

Perfect Peace

by Chuck Smith

Perfect peace is a promise from God that He will keep us in peace, even in the midst of troubles, when our mind is stayed on Him and we trust in His love and power.

Duration: 35:41

Scripture: Isaiah 26:3, Philippians 4:6

Topics: "Peace"

Description

In this sermon, Skip leads a study on Isaiah chapters 26 through 28. He emphasizes the importance of prioritizing the study of the eternal Word of God over temporary distractions like fireworks. Skip highlights instances in the Bible where Jesus tells his disciples to be of good cheer and not be afraid, assuring them of his presence and power. He also shares the story of Jesus calming the storm on the Sea of Galilee, illustrating how God can bring peace in the midst of chaos. Skip encourages listeners to fix their minds on God's greatness, love, power, mercy, and grace, reminding them that they have access to heaven's resources and can overcome any obstacle through God.

Transcript

Let's pray. Father, we're so thankful for the confidence that we can have knowing that the God of peace is with us. In a world that is torn apart by wars and struggles, we thank you, Lord, that we can experience that peace that passes human understanding.

Lord, we pray that this day, those whose hearts are troubled, those who find their lives in turmoil, we pray, Father, that before this day is over, they might experience, Lord, your perfect peace in their lives, dispelling, Lord, the fears, the anxieties, the uncertainties. May they just have, Lord, that perfect peace. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

You may be seated. Tonight, Skip is going to continue to lead us in our journey through the Bible. And so, we're looking forward to tonight's study, as Skip will be taking us in Isaiah chapters 26 through 28.

I know that it's the fourth of July, and I know that there are going to be fireworks, but I'm very curious as to priorities. Which is most important in your life? The study of the eternal word of God or watching some brilliant flash that will be over in a moment? Hearing the loud explosions and doing the oohs and aahs, I'll be watching to see tonight just which people have the right priority in their life. This morning, we'd like to draw your attention to the 26th chapter, verses 3 and 4, where Isaiah tells us, thou will keep him in perfect

peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.

Trust ye in Jehovah forever, for in Jehovah, Jehovah is everlasting strength. In a world that is filled with wars, filled with striving, filled with bitter competition, the heart of the normal man longs for peace. David, in Psalm 120, said, I am for peace.

And I'm certain that most of us would echo those words of David, I am for peace. I want peace. One of the main goals of the hippies was peace.

On their old vans with the psychedelic paintings, they always had on the van that painted peace sign. They would often flash the peace sign to one another, for they were searching for peace. I can remember being in a van parked behind one of these vans at a signal.

And when the light turned green, the van sputtered and died. And I sat there behind this van as the light continued green, but I knew it would soon be red. And I started honking my horn and saying, get that dirty piece of junk off of the road, you know.

And a hand came out the window with a peace sign, peace brother, you know. And I was embarrassed. I thought, here I am a minister.

And here's this hippie kid telling me peace, brother. When in reality, I should be saying peace brother to him. But our world is such that we long for peace.

The hippie kids were looking for that peace and they thought that their quest for peace could only be found by dropping out of this dog-eat-dog society. So they dropped out of a competitive world. They started living in communal houses.

They disdained the material things, the fancy cars and all. And they got these old Volkswagen buses and they just traveled around the country searching for peace and searching for love. They thought that peace was discovered by dropping acid and going on these kinds of psychedelic trips.

And they really felt that they were discovering the secret of peace. But it wasn't long before they realized that these psychedelic trips were a disillusionment, that their communal houses were not all love and peace. There was striving, there was fighting, there was the quarreling over whose drugs they were.

And so the hippie movement passed from the scene. But in reality, in their search for peace and love, they were ripe for the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is a gospel that promises peace and love. Here in our text in Isaiah 26 3, Isaiah said that thou will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.

Who is the thou? In verse 4, Isaiah tells us, whose mind is stayed on thee for he trusteth in the Lord. The Lord is the one that will keep you in perfect peace if you will keep your mind stayed upon him. He is, according to Paul, Romans chapter 15, the God of peace.

When Jesus was giving his final instructions to his disciples, the night that he was betrayed, as they were on their way from the upper room to the garden of Gethsemane, he said to them, Peace, I leave with you. My peace, I give unto you. Not as the world gives, give I unto you.

Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. My peace, I give to you. Don't be troubled.

Don't be afraid. As we read in Philippians chapter 4, Paul wrote to them, Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God that passes human understanding will keep your heart and your mind.

That glorious peace of God, which passes human understanding. You can be going through the most difficult experience, the most stressful experience and have such wonderful peace. It will surprise you, surprise you that you have such peace in the midst of these tense circumstances.

You know, I think that the life of Jesus was marked by peace. So often where there would be this crowd of people that are pushing, shoving and yelling and all, the one with the peace would be Jesus there in the midst of the crowd. I think of that song, the lyrics of the song, What a Friend We Have in Jesus, those lyrics that say, Oh, what peace we often forfeit.

Oh, what needless pain we bear. All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer. You see, Paul said, Don't be filled with cares.

Be careful for nothing or filled with care over nothing, but with prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. What is Paul telling us? He's telling us that we should take these things that bring care to our hearts and make them the topic for our prayers. The things that trouble me, the things that concern me, the things that worry me, those are the things that I need to be praying about.

And if I will take my cares and make them my prayers, then the peace of God which passes all human understanding will keep my heart and my mind in Christ Jesus. Our text tells us that he will keep us in perfect peace. It's not just a fleeting moment of peace.

It's not like an aspirin that will last for four hours. But it is a constant, continual peace that I can experience in Jesus Christ. He can keep me in a state of perfect peace.

Mark's gospel, chapter four, tells us how Jesus was with his disciples and they were crossing the Sea of Galilee. And a storm came up that was threatening the little ship. In fact, they were sinking.

It was filling with water and they were sinking. And in the midst of this storm, where the disciples were busy trying to bail the water out and going around feverishly and actually now beginning to fear that they were going to sink there in the Sea of Galilee, they found Jesus in the midst of the storm in the back part of the ship, sound asleep on a pillow. And they woke him up and they said, Master, don't you care if we perish? And they were just filled with fear.

And Jesus woke and he said to the wind and to the waves, peace, be still. And immediately the wind ceased blowing and there was a great calm so that the disciples marveled. What kind of a man is this that can speak to the wind and speak to the storm and comet? But then Jesus chided his disciples, chided them for their fear, chided them for their lack of faith.

Having rebuked the storm, he now sort of rebukes them for a lack of faith and for fear. Why did you fear? And that always sort of troubled me. It seemed to me they had real cause for fear.

The ship was sinking. Jesus was asleep. And it seems to me that there was real cause for fear.

And as I read that, it sort of troubled me that Jesus would chide them because they lacked faith and they were fearful. But then I read the story again more carefully. And back at the beginning of the story, I read,

and Jesus said to his disciples, let us go over to the other side.

He didn't say, let's go under to the other side. And if Jesus said, let's go over, you can be sure that you're going to go over. If you just listen carefully, you can't go under while going over to the other side.

And thus his chiding them for the fear that they were going to go under. Thou will keep him. The him is you.

He will keep you in perfect peace. The Hebrew Bible reads, shalom, shalom. A double piece.

He will keep you in peace. Peace. The word perfect is not there in the Hebrew scriptures, but using a double shalom is for emphasis.

The double is a emphatic. That is, he will keep you in great peace, emphatic quite often, even to the present day. When you're in Israel, you greet someone always with the word shalom.

And quite often, as you greet someone with the word shalom, their response is shalom, shalom. They will double it, which is an emphatic piece. May you have perfect peace.

Thus the word perfect piece is a good translation because it brings out the emphatic piece or the great piece that is being promised to those whose minds are stayed upon the Lord. So let me ask you a question. Can you say that today you are experiencing that perfect peace? Can you say that your heart is at rest? Many years ago, I was invited to a seekers meeting made up of college professors and doctors and many of the prominent people of Orange County.

And they had asked me to come and share my understanding of God with them. So I went to this meeting and time came that they wanted the discussion. So the fellow sitting on the floor in a lotus position told me that he was a Buddhist at one time and his search for peace and his search for meaning and search for God.

And he said, we've invited you now tell us about the God that you believe in. So I said, well, you fellows have been on quite a search. And so why don't we start at the beginning of the Bible in the beginning, God.

And one of them spoke up and said, well, now when you say God, are you talking about an anthropomorphic concept of God? And then these guys started getting in this argument with each other on concepts of God. And after about five minutes of their bantering back and forth, during which time I was saying, Oh God, why am I here? Why? Oh, Lord, get me out of this place. If you do, I promise I'll never come back again.

Help me out of here, Lord. I mean, I didn't come for this. And one of the ladies said, would you guys please shut up? We hear you go through these things every week.

And now we've invited a guest, give him the courtesy to at least share with us what he believes. So I started again. But while they were in their little discourse with each other, I started the next time by declaring my heart is at perfect peace.

You could have heard a pin drop. They all began to sit on the edge of their seats to listen. Why? Because that's something they could not say.

That's something they did not experience through all of their searching and philosophizing and all they had not found that perfect peace. And it shocked them to have someone say, my heart is at perfect peace. And that was the key.

They listened then to what I had to share. And in the subsequent weeks, many of them called me and thank God, many of them accepted the Lord and that perfect peace that he has promised to us. Are you afraid that your ship is sinking and Jesus seems to be asleep? You feel that he's not aware of your problem.

You need to remember that Jesus said to his disciples in Luke 12, six are not five sparrows sold for two pennies. And not one of them is forgotten before God. But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Fear not, therefore, for you have more value than many sparrows. Your father watching over his creation, even these little sparrows, hardly worth anything. Five of them sold for two pennies.

You could for one penny by to bargain price by five, two pennies. And yet your father is cognizant of them. Not one of them falls to the ground, but what your father isn't aware of it.

Now, if your father is that aware of just his little creatures. How much more is he aware of you, his child? How much more is he cognizant of your needs and desiring to minister to you and to help you in those hours of distress? So what are the conditions for receiving this perfect peace? Isaiah tells us whose mind is stayed on thee. I must keep my mind stayed upon the Lord or fixed upon him.

It means that I am looking to him. It means that I am trusting in him. Perfect peace is not promised to those that listen to the 10 o'clock news at night and find out all of the murders that happen today in our community.

Perfect peace is not promised to those that lifts into the ravings and the rantings of carrier gore. That's a good way to raise your blood pressure. Perfect peace is not to those whose minds are stayed on the world conditions, for we don't live in that kind of a world.

I'm not saying that we shouldn't be cognizant of what's going on in our world, but don't let your mind dwell on those things. When you start to get upset over the world news, just realize that God is still in control. He has allowed Satan certain liberties.

He has put a limit, however, on Satan's work so that Satan can only work within the constraints of which God has allowed him to work. Jesus said to his disciples, let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me.

And as you keep your mind stayed upon him, the result will be a perfect peace in your heart. I think of how the scriptures so often tell us that Jesus said to people who were going through troubling experiences, be of good cheer. There was a man who was suffering a crippling disease as the result of his sin.

He had become an invalid as this particular disease, which was transmitted by sexual relationships, as it was taking its toll upon his body and now was helpless having to just lie on a cot. His friends brought him to Jesus and as Jesus looked upon him in that condition, he said, be of good cheer. Oh, how that must have brought comfort to his mind that was plagued over his guilt, his mind that was constantly going back and saying, why did I do it? Why was I so foolish? Why? And, you know, as you see your body just slowly

deteriorating and you can do nothing about it and you realize it's my fault, it was my folly, it was my stupidity.

Why did I do it? It can be a very tormenting thing. And to this man, Jesus said, be of good cheer. Your sin is forgiven.

To the disciples that were out on the Sea of Galilee, struggling against a contrary wind, they're in the middle of the sea, not really progressing towards the other side. And at around midnight, Jesus came or was actually the fourth watch of the night. Jesus came walking to them on the water.

And when they saw him walking toward them, they began to cry out in fright. They thought it was a ghost. And as they were crying out in fear, Jesus said, be of good cheer.

It's only me. Don't be afraid. He told his disciples that in this world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer because I have overcome the world.

Let not your heart be troubled. Be of good cheer. You see, you can't be both.

If your heart is troubled, you can't be of good cheer. And if you are of good cheer, your heart can't be troubled. They're sort of mutually exclusive.

And Jesus is encouraging you today. Don't let your heart be troubled. Don't worry over these things.

Be anxious for nothing. Be of good cheer. Look to me.

I'm here. I want to help you. I will sustain you.

I have the answers for you. Most of the panic that comes to us is from failing to figure God into the equations of life. I look at my present problem and I measure it by my resources and my ability to handle it.

And I panic because I realize I don't have the ability or the strength to deal with this. I need to remember not to measure though the situation by my capacities, but to measure them by his capacities. It isn't an issue of can I cope with this? But can he cope with this? We are told in Psalm 56 that David was taken by the Philistines.

He was in a frightening situation. He was in the city of Gath. And David prayed this prayer while they're taken by the Philistines.

Be merciful unto me, O God, for man would swallow me up. His daily fighting oppresses me. My enemies would daily swallow me up, for there are many that fight against me.

O thou most high, when I am afraid, I will trust in thee. I will praise God's word, for I have put my trust in God. I will not fear what man might do to me.

You see, in this place of danger, in this place of peril, David turned it over to God. Lord, I put my trust in you. Deliver me from these men.

They're fighting. It oppresses me, Lord. All of this tension that just, Lord, I put my trust in you.

I will not fear what they might do to me. David knew that he was no match for the Philistines, but he knew that the Philistines were no match for his God. Even so, you are no match for your problems, but your

problems are no problem to God.

He that has perfect peace is among the richest people in the world today. To have a very beautiful estate, a huge mansion, what value is it if your heart is constantly troubled and you're constantly plagued with fear? What good is a bank account into the millions of dollars if at the hour of death or deep distress you do not have God to call upon? I have neither estates or mansions or large bank accounts, but I have heaven's resources at my disposal. And thus, I'm one of the richest men in Newport Beach.

I love to drive around and look at all of those lovely homes and realize I'm richer than any of the people living in any of these homes because I have heaven's resources at my disposal. And that's the glorious thing. You have heaven's resources at your disposal, and God will keep you in perfect peace when your mind is stayed on him.

So we need to fix our minds upon his greatness, his love, his power, his mercy, and his grace toward you and me because our God is an awesome God. And through him, we need not fear any obstacle that the world could throw against us. For through God, we have the victory.

Let's pray. Father, we're so thankful that you've made your resources available for us, your children, and that you have promised that you would provide for our every need according to your riches in glory by Christ Jesus, our Lord. Lord, there are those here today who came with worried hearts.

They're facing troubling situations, and these have created fear and anxieties. Lord, I pray that as they are here today, they might just fix their minds, Lord, upon you, upon your love and your greatness and your ability to help those who put their trust in you. Free them, Lord, from the fears that are so debilitating and are dragging them down.

May they go, Lord, from this service with the confidence and the assurance that you're going to work as they place the issues in your hands. And may they go, Lord, with perfect peace as their minds have been stayed upon you and as they have put their trust in you today. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. Shall we stand? The pastors are down here at the front to pray for you today. If you are faced with some troubling situations that maybe are keeping you awake at night, maybe they're robbing you of sleep, you're worried, you're fearful, you're not certain as to what's going to happen and you really find yourself quite troubled, they're here to help you to connect with God today, to connect with his resources that he wants to make available to you if you would just trust in him.

So I would encourage you, don't leave the place today carrying the same burden that you carried in. But as the scripture said, casting all your cares upon him because he cares for you. Go from this place carefree.

Let him carry the burden for you. Turn it over to him and let him take care of it. He's promised that he would.

And you're foolish to try to bear that load all yourself. It can drive you to distraction. So I would encourage you find today before you leave here, find that perfect peace that God wants you to experience through the commitment of these issues fully to him.

These men are down here to pray for you and to help you find that perfect peace. The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee and be gracious unto

thee.

The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace. 272 W.O.R.D.

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