

Perfect Peace

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[0 : 00] Let's turn for a little to the chapter we read, Isaiah chapter 26, and reading at verse 3. Isaiah 26, verse 3.

You keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. As we know, one of the greatest possessions that any person can ever have is the great jewel of peace.

It is something that I suppose everybody in this world craves, or the majority of them are, some people who do not want peace, but they are certainly in the minority.

The vast majority of people want peace, seek, search for peace, crave peace. And, of course, the sad thing is that most people look in the wrong place, because ultimately the true peace is found in and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus himself said that, my peace I give you. Not as the world gives, give I unto you. Now, this verse, as we see, is part of a song. And at the beginning of it, we see that there's a city.

[1 : 09] We see gates and walls and bulwarks. And that the great blessing, obviously, in this city is this city that knows the perfect peace, knows joy, knows the hand of God upon it for good.

And that, of course, is the great blessing that God was promising his people if they followed him and adhered to his laws.

Because when you go back into the Old Testament, into Deuteronomy and the passages where God is speaking about the blessings that will come upon his people, one of the great blessings was peace in the land.

That even wild beasts would be kept from them. That the streets would be saved. That they would live in peace. That terror would be kept from them. And that is part of the national blessing and security that God gives where righteousness dwells.

We know that righteousness exalts a nation. And when God's righteousness is at the forefront and the heart of a nation, the heartbeat of a nation, the result is that his peace will be in the streets, his peace will be in the home, and that people will dwell in safety.

[2 : 26] That's one of the things he promises. My people will dwell in safety. Isn't that wonderful? And when we look at Great Britain today, when we look at the United Kingdom, it's a very reverse.

Not safety. In most of the cities tonight, most people are prisoners in their own home. They won't venture out. They're afraid. In many, many parts of our cities, once it gets dark, people say, I can't go out of my own home.

I'm scared. There's not peace in the streets. There's not peace in the home. There's so much violence. So much domestic abuse. In fact, self-harm amongst the young, apparently in our country, is greater than probably anywhere else in sort of industrial part of the world.

Because there is so much unrest. So much, just such a void, a lack of peace. And this is all indicative of the fact that we've turned our back upon the Lord.

Because, you see, when we turn our back upon the Lord, God says, I hand you over to yourself. Remember in Romans 1, it talks about the wrath of God being revealed. And what God does in displaying his wrath is he simply leaves us to ourselves.

[3 : 51] And there isn't a worse judgment. Because we're losing the protection. We're losing the sense of his being there.

And so we need to pray for ourselves nationally. And we need to pray for our homes and our streets and everywhere. But this picture that we have here is of a place where there is joy and where there is happiness, where there is peace.

Now, I want us to look at this and bring it in to ourselves and to focus at verse 3 here upon the individual person. Because it says here, you keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you.

And the obvious thing to notice here, that this perfect peace is given to us by the Lord. It is not something that we can work up ourselves. There are some people who go into deep places of meditation.

There are people who will say, you know, I'm able to empty my mind and I come to a place of peace and I feel good and such like. Well, I don't for one moment doubt that that can be done and that is done.

[5 : 02] But that's not the peace that is spoken of here. This peace is a gift. This peace is a peace that is given by the Lord. It is by his hand alone.

And God is the one who orders peace, who ordains peace. He tells us that in verse 12. O Lord, you will ordain peace for us.

You have done for us all our works. So you see, the Lord is the one who does this. And the Lord is the one, he knows beforehand.

You look at the reign of Solomon, David's son. Solomon, when he was king, the whole land had peace right throughout Solomon's reign. He had rest.

The nation had rest from conflict. There was no war during Solomon's time. All the wars had been fought in David's time. And the Lord, with David's, the Lord, with David, with the Lord's help, had conquered all the enemies round about.

[6 : 05] And the Lord had said to David, when David, after he had sort of subdued all the enemies and he was sitting on his throne and he said he was going to build a palace, a good palace.

But he said, it's not right that I'm living in this palace and the ark of the Lord is in a tent. I want to build a temple for the Lord.

And it was a great idea. And David just had this passion in his heart to build the most magnificent temple to and for the Lord. God said to him, David, your idea is a good idea.

But I'm not going to allow you to do it because your hands are red with blood. You have been a man of blood. But you will have a son, Solomon, and he will build the temple.

And he will be a man of peace. And I will give him peace all the days of his life. And that's exactly what happened. There were no wars, no conflicts in Solomon's time.

[7 : 01] And it was God who ordered the peace. God ordained that peace. He promised that peace. He prophesied that peace. And so we've always got to remember that the peace is God given.

It is God who gives this peace to us. Now in order to experience this peace, this verse shows us of how we really have to cast ourselves upon the Lord.

We sang in Psalm 37 about resting in the Lord. And I love that expression. When you rest, one of the things that you do is you lie down and you totally relax yourself.

You can't rest if you're all agitated or stressed out or uptight. It's the one thing you can't do. But when you rest, it's like all the tensions, all the pressures, all the stresses, they just like as it were ooze out of you.

And that's what the Christian is doing with the Lord. We come to rest in him. And we lie down upon him. And we just cast ourselves upon him.

[8 : 15] And we place ourselves upon his wisdom and upon all that he is, his love and his care. And we are persuaded that he will do what is right.

Shall not the judge of all the earth do that which is right? And resting in the Lord means also that we are submitted to his will. We submit ourselves to his will.

Now, as you and I know, the will of God is not always what we want. And sometimes we cannot understand God's will. Many of the things that happen in our lives, they just don't make sense.

But God knows. And it's only faith that can lay hold upon this. Now, this is how some Christians can enjoy God's peace.

And other Christians don't when they're going through troubles and conflict. Because you and I know, if you're in conflict with anybody, about anything, one of the things that you don't enjoy is peace.

[9 : 19] You cannot have conflict and peace at the same time. You cannot have conflict in your life and peace in your heart at the same time. Conflict with somebody and still having peace within your heart.

And it's true with the Lord as well. You cannot be in conflict with the Lord and enjoy his peace at the same time. So what I mean is, if we are not submitting ourselves to him, and even although his will may be hard for us, and we need great grace to submit to his will, as long as we are resisting his will, and we are arguing against the Lord, and resisting his way and his will, we won't know his peace.

It's not until we give in. It's not until we yield. It's not until we say, Lord, this hurts. My heart is broken.

But Lord, you have given me the grace to submit to your will. And in doing that, it is only at that point that we really begin to discover his peace.

Now, again, these things can sometimes be very, very difficult for us. But you notice that the Lord doesn't just give peace.

[10 : 39] He keeps his people in the enjoyment of peace. You see what he says? You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you.

Now, you notice the importance of that word stayed. whose mind is stayed on you, fixed on you. Not somewhere else.

It's not just a fleeting glance. It's not looking for a wee while and then moving away. It is stayed. It is permanently. It's on. It is rooted too.

It's like your gaze is fixed. This was mentioned in the prayer. It's like Peter walking on the water. And when Peter began to walk on the water, he did so. When he climbed out of the boat, his eyes were on Jesus.

When he put his feet on the waves, his eyes were still on Jesus. And as he walked towards Jesus, his eyes were still upon Jesus. And he continued to walk as long as his eyes were fixed upon Jesus.

[11 : 40] As long as his eyes were stayed upon Jesus, Peter walked on that water. But then he took his eyes off Jesus. And then he went to the waves. The glance moved away.

Because he began to hear the wind and he saw the waves. And at that moment, what he was doing to go over and he says, what am I doing? He no longer heard the voice of Jesus saying, come.

He no longer saw the figure of Jesus before him. And when he lost the sound of Jesus and the sight of Jesus, he sank. And it's the same for you and for me.

It's the most basic lesson. But we need to hear it over and over and over again because it happens within our lives. So often we sink. And whether it's sinking into sin or sinking into despair or sinking into despondency or sinking into whatever it is, it is generally because we've taken our eyes off Jesus.

And you know, there are times, sadly, we choose to take our eyes off Jesus. The Christian does that at times. The Christian says, I'm in trouble here and I'm going to deal with this trouble.

[12 : 53] And sometimes we actually wallow in our sorrows and in our despair. And then we say, oh, well, this is where I'm at. And we say, oh, it's too much, it's too much trouble to fix my eyes upon Jesus.

It's going to involve too much effort to fix my eyes on Jesus. I'm just going to put up with where I am. I'm just going to struggle along and trudge along.

Not enjoying it. But it's too much effort to keep my eyes fixed upon Jesus. But we lose out. Because Jesus says, you keep your eyes, fix your eyes on me.

And I guarantee you, I will give you my peace. Not just any old peace, but perfect peace. And that is the great jewel.

It's the most wonderful thing. And this affects every single thing about us. To keep our eyes fixed upon the Lord. Because when our eyes are fixed upon the Lord, we realize this is the Lord who makes us see His footsteps and rides upon the clouds of heaven.

[14 : 02] And that every single thing is under His control. That He is Lord of all. And sometimes, when we look at the Lord, we have a small view of Him.

We brought the Lord down. We bring Him down and down and down. And when we relegate the Lord to making Him think of Him as someone like ourselves, then we won't enjoy the peace.

We don't see Him as Lord of heaven and earth. So it's important that always we're seeing Him like this. And again, even sometimes when a sense of sin comes in and begins to cripple us, it's very easy to focus in upon our life, our failures, our mistakes, our sin, and we say to ourselves, what's going to become of me?

And that's why it's so important that always our eyes are fixed upon Jesus. Satan wants us to keep our eyes off Jesus. Jesus is a great sin bearer.

It's what He came to do. It's what He loves to do. And when we go to the Word, the Word is full from beginning to end telling us of what Jesus has done and what He delights to do.

[15 : 15] And that He has washed away all our sins. That He has cleansed us from all iniquity. That when that great day comes, our sins and our iniquities, which will be called for, they won't be there.

Because He's dealt with them. They're gone. And that's why we need to come back to focusing upon Him and to see Him as always this unchanging, wonderful Lord.

So our minds must be stayed upon Him to stop there. You keep Him in perfect peace whose mind has stayed on you because He trusts in you.

This has got the idea of a little child snuggling in close to a parent. A little child that's anxious and worried.

And as they snuggle in, there comes this great sense of security and of peace and of love and of assurance and of strength and of grace.

[16 : 28] And that's how it is with the Lord. That's the picture that we have here. And that's where to go. Psalm 91 talks about hiding within the secret place.

It's one of the most beautiful psalms. If you ever feel vulnerable and scared in the world that we're living in, as all the different enemies, enemies of the world, the flesh and the devil, they assault you, go to Psalm 91.

Remind yourself of it. Read it. Read it over and read it over and read it over again. And that's for you. It's for all the people of God. It's a most wonderful psalm where the Lord is highlighting to us of His protective love.

Just as a mother bird will put its wings round its little ones, hide them there, shelter them, so that they can't be seen and they're kept warm and cozy and safe and secure.

The Lord is saying, that's what I'm doing to you. And as He does that, then you will enjoy His perfect peace. Let us pray.

[17 : 34] Oh Lord, we give thanks for what Your Word assures us and tells us about Yourself and what You do in us and for us. We pray, oh Lord, that You will encourage us as we go forward in life.

There are so many challenges and each day brings its own challenges. Sometimes, Lord, we have to confess that we're not nearly as vigilant as we would want to be.

There are times, Lord, we have to confess that we want to go it alone. There are times that our spiritual vibrancy is not very vibrant at all.

And we confess that because this is sin. And we ask, Lord, that You will forgive us. We give thanks for how patient You are with us. We give thanks, Lord, that You do not deal with us according to our deserving, but You deal with us according to Your love.

But we pray that in wrath You will always remember mercy. We pray that You will bless us as a congregation and people. Bless our homes and our families. We pray that You will be with us.

[18 : 42] We pray for those who mourn with even though we have two funerals, the funeral of Finley McLean tomorrow and of Roddy Morrison. And we ask, Lord, that You will bless grieving families at this time.

Pray for all who are ill and those in hospital, those who are seriously ill, those who are recovering. Give thanks, Lord, for the way that You helped Arthur McLeod there after that terrible accident and, Lord, he is in so much pain.

We give thanks for Your preservation of him and restoration of him. And we pray that You will heal him completely in body, mind, and soul. And we give thanks, Lord, for the way that You work so often unseen by many eyes.

And yet You work silently and powerfully. And we pray that You will do that for us tonight. Take away from us our every sin, we pray. In Jesus' name we ask all.

Amen. We're going to conclude singing in Psalm 122, the Scottish Psalter. After the service tonight, there's a short session meeting.

[19 : 55] Psalm 122. And if you'll excuse me not going to the door tonight, I'm going to run out to Laxdale after because I've got a week there. Psalm 122.

And we're going to sing from verse 4 to the end. Psalm 122 from verse 4, well, it's from the middle of verse 4 to the end. To Israel's testimony there, to God's name, thanks to pay for thrones of judgment, even the thrones of David's house there stay.

Pray that Jerusalem may have peace and felicity. Let them that love Thee and Thy peace have still prosperity. Therefore I wish that peace may still within Thy walls remain and ever may Thy palace's prosperity retain.

Now for my friends and brethren's sakes, peace be in Thee, I'll say. For the house of God, O Lord, I'll seek Thy good all we. From the middle of verse 4 to Israel's testimony there.

Amen. Israel's testimony there took God's name, that stood vain, for thrones of judgment and tear the throne of dearest house their sin.

[21 : 25] With a church solemnly have peace and felicity.

let them love Thee and Thy peace have still prosperity.

Therefore I wish that peace may still like them and bless what I should or Scrinhos and friends and brethren sing, is the end the I'll say and for the hearts of God our Lord I'll seek thy good always now may the grace mercy and peace of God the Father

Son and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen.