

Isaiah 26 (3-4) – Perfect Peace

The context of our text is about God restoring Israel back to their homeland after suffering in captivity. But vs.3-4 can certainly apply to you in a very personal way. And in this text, God is offering peace for your life. We will look at this under three main headings, the nature of this peace, the source of this peace, and receiving this peace.

The nature of this peace – *perfect peace* is “peace” peace; it is the same Hebrew word used twice in a row for emphasis. This is beyond a mere sense of peace. It is an overflowing abundance of peace, a deep peace. The text says that God will *keep* you in perpetual peace. This is about your whole life.

The Hebrew word for peace used here is shalom. It is more than just a simple peace. Shalom is the picture of wholeness, a spiritual well-being, a sense of safety, and having a healthy, prosperous, contented soul. The person who has shalom has found favor with God, and has no fear of condemnation.

It’s like when you first get saved, and you begin to understand it. You know you have peace with God because of your faith in Jesus Christ. And so now you don’t have a dread of God, there is peace, and a delight in God. It affects your whole life. When you know that with Jesus you have something money can’t buy, poverty can’t lose, no one can steal, death can’t stop, and the devil can’t touch, that, my friends, gives you a real sense of peace.

What is being offered to you here isn’t just shalom, it is “shalom” shalom, a whole wholeness, a complete abundance of secure contentment. This is mental and emotional peace. It is a state of trusting God, despite the battles that may be raging around you, or even those trying to rage within you. It is the mental ability to keep your cool when the heat is on.

This is peace of mind, where you are not getting weighed down with worry. It’s when you can stop being so easily offended. And even when there is a lot of bad stuff, you’re not consumed with focusing on just the bad stuff. You

don't get stuck there, you move forward. You can focus on what is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, and worthy of praise. That's Philippians 4:8, and that's when verses like Psalm 56:9 (*This I know, that God is for me*) come alive in you. You can have this!

When you have this perfect peace, this "shalom" shalom, the things that pick at your wholeness only prove your wholeness. Whatever comes your way your peace is proven. You don't immediately assume the worst. You aren't so easily agitated or irritated by unexpected things. You don't fly off the handle when people fail to do things like you want. No longer does every little thing turn into an emergency. You stop feeling like everything is some sort of a sign, like everyone is out to get you. People can put you down, or life can pile up on you. But you aren't easily rattled, you have perfect peace. You know God is using those trials to make you more like Jesus. You know he will be right there with you in the midst of your suffering.

This whole wholeness is a mindset. But it is more than just a mindset; it is an experiential knowledge, and active faith that lives like your significance, your sufficiency, and your security are found in God. It's a mindset that becomes a lifestyle. No matter what your situation is, no matter what it may feel like, no matter what anyone else says. He is your potter and you are his clay. Money doesn't dominate you. Your body may be wasting away, but your spirit is being renewed day by day. You aren't wilting, you aren't whining, you are winning. That's what God offers you in this passage.

The source of this peace – Looking at these verses, it is easy to see that God is the one who gives this peace. And God is the only one that can give this peace. Any other source of peace can fail, it can end, and it can be stolen, or taken away. If you are trusting in some other thing to satisfy you with a sense of true, real, lasting peace, you will find out that it won't always deliver.

Of course, you can find momentary peace from the troubles of this world. These things aren't God's peace, but lesser or false senses of peace. Some turn to fame, fortune, popularity, financial success, power, influence, family,

and friends. Some identify with others who feel their same sort of brokenness. Some try to find peace by having fun, through various vacations, parties, events, or hobbies. Some use addictions or medicating behaviors. Some pursue achievement in academics, business, professions, society, or church. Some just check out of life. And some just never slow down; it's all busyness, in religion, social causes, volunteering, or whatever. Everyone is looking to maximize their peace. And some of those pursuits can be good and right and enriching and helpful things. But those things alone can never deliver the kind of peace that God alone can.

Ask Solomon, who had all the wealth, money, power, fame, and anything anyone could ever have, yet it left him with a feeling like he was trying to grasp the wind. You can be happy for a while, and maybe you'll have enough money, success, fame or whatever to go from one thing to another in search of your next thrill. But you'll have to, because like Solomon, you'll never find true peace if you don't find it in God, the only source of lasting peace. Now it's not wrong to find legitimate happiness. But you can achieve everything you've ever dreamed of, and it's not enough, because satisfaction is not the same thing as supernatural peace in your soul. And peace in your soul is greater than satisfaction in your life.

Vs.4 points out the all-sufficient nature of God, the author of peace. The first mention is LORD, or the Hebrew is Yahweh, which speaks of his self-existence. Everything is dependent on him. He is the eternal, all sufficient, unchanging one. He told Moses, I am who I am. He IS peace.

The second mention in vs.4 is LORD GOD; it's a compound, put together for emphasis, like "peace, peace" in vs.3. This refers to his power. God has the power to deliver the peace you need. He has the peace in himself, his peace has no limits, and he can keep you in perfect peace.

Finally, you see that God is called an everlasting rock. God is eternal, immovable, and unyielding. He is the firm foundation, the solid rock. He's not going away, and he's not going to be any less than he has always been.

Nothing can even begin to threaten his peace. In him is ultimate, unwavering, unstoppable security. You see this type of imagery all throughout the Bible. On Christ the solid rock I stand. He is my shelter in the storm. You can trust God forever, because he is who he is forever.

Receiving this peace – How do you get this supernatural, God given, perfect peace, to help you deal with the unavoidable stresses in your life? Maybe you're thinking right now about those things that drain your energy, make you worried, keep you miserable, keep your mind occupied, and keep you up at night? Maybe you are successful but you have no peace? Or maybe you wonder how you can get back your sense of purpose, instead of life draining all of your zeal? How can you receive this whole wholeness?

There are two responsibilities you have, two things you need. The first is found in vs.3. It is a **steady mind**. *You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you.* It is an established, steadfast mind. It is firm, rooted, anchored. This is not just about a moment of time where you fix your mind. This is about a mindset that is saturated and focused. It has been built up, and it's always in the process of being built up. Think about an abandoned building. What happens? The weather starts affecting it. It starts to break down. It gets occupied with bugs, rats, disease, and crime. It isn't safe anymore. It loses its purpose. An abandoned building is not a place for peace.

The Hebrew word used for mind here is speaking about your conception, your imagination. This doesn't mean that you are to do nothing but think about God all day every day. No, it means that the center of your thoughts is God. Your mind doesn't wander outside the framework of God. You take every stray thought and make it captive to Christ. This isn't about more work. This is about Jesus as the center of everything. That isn't some increased burden. That becomes an increased blessing.

People let their mind wander all over the place all through the week. They fill their minds with all sorts of garbage. Day in and day out, their thoughts are concerned and consumed with worldly things. Or even if they are

thinking of good things, they don't think much about God or the things of God. Then they wonder why a few minutes or hours a month in church or reading the Bible or praying doesn't seem to be working when it comes to losing your peace. Now this might be a symptom of a much larger problem. Maybe you keep acting according to your human nature because that's all you've got. Maybe it's time to truly surrender to Jesus Christ.

Still, for some who really are saved, they can run into a problem with their peace here. They see this text, and they see the words "stayed on you," and they think that it just means in the moments of crisis. They think that when the stress or trouble or whatever comes, if they just start thinking about God right then, he will give them peace. And it can happen. But what happens when it doesn't work? And why doesn't it work?

It's never wrong to start thinking about God. But this text is talking about more than just a call to God in a crisis. However, for the person who isn't distracted from God most of the time, when they concentrate on God, they find relief. But God was the biggest concern in their life already. This "mind stayed on God" isn't a fix-it formula that makes God work for you. You can't keep Jesus in your pocket like a magic amulet.

You can enjoy life and have peace, but you can't expect to spend all your time on entertainment, leisure and pleasure and think you're building up a steady mind. What do you need to do? You need to change your frame of mind. You need to reorient your thought life around God and the things of God. You need to adjust your attention span and train your mind by spending some serious time in God's word. And the peace that will come from a renewed mind will be worth it.

Now for some people, a mind stayed on God will look different than it does for most others. God understands that. If you have a hard time focusing, ask God to help you. But for many people they just need to be honest. Confess your complacency to God, and ask him to give you a delight in him. Do you want to be kept in perfect peace? Keep your mind on God.

The second thing you need if you want to receive this perfect peace is a **trusting heart**. You see this at the end of vs.3 and the beginning of vs.4. This refers to a complete, confident reliance upon God. It is like you're in a raging storm, and in the midst of the mighty waves, you place your whole weight on a solid rock. The heart that trusts God sees the bigger picture of who God is when the immediate picture isn't so good. Your sense of urgency is tempered with a sense of proportion. God is bigger than your troubles. God is stronger than your situations. When tragedy strikes, your sense of loss is mixed with a sense of God's truth. And when all around seems to give way, you stick to your source with a tenacious hope, and a firm, settled faith.

A trusting heart isn't trusting in its own strength. A trusting heart says like Psalm 73:26 – *My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.* A trusting heart knows that God is good all the time, when you look like you're winning, and even when it looks and feels like you're losing. A trusting heart acts in faith. It learns to rest upon God, and it continues in that trust. All is well in the kingdom, and I'm part of it.

When you trust in the Lord, you might be weak, but you are attached to his strength. Those winds and those waves can crash and splash as much as they want, but they cannot move that rock, they cannot even take a piece of it. That solid rock, our great God, will never be lesser than he is or has ever been. And when you trust the Lord, Jesus Christ, you are one with him. Death on the cross couldn't hold Jesus back from his destiny. He paid for your sins and he rose again. And now you don't have to fear the biggest, fiercest waves of them all, death, hell, and the devil. Hebrews 2:14-15 says that through death Jesus would destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. So, you can trust in the Lord for your forever. In Christ you are part of that solid rock, and you can trust him all the time.

When you do that, you will live a life of perfect peace. As Jesus said in John 14:27 – *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.* Amen.