

# Do You Enjoy True 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: 09 July 2023

Preacher: J.D. Edwards

[ 0 : 00 ] Would you pray with me? Oh, Father, satisfy us before the day has passed us by.

Cause us to find all that our hearts desire and long for and seek after fulfilled in you from Jesus Christ and for his sake alone we ask.

Amen. Well, beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, do you enjoy true peace?

God's word holds up for us. Shalom. True peace. Shalom means completeness. It means wholeness of relationship.

And on the last verse of Psalm 4, he says, I will lay down in peace. I will lay down in shalom. The verse right before that, he says, it's God who has put gladness in my heart.

[ 1 : 17 ] And I simply want you to examine yourself and reflect on that question. Do you know what David's talking about? Do you enjoy true peace?

Charles Spurgeon calls Psalm 4 another choice flower from the garden of David's afflictions.

There's the life of David full of affliction. Not a good life, a miserable life. And yet from that affliction, from those tribulations and from those temptations, from that anger, those accusations, the spirit ministered to this man, the sin saver, saved sinner.

Sorry. And in Psalm 4, I don't think David is put up to us necessarily as a type of Christ in this Psalm. You know, the Psalms are the songbook of Jesus, and he prayed them throughout his ministry from the cross.

But I think Psalm 4, it's a Psalm where David is simply made low. He's made low as a common man, a common foot soldier, a sinner who has been saved by grace.

[ 2 : 29 ] So it puts words now inspired by the spirit for us who are believers, who are saved sinners in that same way. In Psalm 1, we saw there are two ways to live.

Do you remember that? Now in Psalm 4, we see there are two ways to lay down at the end of the day. You can lay down in stress and anxiety and fear, or you can lay down in peace.

In Psalm 3, the emphasis was on how David laid down, but he woke again. And as he wakes, he calls on God to rise up. And in Psalm 4, the emphasis is less on waking up.

It's more on being still in the quiet of your own bed and having peace with God in your conscience.

In Psalm 3, David declared that salvation is of the Lord alone.

Do you remember that? And in Psalm 4, David bears witness. It's possible to enjoy true peace in a hostile world.

[ 3 : 37 ] That's what he confesses in Psalm 4. He says, I will lay down and sleep in peace. You know, in the New Testament, death is always referred to as sleep for the believer.

When the believer dies, it's referred to as you fell asleep. And so Psalm 4, in that sense, talks about one day in the life of a believer in a hostile world. But that one day is really a picture of one life lived in a hostile world.

And when you will go to sleep that last day, will you be in peace? Every night when you lie down, you have the opportunity to practice for the day of your death.

You get to prepare for death once every single day, at least. You get to prepare for death seven times every week. When you lay down at night and all is dark.

365 times a year. We are practicing for the day when our soul will leave our body. The body will sleep and the soul will face eternal destiny.

[ 4 : 47 ] Are you at peace? Do you enjoy true peace? Have you tasted that gladness that David talks about now in preparation for that eternal gladness with Christ?

At the end of your day, do you enjoy true peace? At the end of your life, will you enjoy true peace with God? That's what you need to figure out from Psalm 4.

So my one main point is this. If you trust in God as your righteousness, he leads you to enjoy true peace.

First observation. God's enemies hate the Prince of Peace and they hunt down God's people. The language of Psalm 2 is that the nations rage against God.

And they hate the Son of God, we're told. Well, David, he has said, that's my God. He's aligned himself with the kingdom of heaven more than any other kingdom on earth.

[ 5 : 51 ] In verse 1 and verse 3 of Psalm 4, look there. David feels rightly accused by Satan. He says, you don't rightly belong in the congregation of God's people.

If you're praying to God, what makes you think God should hear you? You're a sinner, David. Do you hear the accusation? But David defends it and he calls out, God, hear me when I pray.

But in Psalm 4, David is accused by Satan. In verse 2 and verse 6, David feels pressure, distress, persecuted from the outside, from worldly men.

And the King James, he preaches to them. He says, you sons of men, you're not from the line of God of heaven. You're sons of men. You're earthly, worldly men. So he's tempted by the men of the world and accused by them, just as Satan is bringing tribulation on his life.

But it's not only Satan, it's not only the world, it's also within David, inside of himself, his own flesh. In verse 4, David feels anger. The phrase, stand with trembling and anger, stand in awe, or in your anger, don't sin.

[ 7 : 09 ] But the temptation to sin comes from inside of David as well, when he's all alone in his room. So he is tempted by Satan, he is tempted by the world, and he is tempted by his own flesh.

And look at the result of this kind of temptation. He's in his own bed. He's up and down. He's unable to sleep until the very end of the psalm. David's experiencing what the novelist Charlotte Bronte described.

She said, a ruffled mind makes a restless pillow. You've had those nights. You look at the clock. If I could fall asleep now, I'll get six hours of sleep.

It doesn't happen. If I could fall asleep now, I'll at least get four hours of sleep. That's one REM cycle. It doesn't happen. Man, in 40 minutes, my alarm is going to go off. If I could just close my eyes and snooze, then I'll wake up and I'll feel better.

And it doesn't happen. You've had those sleepless nights. So God's enemies, they hate the Prince of Peace and they hunt down his people. If you're a Christian, Jesus said, in this world, you will have tribulation.

[ 8 : 23 ] 1 John 2.16 tells us that God has enemies and those enemies come after God's people. They hunt you in the same way. From that, the church has gotten the three enemies.

Historically, it's the world, the flesh, and the devil. You see all three right here in Psalm 4, don't you? David says he's been swarmed by lies and vanity in verse 2.

He says, there are many. I look around and I see most people. They have no hope in God. They look to anything else to give them a kind of blessing. David says his soul has been empty of any kind of gladness.

He can't come up with joy on his own. He's depressed. He needs it to come from outside of himself. And in this state, David is tempted to sin.

He feels like he can't bear this any longer. And he says in verse 2, how long? And that phrase, how long, is normally used as a lament.

[ 9 : 25 ] And it's usually taken to the throne of God and declared, God, how much longer until you will step in? Well, notice though here, David in verse 2, he turns this lament into preaching at the nation.

And the word of encouragement is this, that God does lead his people to enjoy true peace in this world that rages against God. And God gives his people fitting weapons for this battle.

My first point comes from the superscription of Psalm 4. Look at that. The superscription is that little description at the top of the psalm. It says the context and how it's to be sung. So you see in your Bible, mine reads, to the chief musician, on Niganath, a psalm of David.

That's the superscription. And I want to try to argue that God gives us, his people, fitting weapons for this battle that we are all in, one of which is congregational singing.

See, Satan, he knows that your flesh wants to believe happiness is possible without God. And Psalm 4 attacks that lie. You will not find happiness without God.

[10:36] Satan knows that he can cut you off from God's family. And if he can cut you off from God's family, God's army, God's church, he will shut you up. Now the Spirit says, no, no one can clutch you out of my hands.

But Satan tries. He tries to cut you off of God's people. And Satan knows that isolation leads to depression. Depression leads to sin. Sin leads to guilt.

Guilt leads to you feeling like your fellowship with God is broken. When you feel that way, you don't enjoy peace. You have no joy.

You see the battle that's going on for your soul? But notice David says, take up the stringed instruments. And he gives orders as the king to the chief musician.

What's the weapon? What's the weapon that the Spirit is calling the church to use? It's congregational singing. There's musicians. There are instruments. There's the army gathered.

[11:42] The army is the choir. We're going to sing Scripture. We're going to do this because God put this in our hands as a weapon against his enemies.

Here's the importance of congregational singing. It's not only for our own good. It's also for the glory of God. Look at Psalm 4, verse 2. David said, the enemies of God have turned my glory into shame. I know it's been a few weeks, but flip back to Psalm 3. Notice in Psalm 3, verse 3. What is David's glory? Or better, who does David say is his glory?

He prays that to God. God, you are the lifter of my head. You are my glory. And now the very next Psalm, he says, they've turned my glory. They've turned my God into shame.

So let's take up our singing. Let's take up instruments and let's declare the true glory of our God, which has come under attack. And as we bring God glory to his name through congregational singing, he protects our souls for our good as well.

[12:57] Isn't that a blessing? God calls you to sing regularly with his people.

I know that's so simple, but that's a call from King Jesus on your life. You are the musicians. You are adding your voices, even if it's off tune, you're adding your voices to the stringed instruments. In Revelation, heaven is described as having an army of harp players, stringed instruments. Our guitar players would say those are probably guitars. They're using a prophetic idiom to describe heaven full of instruments, full of congregational singing.

And as simple as we be, no matter how bad you sound, when you add your voice to the congregation of God's people to declare his glory and sing scripture, you are singing as a soldier in his army.

This is one of the weapons he has given us to use. God's army is not silent. The army is a choir. And we sing God's word back to him.

[14:07] That's what we try to do every week, isn't it? The spirit-breathed word in Psalm 4 and through all the Psalms, it calls us to sing to God for his glory, for our good.

Remember, this is David who would play the harp in the court of King Saul, who was wicked. And even King Saul, the wicked king, who didn't know the glory of God, even he found peace and comfort.

How much more if you have the Holy Spirit in you and it's God helping you to declare his glory.

Martin Luther, when he's portrayed in the late Renaissance, you know, with the different reformers, usually next to Luther is a lute, a little stringed instrument like a mini guitar.

Luther in the lute. And Luther said, when my heart was sick and weary, it has often been solaced and refreshed by music.

When Luther would give his little table talks, he would have the young men that were wanting to get biblical training and discipleship into his home. They would sing using the lute and they would lift their praises to God even though they were exiled from their countries, from their families.

[15:16] So picture King Jesus on his throne. Picture him singing over his people like Song of Solomon's describes him.

And picture all of the congregation responding and adding our voices to that soaring melody of King Jesus from his throne. And that's a taste, a small little sample that we get now of the peace and the joy and the music that fills heaven.

God loves music. Read your Bible. You'll see that. God loves music. Heaven's joy spills onto the church through his word, through congregational singing.

That's one of the ways God gives us fitting weapons for this battle against our soul. Well, how else does God lead his people to enjoy true peace in a world that rages against him?

As God's people sing gospel truths together, look at what happens to David. God reforms your thinking. And when you have right thinking, be transformed by the renewing of your minds, Romans 12.

[16:33] As your thinking gets reformed, you enjoy the peace of being right within the world God created. So, look at verse 1. First, David declares and applies God's truth to himself.

That's our application. David says, hear me, answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness. He declares, God is my righteousness.

Jehovah Sidkenu. Sidkenu. He declares it and he applies it to myself. Therefore, hear me. Don't hear me because of my righteousness. You are my righteousness. Therefore, by your righteousness, hear me, one who you've taken in.

1 Corinthians 1.30 declares that Christ is our righteousness. And since God is my righteousness, I know he hears me.

That's a simple syllogism. If God is your righteousness, through Christ, then God hears you. So, cry out to him. Number two, David remembers God's past faithfulness.

[17:41] We should do the same. Look back on your life. Have you ever seen God be faithful to you? Were you ever hard pressed and cornered and God showed himself faithful and true?

Well, remember those times. Draw them back up to your mind. Remember God's past faithfulness. David says in verse 1, God, you enlarged me. You gave me relief when I was in distress.

David was, he was cornered and trapped. He was in distress like an animal that was being preyed upon, about to be devoured. And even though physically he was, he was distressed and entrapped, he says God enlarged him.

Even if his outward circumstances didn't change, his soul found an expansion and space and room to breathe. He was no longer suffocating.

God gave him what his soul needed to survive. And because God has been faithful in the past, he appeals to that past faithfulness and applies it now, Lord.

[18:45] You will be merciful to me again. He appeals to God's gracious nature. See, he says God, you are gracious.

Have mercy upon me again in verse 1. Be gracious to me and hear my prayer. Because you are my righteousness, because you have been faithful, because you are gracious, hear me now.

What a great prayer for us as well. Reform your thoughts about who you are in God. Trust what God says through his word about you.

Trust that it's true. See, David goes after the mind. Look at verse 3. He says, know, know in your mind. Be reformed in your thinking. Know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself.

Know it. Believe this in your mind. This is what God says in scripture. Know that this is true for you. We know this from Ephesians 1. Before the foundation of the world, you are chosen in Christ.

[19:54] He has set you apart for himself. Know that this is true. It's what God has declared. This is what Paul says in Ephesians 6. To know is to cover your head with this truth.

He calls this the helmet of your salvation. You're under attack. Put on the helmet on your head.

Know in your mind who you are. You are saved because you are set apart for God's purposes.

Now you're set apart not because of your good works. John Gale clarifies this very helpfully.

Godliness and good works are the fruits of God's election, not the causes of it.

But if God has set you apart, it will show up as gospel fruit. And so you add your voice to the choir with these truths as well. You testify in song.

I am set apart for Christ, my righteousness. I cannot be condemned. Christ is my righteousness.

God hears me because I belong to him.

[21:01] Christ has covered me like a helmet. I know in my mind I belong to him. Therefore, he hears my cry and he leads me to enjoy his true peace.

Make that your prayer today. Call out to God with confidence that he hears you. Well, David's not done. How else does God put true peace and heavenly gladness inside the hearts of his people in this world?

As you rehearse gospel truths with God's people, we see in psalm 4 that God not only renews your mind, makes you know this, he also transforms your heart and your life.

See, the light of the gospel through the mind, God causes you to grasp and behold how glorious he is, then it works its way into your heart and from your heart it works its way out in your life.

Look at verse 4. Stand in awe. Be dismayed. Stand with angry trembling is the Hebrew poetry, but do not sin.

[ 22 : 16 ] The world and the enemies of God come hard after your soul and we need to withdraw, we need to retreat into stillness and solitude. How often, one commentator pointed out that man reverses this, we sin, yet we don't tremble at God.

David says, tremble, tremble in fear and anger, but don't sin. Commune with your own heart, ponder in your own heart upon your beds in your private retreat where you've turned the TV off, you've left the phone in another room, it's you alone with your maker.

You are preparing your soul for eternity with God. Your soul is being prepared for heaven. You're preparing yourself for your day of your death. In that moment, let God get real with you.

Tremble, tremble at what lies ahead of you. You be silent. Let the truth of God's word sweep over you. See, many have given up on true peace and that temptation is there for every single one of us, as long as we're in the flesh, as long as we're in this world, and as long as Satan is roaming about like a lion, seeking whom he can devour.

Your conscience accuses you, the flesh and Satan and the world say, well then sear your conscience. Just give yourself to those temptations and sear it so it stops hurting.

[ 23 : 51 ] Or numb your conscience, numb that guilt, self-medicate, alcohol, drugs. you won't have peace with that kind of a conscience.

That's the temptation of the world and the flesh and the devil. And that temptation is real for every single one of us. David confesses in that anger, in that powerful temptation, you need to look at verse five, you need to offer up the sacrifice of righteousness and put your trust in the Lord.

God has set you apart for himself. You are not enslaved to sin. You have no reason to fear any longer. You can know true peace and you must practice.

You must practice living out who you are in Christ. George Swinock, Puritan, said, commune with your own self. Think about that phrase, commune with your own self.

You're asking your soul these questions. Where are you from? Well, God made me. For what end were you made? For God's glory, to know him and enjoy him forever.

[ 25 : 17 ] How are you living this life? I need more of Christ. How is it going for you? When I don't trust Christ, it goes bad.

Do you have true joy? When I'm in Christ, I do. What's your tomorrow? When you wake up, what's your future?

God has to guide me every step. I need to trust him more. Do you know true peace? in the quiet, in the silence, offer your sacrifice of righteousness.

He declared already, verse 1, God is my righteousness. Now he's saying, that righteousness that God gave and put over me, it works itself out in my life. It does.

Slowly, through stumbling, but it works itself out. That's the conclusion Paul comes to in Romans 12. offer up your bodies as living sacrifices. You belong to God.

[ 26 : 25 ] What a joy that you belong to him. You don't want to belong to yourself. So you offer your body, not as your own substitutionary sacrifice to be made right with God, but because you have put your trust in the Lord as your righteousness, you offer yourself as a living sacrifice because this is your reasonable act of service.

You obey because you are grateful to be made right by him, by grace alone. You ponder, Benjamin Keech said, how from Christ flow to you the assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit, increasing grace, perseverance to the end.

You ponder this glorious gospel, all the blessings flowing from the hand of Christ, your mediator, your righteousness for the rest of your life in increasing measure until that final day where you get him physically and consummately.

This joyful gospel melody, it reigns in, it gives peace to our wild emotions. You can talk to a music therapist, they'll see a little child with their emotions going wild, and the soothing sound of a melody, it helps to settle them and that melody draws those wild emotions and it starts to teach them a rhythm and a cadence and settles them in.

The melody wins over the emotions. In the silence before God, you need a mediator, you need Jesus Christ alone and when you hear the melody of his gospel, he brings you into alignment by the work of his spirit and he changes you.

[ 28 : 18 ] He draws in your wild emotions and he brings you joy, the joy of heaven and the peace that passes understanding. It works its way out from your mind into your heart, into every aspect of your life slowly, but for a lifetime without fail.

The good work that God begins, he always sees through to the end and that is true for your life. love. I want to draw your attention next to verse six because God transforms from the inside your love.

God transforms what his people love. So you love something different than you used to love and then God satisfies what you most desire.

Verse six, seven, and eight are the glorious verses of this psalm. In verse six, David says, there are many who say who will show us some good. There's the contrast, the way that perishes versus those who are set apart for God.

In verse two, he had said there are many who love vain words. He's looking at their hearts, their desires, what they seek. He says they seek after lies. See, if you stay on that way that perishes, if your loves, if your heart are never transformed by God, you will never find joy.

[ 29 : 38 ] You will never have peace with God unless he changes what you love. And there are many, there are many who are chasing after peace and chasing after joy that will never find it.

They trust in man, they will be disappointed. They trust in their own good works or some other man-centered method, they will be disappointed.

Buddhism says kill your desires. many people are swept into these eastern false religions and it says just don't desire anything. Don't love anything, don't be attached to it and that way you won't experience pain.

That's not how God works. God gives you a deeper desire, an overcoming love and the love for God and for what God loves sweeps over and it transforms your loves and your desires.

It doesn't kill off passion, it replaces fleshly passion with a greater love, a greater desire for Christ and his kingdom alone.

[ 30 : 45 ] Jesus said seek first my kingdom and my righteousness. Jesus came to satisfy the deepest longings of our soul. Look what David exclaims in verse 6.

He says, Lord lift up the light of thy countenance, the light of your face upon us, O Lord. That's what he loves now. That's what he desires. He wants to know nothing else except the face of God, the fellowship of God, the peace of knowing I am right with God.

Let your face shine upon me. This is language from the Aaronic blessing, the brother of Moses, Aaron, the high priest, who is a picture of Christ and he would bless the people.

May the face of God shine upon you, his people. And that's only possible by the work of God on your behalf. God transforms your love.

And then he satisfies that new desire. Look at the glorious declaration in verse 7. God, thou hast put gladness in my heart.

[ 31 : 52 ] Who put the gladness in David's heart? God himself put gladness in his heart. And how did David get gladness inside his heart? God put it in him.

He couldn't fabricate it for himself. And he says, what kind of gladness is this? The best way he can describe it is it is more joy than they have at harvest time.

At harvest time is when their grain abounds. It's when they're collecting all the grapes and pressing them into wine. There's abundance. They are happy because of temporal, worldly things.

And he sees their gladness. But the gladness that God put in his heart when he's all alone, empty without anything of this world, it surpasses that by far.

It's a gladness that's otherworldly. It's the gladness and joy from heaven put in his heart by God.

And that's why we can believe what 1 Peter 4 teaches us, that the spirit of God's glory, the shining face of God, it rests upon you too, church, through the work of Christ Jesus.

[ 33 : 07 ] Watson points out this contrast for the Christian, there is more difference between heavenly gladness than earthly gladness than there is between eating the finest banquet and looking at a mere painting of one.

In verse 8, David says, I will both lay down in peace and sleep. He says, in peace, I will both lay down and I will, when I'm putting my pajamas on, I will know that when I lay down, I'm going to be asleep.

The reason I can lay down and sleep is because you, Lord only, you alone, God, make me dwell in safety.

one pastor pointed out, they sleep most soundly whom faith rocks to sleep.

No prayer so soft as God's promise, no cover so warm as assurance in Christ. Ask God to put his gladness in your heart, to rock you to sleep with that gift of faith, that warm blanket of assurance of knowing you belong to God and he alone makes you dwell safely in his arms this night and when you take your final sleep at the end of your life.

[ 34 : 35 ] When you think of heavenly things, Proverbs says, Proverbs 321, that you will sleep more sweetly. When you think of God as you go to bed, Proverbs 622 says, your head will be fuller of good thoughts.

There's a great hymn I heard for the first time with the church that we visited overseas a couple weeks ago. One of the verses goes like this, the day you gave us, Lord, is ended. The darkness falls at your request. To you are morning hymns ascended. Your praise shall sanctify our rest.

If you can fall asleep with the praise of God on your lips, the thoughts of God on your mind, isn't that a glorious thought that even as you're sleeping, the Holy Spirit is sanctifying you, you rest in safety. So to bring it together, I've tried to show you from Psalm 4 how God leads His people. I want to remind you, God leads all of His people to enjoy true peace, both in life and in death.

[ 35 : 49 ] This is just as true for you as it is for our brothers and sisters in South India. And they don't know for sure what they're going to feed their family tomorrow, but they have the peace that passes understanding.

They have the joy of heaven. The church around the world each night can pray Psalm 4.8, In peace I will sleep. For Thou Lord only and You alone, O Lord, make me and my loved ones dwell in safety. That hymn that I mentioned a moment ago, it goes on to describe this glorious truth of the church falling asleep throughout all the different parts of the world.

Picture the prayer lifted up by the church throughout the day and then the sun sets, but a new part of the world receives the light and their new day begin and their praises go up. The English used to say the sun never sets on the British Empire.

Well, this is way more true of the church of God through all centuries. The sun never sets on the praises going up to heaven. And as one part of the church falls asleep, the other parts are waking so that 24-7, even on earth as it is in heaven, God is being glorified through singing, through praise.

[ 37 : 05 ] The hymn says, we thank you that your church unsleeping while earth rolls onward into light, through all the world her watch is keeping and never rests by day or night.

As over continent and island each dawn leads to another day, the voice of prayer is never silent, nor do thy praises die away.

I've been so humbled in the last few weeks, I've got to rub shoulders and just encourage brothers and sisters from around the world. And I think of Leonardo in the Philippines and his study of Romans 8.

I'm so encouraged by what he's doing. I think of Singhi in Nepal working with children who don't have access to good education and they're bringing them Christian education at great peril to their families.

I think of Paulus in South India who signed up officially with the government as being a Christian, knowing that it would eliminate job opportunities for him and his family.

[ 38 : 07 ] I think of Arted in Latvia, the church planting that's going on in Eastern Europe, former Soviet countries, and I'm so encouraged by their zeal for the Lord. I think of Sam who we heard from last week in North Africa, the work that God has put on their heart to do to take the gospel to this people who would never hear otherwise.

I think of Clint in Calgary, Canada, and the Lord planted their church I think 17 years ago, and now he's seeing many more come to the faith and a church being planted by God's grace.

You see, as we move over the continents all the way around the world, God is at work. In that hymn, the last verse says, God promised of Christ's glorious day in Isaiah 51 11, that the ransomed of the Lord shall return with singing.

Sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Everlasting joy shall be upon our heads, and we shall obtain gladness and joy. Picture Christ on that last glorious day when we will see his face shining upon us, and he will see the great harvest.

More than when any earthly fields abound in harvest, here comes the harvest of King Jesus, the harvest of souls who he purchased with his precious blood. And that same joy, Jesus Christ puts in

you while you are yet in this world.

[ 39 : 47 ] When your days on earth have ripened and the end has come for your soul, as someone put it, to enter Christ's heavenly rest.

The harvest of your soul is coming. There is a rest that's yet to come, Hebrews tells us. So as you prepare each night, you say Psalm 4a, I will both lay me down in peace and sleep for thou Lord only maketh me dwell in safety today and for my soul's eternal destiny.

Yes, Jesus said in this world you will have tribulation, but I give you my peace that where I am there you will one day be with me.

If you are in Christ today, dear friends, you don't need to fear your death. You need to joyfully practice for your death each night when your head hits the pillow.

You can lay down in peace and sleep. If you trust in God as your righteousness, he leads you to enjoy true peace more and more each day and each year that he gives you to live.

[ 41 : 01 ] Praise be to God. Would you pray with me? God can, is God next good care.

Allah