

Peace of God  
Isaiah 26:1-9  
May 14, 2023  
Mother's Day  
4th Week of Chemo

Intro:

1.) I realize that today is Mother's Day and I thank God for mothers. We all have one. Some of you have more than one mother, a biological mother and others who may have nurtured you.

I had a very godly mother who helped shape my life. I thank God for her and the impact she had on my life.

ILL: I will share one story that gives you insight into her. At my ordination after seminary I was given a Bible that was purchased by my parents. In the front cover my mother wrote these words, "To our beloved son in whom we are well pleased."

All I will say on this Mother's Day is that encouragement is one of the greatest ministries we can give to children, ours and others. Sure, there must be instruction, discipline, love and lots of other involvement in the lives of children. But may we never overlook the value of encouragement.

Honestly, I am glad my mother is in heaven with Jesus and isn't in this world to feel the pain of what is going on in my life.

As you have likely heard me say on more than one occasion, I do not believe that those who have died in the faith can look back and see what is going on in this world. It sounds nice to say that Mom or Dad is watching over me, but that just isn't Biblical.

Heaven is a place where there is no more mourning or crying or pain and my mom would have a heap of pain if she had to live through me having cancer again.

As I look back on that I believe that was maybe the hardest time in my mom's life. Some of you, like Rich and Donna and others know the pain of having a child at whatever age whose life could be in the balance.

2.) I am going to dispense with the usual opening for most sermons. I shared three weeks ago that we would be looking at peace over the next few weeks.

Little needs to be said about the lack of peace in our world. We live in the most turbulent time in the history of our country. There seems to be almost no peace in every sense of the word to be found.

And, honestly, I see little peace in lots of the lives of those who claim to be a follower of Jesus, including some of you. I believe that may one of the reasons that God has allowed what is going on in my life.

3.) Let's lay down a couple of things as we begin to look at the peace of God.

First, I don't have all the answers when it comes to experiencing the peace of God, but I do believe I have some insight, or I wouldn't be preaching on having the peace of God in your heart. I hope to share with you at least some of how I believe I have peace in this storm.

This sermon is intended to deal with this issue of peace in the heart as an experience, not as some spiritual goal to shoot for.

I have had and have this morning a consistent, lasting peace in my heart through all of this. But that doesn't mean that there haven't been times when my heart has been troubled, or I have had some anxiety about it all.

In no way do I want to give that implication.

Here's a good Biblical study as we begin to be honest. Two of the greatest examples we have in our faith had times when their hearts were troubled.

You can't read much of Paul's writings to know that he had lots of troubles. **We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.**

In the same letter to the Philippians where Paul writes in  
Philippians 4:6

**Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.**

He writes about Epaphroditus: Philippians 2:28

**Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety.**

The best example is the life of our Lord Jesus. The One who would say to the disciples in the Upper Room on the last night of His life, "**Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid**" the Scriptures tell us that His heart was troubled.

Most of those times of a troubled heart were near the last week of His life.

Jesus' heart was troubled when he saw Mary crying at tomb of her brother Lazarus.

He uncontrollably wept over the city of Jerusalem the last part of His ride on the donkey coming into the city on what we call Palm Sunday.

The last week of His life He said that His soul was troubled from this hour, meaning His death.

He was troubled in the Upper Room when He told the disciples that one of them would betray Him.

And of course, the greatest time of His troubled heart was in the Garden of Gethsemane when He was in such agony that He sweat drops of blood.

So to give any implication that a heart of peace can never have times of being troubled or anxious would be far from reality, even in the life of Jesus or Paul for that matter.

It was Jesus Himself who said, **in this world you will have trouble. But be of good comfort, I have overcome the world.**

And that is just what we see that happened after Gethsemane. Jesus overcame the world. What we see through His suffering and death is a peace in the way He handled going to the Cross for us.

There is a calmness in Him when the soldiers came to arrest Him, when He stood trial before the Sanhedrin, especially when He stood before Pilate, and when they crucified Him.

When the troubles of life come to you as they certainly will and likely have, we have a high priest who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses, One who fully understands your troubled heart.

Maybe one way we get through the troubles and anxieties of this world is to begin by being honest about them as Jesus surely was. Repressing them or trying to ignore them won't help us overcome them as Jesus said He could help us do.

ILL: I had a very difficult treatment on Tuesday. I didn't write a blog about it. It was the most difficult so far. As some of you have found, the nurse can make the difference. I previously wrote about a good nurse. I chose not to write about the not so good one on Tuesday.

I could tell from the outset that she wasn't comfortable. She kept asking other nurses questions and didn't give the infusion as it had been done previously. I am sure that I tensed up in response which may have added to it.

When it was finally over and I walked out Teresa looked at me and said, "You look whiter than a sheet." I had no doubt about that.

There are times of anxiety in this, especially over the treatments and the possibilities of what they will do and are doing.

As with Jesus and Paul, I am learning that it is possible to return to that peace after the troubling.

I'd like to look at a very different passage than I would have thought that I would use as a text for experiencing the peace of God. There are a number of passages that would have been on my list and we may refer to some of them as we walk through this sermon.

Turn with me to Isaiah. Not the Isaiah 9 passage we use at Christmas as the Prince of Peace, but rather Isaiah 26.

Isaiah is a prophet of God charged with ministering to the people of God during a very dark time in their history. As a young man he witnessed the rise of his country into an economic and military world power. But along with this prosperity there was also corruption, shallow spirituality, and ritualistic religion. A new power had now come on the scene in Assyria and the splendor of Isaiah's nation was starting to fade. While politicians argued, the nation was downgraded and the people grew anxious. Kind of sounds like America today, doesn't it?

Let's read several verses:

### **Isaiah 26:1-9**

**1 In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:**

**We have a strong city;  
God makes salvation  
its walls and ramparts.**

**2**

**Open the gates  
that the righteous nation may enter,  
the nation that keeps faith.**

**3**

**You will keep in perfect peace  
those whose minds are steadfast,  
because they trust in you.**

**4**

**Trust in the Lord forever,  
for the Lord, the Lord himself, is the Rock eternal.**

I read this: Aren't you glad that no matter what problems you face, there is never any panic in heaven?

Let's quickly define Biblical peace. It doesn't mean a lack of troubles or the cessation of fighting. Biblical peace is a shalom of the heart, a tranquility of the heart that is in harmony.

Peace isn't something that happens out there, it is something that happens in here, in your heart.

Let me try to give you some insight into how I am finding this peace in my heart.

### **I. Peace with God.**

As I said three weeks ago in the sermon on Peace with God from Romans 5:1-2 where Paul writes these words:

**Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ**

You will never have the peace of God in your heart until you have settled the issue and have peace with God by committing your soul to Him and receiving Him as your Savior and Lord. Nothing I can share with you will help bring any peace to your heart unless you have Jesus in your heart and that you know that you are at peace with Him.

God gives us some great insight into how we can experience peace in verses three and four in Isaiah 26.

Notice how verse three starts: **You will keep in perfect peace**

The phrase, "perfect peace" is literally, "shalom, shalom" in Hebrew. The word "perfect" is not in the original. One commentator says it means, "In peace, peace." Spurgeon said that "God does nothing

by halves, but everything by doubles.” When a word is repeated in the Bible it’s done for emphasis, like an exclamation mark.

Notice how the verse begins: You (meaning God) will keep. **The word, “keep” means, “To guard, protect or maintain.” It’s a military term meaning to protect a camp or castle.**

Paul picks up on this same idea when he writes in Philippians 4:7 **And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

God wants you to have peace that only He can bring. He will guard two things Paul says, **your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

Look closely at verses three and four again in Isaiah 26:

**You will keep in perfect peace  
those whose minds are steadfast,  
because they trust in you.**

**4**

**Trust in the Lord forever,  
for the Lord, the Lord himself, is the Rock eternal.**

What do you see? Exactly what Paul said that needed to be guarded. Your hearts and your minds. Let’s take them as Isaiah writes them.

## **II. Experiencing the Peace of God comes through a steadfast mind.**

Your mind has a great deal to do with peace or lack of peace in your heart. We speak of having or wanting peace of mind about some things.

How you think and what you think about will have a great impact on what you feel.

Mind here refers to our mindset or our frame of mind.

Our minds are filled with so much negativity from the culture in which we live. No wonder most of us have trouble with peace because of what stimuli we get each day.

Here's what I have found that has helped bring and keep the peace in my heart. Sometimes I have to literally shut out all the negativity. Turn off the radio or the TV or watch something that lifts my mind instead of depresses me. Remove the things that steal my peace.

Isaiah says here that **1 In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:**

I have shared with you in this the value of listening to praise and worship music. Music, the right music, can help your mind focus on God instead of your problems. The worship of God is vitally important in our spiritual walk. Worship gets our minds off our problems and on to God who is able to help us deal with the problems.

I have tried to focus on my blessings rather than the problems or worry about what I can't control.

Some of you have no peace because your focus is on worrying over what might happen. You have no peace because your mind is controlled by that worry.

ILL: I remember very little about college chapel when I was at Asbury for one year, other than the administration being so loving that they had chapel on Saturday mornings at 8:00 am.

The only speaker that I remember was actually a movie producer who decades ago was concerned about the filth and violence that he saw in the movie industry.

And he said something that I have never forgotten. He said, "You would never put poison in your body and not expect it to affect you. Why would you put poison in your mind and not expect it to harm you?"



I have tried to live by the wisdom of Philippians 4:8 since then where Paul writes: **“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy- think about such things.”**

Take an honest look at what you are allowing to enter your mind. What you watch, the music you listen to, what you read, what you hear from others.

Paul gives us some great insight into what can steal away your peace when He writes in 2 Corinthians 10:5 **We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.**

The pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God comes from the evil one. As much as we'd like not to believe it, the enemy has access to your mind.

Do you ever have some thought cross your mind and you think, “where did that come from?” We all do. It may come in the form of some temptation or some negative thought.

Paul says we take every thought captive. In other words we control every thought that leads us away from the knowledge of God.

I have found the way to take is thought captive is to move my mind to focus on something else rather than dwell on the negative thought.

Paul speaks in Romans 12:2 **Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.**

Some of us need the transforming of a renewed, a changed mind away from conforming to the pattern of this world.

Romans 8:6 **The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.**

Let me say, it is very important what we allow in the minds of our children and young people.

So the mind plays a great role in whether or not you have peace.

The second is obvious:

**III. Experiencing the Peace of God comes through a trusting heart.**

end of verse 3

**because they trust in you.**

**4**

**Trust in the Lord forever,**

**for the Lord, the Lord himself, is the Rock eternal.**

The mind affects our peace, but ultimately peace is a heart issue. Peace in your heart.

I believe that peace comes through learning to trust God. **Trust in the Lord forever.** That in itself implies that it isn't a quick fix to a troubled and anxious heart.

Here are some things that I have learned about this peace in my heart. There are several.

**1. Peace is a part of the fruit of the Spirit that Paul speaks of in Galatians 5:22. Love, joy, peace.**

Every believer has access to having the fruit of the Spirit in your life. I have found that some aspects of the fruit of the Spirit are more evident in my life than others.

I have also found that like natural fruit, the fruit of the Spirit is a growth process. And you can rarely see it growing at the time.

I think peace has been that way in my life. As I look back at cancer 22 years ago and compare it to dealing with cancer now, there is a great deal more peace now than I had then.

My age and station of life have something to do with that, but hopefully in the last 22 years I have learned to trust Him and the evidence of the power of the Holy Spirit who is at work.

2. Peace of the heart is a gift from God. Jesus said, "**My peace I give to you.**"

Peace is a gift from the heart of God to your heart. It comes out of your relationship with Him. I have found that it isn't like a Christmas gift that I unwrap it and have it pronto.

It is a gradual experiencing of that gift that I have experienced.

2 Thessalonians 3:16

**Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.**

3. It is a peace that passes our understanding.

Philippians 4:7 **And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding,**

I can't explain it and I don't fully understand it, but I know that sweet peace in this storm.

4. It is a peace that comes as this Isaiah passage says through learning to trust Him.

I have shared in both times of cancer in my life that Psalm 31:15 has sustained me. **"My times are in His hand."**

I am at peace because I am held in the hand of God. I learned that He was trustworthy 22 years ago and He is still trustworthy.

That in no way means the outcome. The three children heading to the fiery furnace said, "We believe our God can deliver us, but if He doesn't, we will still trust Him."

I have peace because I have learned to trust Him. I stand upon His promises.

He does work in all things to bring about His good.

He does provide sufficient grace.

He never leaves us or forsakes us.

5. I have found that there is a connection between righteousness and peace.

Pick Up with Verse 7

**7**

**The path of the righteous is level;**

**you, the Upright One, make the way of the righteous smooth.**

**8**

**Yes, Lord, walking in the way of your laws,**

**we wait for you;**

**your name and renown**

**are the desire of our hearts.**

**9**

**My soul yearns for you in the night;**

**in the morning my spirit longs for you.**

**When your judgments come upon the earth,**

**the people of the world learn righteousness.**

Walking in the ways of your laws is another way of saying that peace comes through obedience and submission to God.

I have found that there is never any peace in my heart when I refuse to be obedient and refuse to submit to God in every aspect of my life.

It would seem obvious that to walk in the ways of His laws and to wait on Him, might mean that you stay in His Word and prayer as part of knowing His peace that passes understanding.

What I have found in this hasn't been long periods of prayer. Maybe I will at some point. What I have found is more of what Paul says when he says pray without ceasing.

Not down on our hands and knees praying, but rather realizing that God is there with me every moment of the day. I speak to Him often, countless times a day.

That means that He is on my mind and in my heart.

**2 Isaiah 60:17, "I will make peace your governor & righteousness your ruler." (NIV)**

**3 Psalm 85:8-10,**

**8 I will hear what God the LORD will say; For He will speak peace to His people, to His godly ones;**

Righteousness comes out of our relationship with God.

**your name and renown  
are the desire of our hearts.**

**9  
My soul yearns for you in the night;**

**in the morning my spirit longs for you.**

6. I have found that God is big enough to handle whatever problems I am facing.

the end of verse 4    **for the Lord, the Lord himself, is the Rock eternal.**

He is the Rock in my life. He is the One on whom I stand and in whom I trust.

7. One more. I have found peace in my heart because I know ultimately how it is going to turn out.

I will be healed in one of two ways. And in that I can trust Him.

CLOSE: In the mid-17th century, Oliver Cromwell sent one of his officials to France to represent England in some negotiations. One night during his travels this official found he was unable to sleep. According to the custom of the day a servant slept in his room and that evening the servant was sleeping soundly. In the middle of the night the official woke his servant to tell the servant that he could not rest because "I am so afraid something will go wrong with the diplomatic mission."

"Master," said the servant, "may I ask a question or two?"

"Of course." Replied the official

"Did God rule the world before we were born?"

"Most assuredly He did."

"And will He rule it after we are dead?"

"Certainly He will."

**“Then, master, why not let Him rule the present, too?”**

Something in the servant’s reply stirred the official’s faith and he felt a deep sense of peace come over him - and in a few minutes both he and the servant were sound asleep.

I have found peace as I am trying to let God rule the present in my life.