

Perfect Peace

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 22 March 2020

[0:00] Let's go to Isaiah 26 and just to lead in. Of course, truly these are times of unrest, aren't they?! Disquiet, fear, confusion.

! Really, we could ask, what else can we expect? Really, from a world in rebellion against God. Some would blame God, wouldn't they? Don't blame God for this mess.

Blame God denying, God defying, God rejecting men. Especially Adam. It's all his fault. But no, really, we're all in the same boat, aren't we?

We're all sons of Adam. Peace can seem elusive, can't it, in such a time? It seems elusive such that, will it ever happen? Peace.

Like the idea of peace in the Middle East, that's almost an impossibility, isn't it? Of course, we know someone is going to come as the man of peace. He's going to be far from it. But, of course, we know that at such a time, people's thoughts turn to despair.

[1:05] And no wonder there's an increase in stress and suicidation. We know, I know there's some that I've had some awareness of that are in some difficulties at this time, in terms of their stress and overwhelmed.

And there's people, even people in our number that are facing some tough things. We know hours have been cut. Jobs are in peril. You know, there's a lot of unease across our community.

And including ourselves, we're not immune to it. Of course, we know the Bible says the rain falls on the just and the unjust. We know that we're all subject to the needs and boundaries of life.

But thankfully, brothers and sisters, tonight, we can take heart. There is an answer to a world in unrest and disquiet. We see that in Isaiah 26. And these words, of course, you'd be familiar, many, with these words.

Isaiah 26, from verse 3 through 4. It says, Peace, perfect peace.

[2:31] Peace. How do we define peace? More than that, perfect peace. Of course, we know, and I know my dad's itching to yell out. Not that my dad ever yells out.

But this word, perfect peace, it's actually in the Hebrew, not that we make much of the original languages, but it certainly is telling. Shalom, shalom, is what it says in the Hebrew.

You are a Hebrew reader. That's what you'd have in front of you here. Shalom, shalom. Peace, multiplied. Peace, double peace. Peace, peace, perfect peace.

And peace is the question tonight. And I do love preaching on such subjects. And I know it's probably not that long ago I've preached on such themes. But it bears repeating, doesn't it?

At such a time that we need to know peace. And peace, yes, it is possible. And it is promised. It is promised. Peace. Not just any peace, but a deep, abiding peace.

[3:31] God's kind of peace. True peace. And this peace is a peace that we can know. Amen? We can know this peace. Where does it come from? It says, thou will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed upon thee.

Stayed upon him. Now, I put to you our mental health is formed, it's framed by what our thoughts dwell upon. What is it that we dwell upon?

What is it that we think upon? We all have, you could say, mental constructs is a kind of buzz term that they use in, I guess, the health sector and such. Mental constructs such that these things that are framed, that are built up, that are constructed.

It's our mindset. It's our make-up. How we think. Our mind. And what are we to do when our minds are buffeted and barraged and beset by all these burdensome thoughts at times?

Of course, we just have to tune in to what the media is saying and there's more and more of that coming our way. But when stress and worries can threaten to overwhelm and overload us, we have someone we can turn to.

[4:43] Amen? And that's my plea for you tonight, to take heart. Our mind is stayed upon him. That's something we can do. Our mind stayed upon him. Such that there's a mind shift, isn't it? That we're sustained by him. That our mind is fixed upon him. That our mind, our thoughts are hopeful and hoping upon him.

And friends, the Bible tells us, for the one whose mind is stayed on thee, the Lord, it says that he will keep you in perfect peace.

It's his promise. He will keep us. He will guard us. Our thought life is very powerful, isn't it? These mental pictures we have at times and sometimes those mental pictures come from ungodly, wrecked places.

We can't but help be absorbing it as we live life. But our thought life is very powerful. It constrains us. It can overwhelm us. But thankfully, perfect peace is possible.

[5:54] This is not a peace that is from some pipe dream, some peace that is just merely philosophical. It is God's peace and it's offered to you.

And this peace, brothers and sisters and anyone who's hearing this who might not be saved, this is the peace that we must find in our lives, isn't it?

Don't go through life and miss this. It's the missing peace, as it were, in many people's lives. This peace, this peace that is deep down in your soul, it's a lasting peace.

It's an eternal peace. This peace goes on from the moment of salvation for eternity. Amen? That's when it begins and it continues on, doesn't it?

For the one who has peace with God. What's more, this peace is not dependent upon what happens for us. You know, you could be in a country where saying, I'm a Christian, means the death squad will shoot you.

[6:55] That's the reality, brothers and sisters. I know I've shared, in recent times, there's some graphic things. Christians getting killed. It's on the internet. They're getting shot.

They're getting killed in all manners of ways. There's torture. There's persecution. There's suffering. And it's all around us. To trust Christ could mean death for you. The Bible says to live is Christ. To die is gain. We just get there sooner. I was just talking to Julie on the way here and thinking, well, you know, how much time have we got? Not meaning to alarm you or anything, but of course it does make you think.

With the fact of the threat to our mortality and the fact that there's all of this escalating goings-on of potentially global control.

A lot of talk about New World Order. I saw a newspaper, the front page of the, I think it's the Tasmanian main newspaper, the Mercury or something.

[8:00] And the words in block letters, in bold print, as one of the big headlines on the front page of the Tasmanian newspaper was New World Order.

Now this is not the conspiracy theorists talking about it. This is the general media. And look, I'm not any doomsday soothsayer here or some prophet of doom and destruction.

But friends, I put to you that these are telling times, aren't they? And friends, yet our peace is not dependent on the circumstance.

They suddenly outlaw Christianity in Australia. Not that that's a likelihood this time, but who knows? But we need to stand firm and strong such that our peace is not dependent upon our comfort level. Amen? That's what I'm saying. Our comfort level doesn't, it's not the foundation for our peace. But God's peace can sustain us no matter what, no matter what happens.

[9:03] And we can be perfectly at peace. Our mind can be, it says. The mind that is stayed upon thee. Our mind can be sustained.

It can be at peace. It can be peaceful. We can be perfectly at peace. How so? How can we get a mind like that? How can we get this kind of a mind? I find a lot of keys in Philippians.

You might like to turn there. Of course, this is an allied scripture. There's many, many, many Bible verses we could give tonight. As we know, the Bible's jam-packed.

The promises about peace, the peace of God. But in the letter to the Philippians, Paul writes about peace. And as we turn there, this peace is that peace, it says, that surpasses all human understanding.

All reckoning and divisive men. And it's not found at the feet of a guru, this peace. This peace is not of man's making or manufacturing.

[10:04] This sure peace does not come by human reasoning or intellect. This peace is by trusting. Trusting.

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee because he trusted in thee. It's not at the feet of some man. It's in the presence of our mighty God.

It's as our mind is stayed upon him. As our trust is in him. As we have that total surrender to his will. It's a contentment that goes beyond the circumstance.

Such that we're content in whatsoever state we are in. That's a state of peace, isn't it? That, well, I'm content. Even though all of us would like more of something or other.

Yeah, we can be content, can't we? And God helps us to be. And this peace, it tells us here in Philippians 4, from verse 4 through 9. It tells us this peace is superior.

[11:07] It's far and above, exceeding. That which our understanding can comprehend. Beyond our conceiving, our conception. Philippians 4, verse 4 through 9.

And we see the context of this peace is telling. It says, rejoice in the Lord always. And again, I say, rejoice.

Starts with that. Verse 5. Philippians 4, verse 5. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Can't we find ourselves in that context?

Yes, I believe it. He's just around the corner. He's just behind the curtain. He's about to make his entrance. That's the sense of what I feel.

We are on the edge. And look, this could be, we might have this sermon on the internet and be looking back 10 years from now and thinking, well, he got it wrong.

[12:06] I'm not predicting or saying, I'm not turning a date or anything. But the Lord is at hand. As he was for Paul. As he was for the church of Philippi. We know the Lord is at hand.

And we need to be ready for any moment. He could be here. Verse 6. Be careful for nothing. In other words, don't be full of care about anything. But in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

Pray. Now some have paraphrased it such that don't worry about anything, pray about everything. Good way of kind of summing that up. Let your requests be made known unto God.

Don't worry about anything, pray about everything. Verse 7. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

That's that word again, isn't it? Like, thou wilt keep him in perfect peace. His mind is stayed on thee. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

[13:14] Verse 8. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report.

If there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things which you have both learnt and received and heard and seen in me do.

And the God of peace shall be with you. Friends, just to reflect on this, the peace is spoken of here as this peace that is a peace beyond our imagination.

Above our power of, we can't grasp it. It's beyond our comprehension. It's transcending peace above human reasoning. It says this peace keeps our hearts and our minds through Christ Jesus. Peace is possible because of the cross. It says that peace is made. He made peace through the blood of his cross. That's how we can have peace with God. Our minds can be clean.

[14:19] All the stains can be removed. He will keep guard over us. He will watch over us. He will guard our hearts, our thoughts. How can this be? How is this possible?

Notice as we read, Philippians 3 verse 3, it starts with rejoice. Rejoice in the Lord always. And again, I say rejoice.

It starts there with that constancy of joy. That our joy is not in our circumstance. It is in the Lord. Amen. We're saved, glory, aren't we? There's a rejoicing in your soul.

There's a jumping in your heart that you know him, that you're saved. And I love that song, Glory I'm Saved, that we sung earlier today. And I know I sang it wrong, but I love singing it, don't we? Glory I'm Saved! Glory I'm Saved! You know, there's just joy that bubbles up and overflows when we think, wow, I'm so glad to be saved.

[15:19] And there's joy, a rejoicing that we can know. And a constancy of joy such that also we're conscious the Lord is at hand.

That's our source of joy, isn't it? The blessed hope. It's a happy hope. It's a gladdening hope. It's a, wow, this is joy unspeakable. Our Lord is at hand.

Just about to step out of the shadows. And this present distress and the emotions it evokes just confirms this truth, this sure truth.

And like I was saying when Julie and I were coming here, I think, won't it be glory soon? Won't it be glory?

Our Lord draws near. We have this sure hope. And I can't wait. Can't wait. And Paul says, pray. It says, we have this hope.

[16:19] Our Lord draws near. And it says, Paul says, pray about everything. Pray. We can pray for our needs. Bring our concerns unto the Lord. Paul tells us what to feed our mind with. He says, think on these things.

Make a decision. This is what I'm going to think about. What's pure? What's good? What's lovely? What's a virtue? What's a praise and such? Paul talks about, sorry, the word in Acts 15 says how God purifies hearts by faith.

You know, I know my heart is inclined to get soiled. The Bible says that we can purify our hearts by faith. Acts 15 verse 9. The Bible says there's something we can do with our thoughts.

It says in Corinthians it talks about bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. You know, people share with me oftentimes the struggles they have, the things they think about they oughtn't think.

We all have that. We're in vessels of clay. We have angry thoughts, anxious thoughts. But knowing we're saved creates a peace beyond compare. Knowing that soon it will be glory.

[17:27] You know, look, I've got to share with you, I've got a new home being built. Amen. It's under construction right now. I can't wait to get there. Can't you? You've got one too if you know the Lord.

Amen. He says I go to prepare a place for you. He says I've got, you know, in my father's house are many mansions. If it were not told I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you.

Wow. Now the angels are there just, you know, just finishing off maybe still laying the mortar on the bricks or plastering the walls. You know, you can imagine, can't you? I have a new home under construction.

I've got a new wardrobe being prepared for me. You know, these old things, these rags are going to fall off and he's going to give me his robe of righteousness. Well, he already has. But in a sense that we're going to be clothed with white.

You know, we're going to have, you know, flash new clothes. And who knows, a new wardrobe as it were. But what's even more so? He's making a new body for me to wear.

[18:24] Amen. On what to wear that new wardrobe. Amen. And for you too that know him. Praise God. He's making a new body with which to wear our new clothes.

And friends, we can have peace in that context, can't we? Our Lord is at hand. It's soon got to be glory. And how do we get such perfect peace? It talks about a mind stayed upon God.

In other words, where do we lock our thinking onto? Our latch our thinking onto? You can know the peace with God. And the peace of God. And the God of peace as we just read here.

Complete peace. Wholeness. Trust me, he says. I talked this morning, as some may remember that. I've trusted some people who've let me down.

And Julie said, if I ever said, I promised you something, I can't think of a thing, do you? I don't think of my wife. She's almost perfect. She's so Christ-like. But I think there's people that we know human beings can let us down.

[19:23] But our Lord, we can trust him, can't we? We can trust what he says, that he's going to do what he says. God's trusting people will be

blessed with perfect peace. It says your mind has stayed on him because you trust him.

You trust him. The shockwaves of fear may rock our world, but they cannot take that peace away. And he is going to keep us, it says. Keep us in perfect peace. He's not promised us freedom from sorrow or pain.

Not on this side of glory, at least. He has not promised that we're going to be immune from all the difficulties that fall on every son of Adam in this fallen world.

Yet in the daily struggles and assaults from the evil one, we can have a prevailing peace. He's promised it. Amen? He's promised you that. He's decreed it.

And amidst all of that, threatens to disturb and unsettle the soul. He abides faithful. He abides faithful. Amidst all that. And here's the source of all strength, of all joy, of all blessing.

[20:28] Every good gift comes down from the Father of lights. Think of all the good things you've got. They all came from his hand. Amen? All from his hand. Our human emotions can wax and wane, yet we can know a trust, a peace that is steady as we trust our Lord.

Where does our joy come from? It makes me think, as we sometimes would like to picture Paul and Silas in Acts 16, verse 25.

They'd just been hounded down and hauled and thrown into a holding place in some kind of dungeon after they'd been beaten and mocked and hounded.

And at midnight, Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God, and the prisoners heard them. What a testimony. Can that be said of you in times of trouble that you'll stay strong, you'll pray, you'll praise, your faith will hold steady, and the prisoners will hear you.

The lost will hear you. Sing his praises. The Bible says he is our peace. Not the circumstances. We could face, as I say, we could face loss and suffering, yet our peace is not impacted.

[21:56] Because he is our peace. The Bible tells us this very gospel is called the gospel of peace. This is the vital core of it.

I know, as one of our number like to say, it's the gospel. Peace. Peace with God. Peace between God and man. It's made possible. That reconciliation.

That reconciling of a lost man to a holy God. Peace. Peace. The gospel of peace. And it says he has made peace by the blood of his cross. The whole world can be at war, but our soul can be at peace.

Can't it? And this is supernatural peace. It says in John 14, 27, our Lord promises this. He says, peace I leave with you. My peace I give you, unto you.

Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled. Neither let it be afraid. Can't you just see him smile as he tells you that?

[22:58] Let not your heart be troubled. Neither let it be afraid. Amen. And I give, not as the world gives, do I give unto you this peace.

Luke 10, 41, we read how Martha was troubled. She was busy doing something good for the master in the sense of the duties of the home.

But she was cumbered about with much serving. And she was troubled. The circumference, it was a trouble for her. She was troubled. But Mary sat at his feet and heard his word.

And of course our Lord commended her in particular for that. And friends, we can be busy, busy, busy and miss that moment with him.

And look, I'm the worst offender for that. Brothers and sisters, let's sit at his feet and hear his word. Tune in for that heavenly wavelength. Isaiah 48, 22, it says, there is no peace for the wicked.

[24:02] No peace. No peace. It's a saying that people use colloquially, isn't it? There's no peace for the wicked. It's the kind of little jokes some people say. But it's truth.

It's God's truth. Friends, you can lay hold of this peace. This peace that passes all understanding. This peace that is perfect peace. How so? Place your trust in him. Trust him.

Simply that. Don't get too, make it too complicated. Simply trust him. Know him. Saving. Saving. Saving. The saving love of him.

The saving work of the cross by him. Fill your thoughts with him. Be over. What's the word? I'm trying to think of some words to say.

How do you put it? That you're just, you're obsessed with Christ. Addicted, as it is. Addicted to the ministry to serve him. That you want to fix your thoughts upon him.

[24:57] Such that you think of him. And we know of the wicked that says that God is not in their thoughts. But you are in safe hands. Fix your thoughts upon him.

Friends, there is a pathway to perfect peace. And it's as you trust in him. And it's because you trust in him. When you trust someone, you trust, as it were, to trust in him is to trust his plan.

He knows your future. It's not to say you don't use some wisdom as to preparation for your future. But his plan is what we want, isn't it?

And what he will affect. We will have our share of heartache, yet God's peace continues. And Paul gives this prescription for peace, as we've read in Philippians here. He says, pray.

We can miss that. We can miss that. The Lord is near. Paul says, pray. Pray about everything. The Lord is near. God's strength is with us. In the context, it talks about the grace of God.

[25:59] His grace is sufficient. Depend upon him. And friends, this peace that we can hear of here, this peace that we can realise and know personally is the peace that God gives.

It's lasting peace. Everlasting. It's called great peace. As we know, the scripture of Psalm 119, 165. Great peace. Wow. Great peace.

Great peace. Have they which love thy law? And nothing shall offend them. This peace is great. It's great peace. And may we train our minds to think those thoughts that are rightful.

Think on these things. God tells us. That's a command, isn't it? Think on these things. Get familiar with that. Philippians 4. Think on these things.

Whatsoever things are lovely and of good report, of virtue, of praise. I can't locate it now. But that's it. Okay.

[26:56] All right. Yeah, it is. It's his character, isn't it? Amen. Philippians 4, 6? Yeah. 7. I know we've got a concordance here.

Amen. That's what we need to be, isn't it? That we can, yeah. I'm commending you for it, brother. May we train our minds to think those thoughts. Colossians 3, verse 15. It says, And it says, And it says, Friends, let the peace of God rule.

such that that presides, that has the oversight, that the peace of God rules over all your mind, over all your deliberations, over all your affections.

The peace of God rule in your hearts, it says. Colossians 3, 15. And often we may wonder what it is people are thinking. We might ask them, What is on your mind? What should be on our mind?

It's the question. Jesus, our Lord. The Bible urges us to let his word dwell in you richly. I know, again, it's a commendation to put the word in your heart.

[28:20] Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Friends, we need the word in our hearts. We've got to make a deliberate intent to lodge the word in our hearts.

His peace will rule in our hearts, it says. His peace can govern our thinking such that he's in charge and he takes over. And he is the peace giver.

There was a woman who lay dying at a time and a minister came to her and essentially that was the news. She didn't have long to go.

And he said, They think your time is short. Yes, she said. I know. He said, Have you made your peace with God? No. No.

She replied. I haven't made my peace with God. He said, Then you are not afraid to die. No. Do you realise that in a few hours you're going to meet God?

[29:20] Yes. And you have not made that peace with God? No. No. And I'm not going to. Then there was this strange light in the woman's eyes and the minister realised that she was holding something back really about what she was meaning by this.

He says, What do you mean? She said, Listen, I know that I am dying, yet I have no fear of meeting God. I am resting in the peace which Jesus Christ made for me through his atoning death upon the cross.

I don't have to make my peace with God. I'm resting in the peace that he has made for me. There's a sense that it wasn't that she was manufacturing the peace, but her peace was laying claim to

God's promise of peace to her through the cross.

I'm resting in the peace which Jesus Christ has already made. There's a sense of that, isn't it? That our claim to peace is because he's made it for us and we've trusted his making of peace.

And there is rest for your soul, you that know him. As we pass through the veil to the beyond, it's glory for you that know him. It's perfect peace in the present and in the beyond.

[30:35] And it's peace that passes all understanding. The world can't get their head around this peace. It's peace that Christ has made for you.

He's made the peace through the blood of his cross. He's affected everything that he had to do for you to be saved.

Simply trust him. Trust him now. And this is a peace that a martyr can have as he or she burns at the stake. That's the kind of peace we're talking about. That's the kind of peace that we can know. A peace that is beyond where we may have to endure human pain. This side of glory. Because to leave is Christ.

To die is gain. And friends, I know I've probably been a little tedious here tonight. And there was a time when there was a very long and boring sermon.

And the parishioners filed into the church. And they didn't say really much to the preacher. And towards the end of the line, there was some thoughtful person who used to always comment about the preacher's sermons.

[31:38] And the member of the church said this, Pastor, today your sermon reminded me of the peace and love of God. The pastor was thrilled.

Oh, no one has ever said anything like that about my preaching before. Tell me why. Reminded him. Reminded this person of the peace and love of God. And well, the parishioner began, It reminded me of the peace of God because it passed all understanding.

And the love of God because it endured forever. Now, I hope it's not been like that here tonight. But friends, seriously now, that the peace of God, it passes all understanding.

In the sense that God's peace is beyond human comprehension, isn't it? That you can know a peace that goes beyond circumstance and even physical affliction and difficulty.

That your peace is not founded upon this human world. But your peace is founded upon the very work of God, the cross and his saving power, his keeping of you.

[32:43] And you can know a peace that is perfect peace. Amen. Shalom. Shalom. Now, when we greet people, we say good day. In Israel, they say shalom.

May peace be. May you have peace. May you have peace. You know, in Hawaii, they say aloha, which has the same kind of connotation.

May you have a blessing. And they say it and they greet you and they say it when they farewell you. Shalom. Here's the message for you today. And not just shalom, but shalom, shalom.

Perfect peace. Amen. Let's know it today. And I trust, I pray, I urge you. Again, we've got no reckoning of the future. Simply trust him. Trust him now.

It says the one who has perfect peace is the one, it says, whose mind is stayed on thee, God. And the one who trusts in thee. Trust in him.

[33:41] Friends, trust Jesus Christ, your Lord. Trust him now. Trust him now before time evaporates and it's too late. Let's pray. Lord God, we bless you and thank you that we can take heart and comfort as your word is filled with these promises of love and peace and joy.

Lord God, help us to be among the number that rejoice always. Lord, that we can think thoughts that we can reprogram our thinking such that we'll think on these things that are good and wholesome and well for us.

Lord, that we can let the word of Christ dwell in us richly. Lord, let it be that we can know that peace that passes all understanding, that shall keep our hearts and minds.

Free Christ Jesus. We know your word tells us that you've made peace possible through the blood of your cross. And Lord, help us to have that same heart that that woman expressed that it's not so much me making peace with you, but it's you making peace available for us.

And everything of peace that we can claim is everything that you have done. We're simply trusting that work, that finished work of the cross. And Lord, and not only your saving, but your keeping is eternal.

[35:08] Lord, we praise you for that. And in anticipation, Lord, of that eternal home, we know as your word tells us, the Lord is at hand. These are days we can be greatly comforted in that assurance.

And Lord, help us to tell others too, while we can, while we have breath to breathe and lips to tell. Lord, let us use them to tell others. We pray in Jesus' precious and holy name.
Amen.