback.

And that was all right for, you know, a half an hour or something. But it was going on a bit long to me. And so, with my head, there's no way I'd go near the horse.

[8 : 17] But suddenly, I found myself on the horse. And I was going up the hill. Well, the horse was taking me up the hill. And I think probably the colour of my face was the whitest white you probably ever saw.

But it frightened off the two lads anyway. It didn't think so. Well, we all know the story of Thomas. You know, one thing we all know about Thomas was that Thomas doubted.

And, you know, Thomas had peace. But he ended up with doubt. And we want to see why today. You know, Thomas was a guy who was driven with his love for Jesus.

I think he had great love for the Lord. And he was moved by that love. And when Jesus spoke and he said, I'm going to the Father. Who was it that said, how do we get there?

We want to go as well. It was Thomas. And if you turn to John 11 and 16, we won't do so. But if we were to look there, we see Thomas full of enthusiasm. To follow Jesus at any cost.

[9 : 23] And, you know, he picks things up wrong with what Jesus said. But Jesus was talking about death and Lazarus and so on. And the disciples took it at, it could mean that if they go with Jesus, they would die.

But Thomas says, at all costs, let's go. He's spurring them on. He said, even if we all die, let's go with Jesus. And let's go and die with him if that's what it takes.

But in nine chapters, that enthusiasm, Thomas died out. That trust and faith that he had seemed to dwindle.

So what happened in those nine verses that put Thomas from peace to doubt?

Because what happened was this, that Thomas' heart was affected by what he saw. The way things were working out and Thomas could see it all happily on the ground.

[10:28] It was not what he expected. He had this vision with Jesus of where they were all going. Jesus was going to rule and everything. He was one part of that. But on the ground, what he was seeing was Jesus was on trial.

You know, they were all scattered. And Jesus was going through this awful crucifixion. The nails driven into his hands, and his feet and his side pierced.

Jesus dying and being buried. And you know, all this, when he heard that Jesus was with the disciples in that room when he wasn't there, he said, unless I see and unless I touch, I will not believe.

Because his heart was so affected by what he saw on the ground. And it didn't match his head and his vision of where he thought God was taking them.

I think that's an important lesson for him. And his heart really affected his thinking. The same thing I find happening in the Old Testament with Jacob.

[11:38] When Jacob perceived the word that Joseph was alive. Jacob said the same thing. His sons came back and said that, they came back and they said, Joseph is alive.

And if we look at Genesis 45, verse 26, I'll read it out. And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he said unto them.

And when he, sorry, no, that's the wrong verse. And he told them, saying, Joseph is yet alive. So they told him, Joseph is alive and he is governor of all the land of Egypt.

And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed him not. Jacob did not believe that Joseph was alive. Why did he not believe? Because his heart had suffered all those years believing that Joseph was alive, that Joseph was dead.

And now he's told Joseph is alive. And that is so painful in case it's not true. He just, he can't go through that pain again.

[12:50] So your heart does affect you in a major way. And the same is for Thomas. It's so painful that unless he can see and unless he can touch, and the touch was important to him because it really settled his heart.

You know, our heart is part of the emotions. He wanted to touch Jesus to make sure. Now, whether or not he touched Jesus, we don't know. I think seeing Jesus might have been just enough for him. But many things in our life can affect us through terrible things happening in our life. How can this be? How can God allow that to happen in my life?

How come I have this suffering in my life? How come my family don't know the Lord? There's all these questions that my heart will ask me. So my head has to be in the right place to answer those questions.

And things don't work out for us as we expect. I think sometimes we expect plain sailing when we trust in the Lord and everything. But God can take us through a path that we never expected.

[14:00] But God knows the end from the beginning. And, you know, perfect peace is when we look to God in every circumstances and when we're trusting God in every circumstance.

So when we experience situations where we're tested and trialed in different areas of our life, when things are not working out maybe the way we expect it, and we seem to lose our doubt and we lose our peace and doubts creep in, what is the solution for us?

It's the same as it was for Thomas. For Thomas, his doubt came to an end when he met with Jesus. When Jesus came into that room to Thomas, Thomas saw Jesus is alive.

And Jesus did not in such a rebuke Thomas. You know, he could have said to Thomas, How come you didn't believe? You were there when I said, at the death of Lazarus, I said, I am the resurrection and the life.

You should have believed, but no. Instead, he invited Thomas to see and to touch. And this led to the ultimate statement of peace.

[15:14] The ultimate statement of peace was made by Thomas, when he said, My Lord and my God. Thomas went from believing, from saying, Unless I see and this, I will not believe.

He went from that point to this wonderful statement of saying, My Lord and my God. He went from self-centeredness and fear to a life surrendered to, He's my Lord and He's my God.

And He's in control of everything. And the things I don't understand, I look to Him and I know that He is there. And He knows more than me. I don't know the in from the beginning, but He knows the

in from the beginning.

He knows the plan He has from you. And no matter if you can't see it, don't let your heart deceive you. Trust in God with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.

So how does this story of Thomas fit in with perfect peace? Because it shows us that our perception and understanding of peace is not based on our own feelings.

[16:26] It's about trusting in God. That's what gives us perfect peace. And, you know, we have the idea the way things are going to work out. And we don't always see the picture. And knowing that God knows that He is a sovereign God over all.

And He knows all things. And He knows what He's doing. And He knows the plans that He has for us. And we can trust knowing that everything works out for the good of them that love God.

We can take that. No matter what we're looking at today and seeing happening in your life and your family, you can trust that God is working everything out for good because you love God. And, you know, the heading today is a heart at peace.

And Proverbs 14, verse 13, says a heart at peace gives life to the body. You know, trusting God and believing in Jesus, there is a life that comes to us.

You know, John spoke about it as well. These things are written that you will believe and that in believing you'll have that life. You know, if we go in life, we need to have that life in us and that peace that God gives us.

[17:43] And these things are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that by believing you might have life to His name. Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.

Oops. Oops. Our life before we met Jesus was compared to that locked door, that room that the disciples were in.

Our life before we met Jesus was like that. We're in a room full of fear. But Jesus came into that room. We see it the first day when Thomas was missing. What was His first word when He came into that room?

It was peace. And then He showed them His hands on His feet. His hands on His feet and His side. And then they were glad when they saw that. And then He spoke again, peace was His words to them in that room.

We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. He gets rid of all the fear and we can trust God fully. And you know, taking that peace, thank you for that, taking that peace and having that peace, we're to go forth with that peace in our heart.

[18:56] You know, the Bible tells us having our feet shod with the gospel of peace is part of the armor of God. You know, we're going out there to tell people about peace with God.

We should have that experience ourselves in our heart. There's nothing like the peace of God. It gives life to your bones, the Bible tells us.

You know, if we're going after the things of the world, the Bible, in that verse in Proverbs, tells us that it rots your bones. But having peace with God, it gives life to your bones.

And Jesus spoke peace in that room. And we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. A heart of peace is a wonderful thing.

God is the keeper of our peace. God is the provider of our peace. God is the promiser of that peace. And perfect peace is from him.

[19:59] For us, we, you know, we look this morning at our minds and our hearts. And when we read Philippians chapter 4, that when our hearts are full of thanksgiving, when we see the sovereignty of God, and that God, and trusting that God is walking out everything in our life for our good, no matter maybe what way it looks right now, when we see that, our hearts become full of thanksgiving to God.

And when our hearts are full of thanksgiving, the peace of God keeps our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus. So it's walking around in a full circle that when we are, when we see God and trust in God, that peace flows into our lives, back into life, into our life.

You know, we looked at Thomas as an example this morning. We saw how everything changed for him when he saw the sovereignty of God, my Lord and my God.

When he saw that this morning, that God is, is in control of everything. So he didn't have to spend his time worrying and in doubt.

You know, he saw the risen Lord and he realized God is in control of everything. A heart at peace is a heart that is no longer saying, what if?

[21 : 29] What if tomorrow I get a puncture on my way to Cork? What if tomorrow this? What if tomorrow I get sick?

What if tomorrow this? What if tomorrow? And it's all full of anxiousness. It's no longer what if. It is what is the truth? What is the truth?

We had it this morning. Jesus is on the throne. They are the things that Philippians 4 tells us to think about. whatever things are true we're to think on those things.

It is true that God is in control. It is true that he is for us not against us. It is true of where we're going. This life is not all it is.

It's not about what ifs. It's about what is true. God is true. Jesus is on the throne. And we can be full of thanksgiving.

[22 : 24] And when we are full of thanksgiving to God our heart is full of peace. The peace of God is a wonderful thing. No circumstances, nothing, can take away the peace of God which is ours in Christ.

And we thank God for that. And I'm going to finish with a final verse or two from what I quoted from Philippians chapter 4.

I'm just going to read them out. So Philippians chapter 4 and verse 6 tells us this.

Be careful for nothing. That is, not to be anxious and stuff like that. but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving.

And that's the important thing. With thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God and the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and your minds through Christ Jesus.

[23 : 34] So may God bless his word to us this morning. And it says down in verse 8 whatever things are true whatever things are lovely think on these things.

Jesus is on the throne today. We can trust him no matter what's going on in our life we can trust him completely and trust God. And may the peace of God be with us all. And may we experience the peace of God in our life just the fact that we have peace with God but may also flow into every area of our life to the glory of God.

Amen.