

How can I have perfect peace?

Isaiah 26:1-11

October 13th, 2019

Big idea: Present peace is possible for the one who trusts in God's presence and His future deliverance.

Intro:

Hold up sign from Isaiah 26:3

You can see why people love this verse. We want peace. We want perfect peace. This verse tells us how to get it, set our minds on God, trust in Him.

One couple who expressed that this verse was very comforting to them when they had a child who was still born.

But, that can feel like it promises too much and the means to get there seems too vague. Can I really have peace? What does it mean to have my mind stayed on God and trust in Him?

But that verse wasn't just air dropped into your life in the form of a principle. There is a context around this. As we understand the context we can understand the timeless truths that apply to us.

Otherwise, we can misuse it. We can be like the people Jeremiah warns against

Jeremiah 6:14 "They have healed the brokenness of My people superficially, Saying, 'Peace, peace,' But there is no peace.

1. Steadfastly **trust** in the Lord our rock (26:1-6)
 - a. Historical context – Fear of Assyrian invasion
 - i. **Isaiah 10:24-25** Therefore thus says the Lord GOD of hosts, "O My people who dwell in Zion, do not fear the Assyrian who strikes you with the rod and lifts up his staff against you, the way Egypt did. ²⁵ "For in a very little while My indignation *against you* will be spent and My anger *will be directed* to their destruction."
 - b. Biblical context – He is Lord of the nations, including Assyria
 - i. Chapters 13-23 detail God's message to nation after nation in particular terms. Chapters 24-27 celebrate God's Lordship of the whole earth as the grand finale of this section.
 1. Babylon and Assyria 13/14
 2. Philistia, Moab, Syria, Israel, Ethiopia, Egypt, Edom, etc.
 3. Mix of near and far fulfillments
 - c. They will sing this song "in that day" "in the land of Judah"
 - i. 45 times the phrase "in that day" is used in Isaiah.
 - ii. **Isaiah 2:17** The pride of man will be humbled And the loftiness of men will be abased; And the LORD alone will be exalted in that day,
 - iii. **Isaiah 11:10-11** Then in that day The nations will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; And His resting place will be glorious. ¹¹ Then it will happen on that day that the Lord Will again recover the second time with His hand The remnant of His people, who will remain, From Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, And from the islands of the sea.
 - iv. Pictures the people back in the land of Judah singing about God's deliverance.

1. Near time, they will experience a glimpse of this when God defeats Assyria. You'll read about that this week in Isaiah 36-37.
 2. But then a new enemy arises in Babylon and they would be taken away into captivity for 70 years. That is predicted in Isaiah 39. But then they were brought back into the land, just as God had said would happen.
 3. But still, they were not free. Then came Rome and then others.
 4. But, one day God will rescue them and the Messiah will rule in the land and they will be secure. That's what this looks ahead to.
- d. They have a strong city – they are secure
- e. It's a city that the righteous can enter
- f. It is contrast with the "unassailable city" on high that is brought low in vv. 5-6
- i. Their peace is in part by God ending the external threat against them.
 - ii. Ancient cities were built on raised ground to give them a military advantage if they were attacked. High walls were built to further reinforce their lofty position.
 1. Came to symbolize pride but the city would be brought low.
 2. The day of the Lord will bring deliverance and destruction.
 - iii. "City" comes up in chapters 24-27 several times
 1. **Isaiah 24:10** The city of chaos is broken down; Every house is shut up so that none may enter.
 2. **Isaiah 25:2** For You have made a city into a heap, A fortified city into a ruin; A palace of strangers is a city no more, It will never be rebuilt.
 3. **Isaiah 27:10** For the fortified city is isolated, A homestead forlorn and forsaken like the desert; There the calf will graze, And there it will lie down and feed on its branches.
 4. Oswalt – In place of the city of chaos towering over the oppressed in grim splendor, God has another city, one whose walls are salvation, whose gates are open to all who will enter, whose might is not in arrogance but in humble commitment.
 5. Partly where Augustine in the 5th century developed his ideas of the city of God and the city of man.
- g. Present experience – we can fear lots of things
- i. World events
 - ii. Messing up our kids
- h. You can experience present peace through ongoing trust. (26:3-4)
- i. "mind" as in mindset or a total way of looking at things, frame of mind
 - ii. "Steadfast" has the idea of being dependent on, stayed on, fixed on. Not describing the quality of mind (i.e. someone who is steadfast and unmoveable) but the focus of the mind on the Lord.
 1. ^{CSB17} **Isaiah 26:3** You will keep the mind that is dependent on you in perfect peace, for it is trusting in you.
 2. ^{ESV} **Isaiah 26:3** You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.

3. ^{KJV} **Isaiah 26:3** Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose mind is stayed on thee*: because he trusteth in thee.
 - iii. “perfect peace” refers to complete peace
 - iv. What are the top 3 qualities of God most often listed in the Bible?
 1. Holiness? Love? No, not in the top 3
 2. God is good, God is able, God is faithful
 - v. Just like the Jewish people would have glimpses of God’s final victory along the way, so we have glimpses of God’s future complete rescue.
 - i. You can trust His character as He uses **hardship**. (28:23-29)
 - i. He knows when to plow, when to sow, and when to harvest.
 - ii. Isaiah 28:23-29
 - iii. A good farmer knows when to plow, when to sow, when to harvest, how to process the food.
 1. He doesn’t just plow, plow, and plow some more.
 2. There is a goal in the end – a crop of food that can be eaten.
 - iv. In the same way, God doesn’t plow continually.
 1. There will be minor reprieves in life, just like Israel would see periods of peace and deliverance.
 2. There will be an eventual final deliverance
2. Follow God’s **ways** as you seek Him (26:7-11)
 - a. Language that reminds us of the book of Proverbs.
 - i. **Proverbs 4:11-14** I have directed you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in upright paths. ¹² When you walk, your steps will not be impeded; And if you run, you will not stumble. ¹³ Take hold of instruction; do not let go. Guard her, for she is your life. ¹⁴ Do not enter the path of the wicked And do not proceed in the way of evil men.
 - b. The way is smooth not because it is always easy or without pain.
 - i. But as one author has said, it is not devious or deceptive with hidden pitfalls. It’s demands are clear in advance and its final destination is sure. Such a way may not be filled with illicit pleasures, but it will offer excitement in plenty for those with the courage to take God at his word.
 - ii. The one on the level path is the one who is following God’s “judgments” (v. 8) or laws – God’s Word.
 - iii. **Proverbs 4:19** The way of the wicked is like darkness; They do not know over what they stumble.
 - iv. Israel is a land of hills and valleys. A journey on foot would usually be grueling in the up and down journeys. How refreshing to picture a road that was level and straight.
 - v. **Psalms 27:11** Teach me Your way, O LORD, And lead me in a level path Because of my foes.
 - c. The goal is relationship with God, not an easy life.
 - i. “waited for You eagerly”

1. Waiting is a biblical expression of confident hope. It expresses the believer's expectation that God will demonstrate his faithfulness at the most appropriate time (Oswalt).
 2. Waiting is hard – waiting for test results, waiting to hear back from a job, waiting to hear of someone wants to end a relationship.
 - a. Waiting is hard because usually at that point the result is out of our hands. Its an admission that there is nothing we can do to achieve our ends.
 - b. Yet that admission is the first requirement for spiritual blessing.
 - c. This waiting becomes a spiritual statement wherein we say, above all to ourselves, that we are in a problem we can't solve. (Oswalt, adapted)
 3. The language makes clear that the prophet is longing not just for a solution, but for God Himself, for fellowship with Him.
 - a. "Your name is the desire of our souls"
 - b. "My soul longs for you"
 - c. "My spirit within me seeks You diligently"
- d. For some, hardship is necessary to get their attention (vv. 9-11)
- i. We saw that last week in Isaiah 19 with the striking and healing of Egypt.
 - ii. Here in 26:9-11 that God's judgments can have the effect of getting attention.
 1. For some, showing them favor only convinces them that they are in the right, and they do not "learn righteousness" or "perceive the majesty of the Lord" but deals unjustly.
 - iii. Certainly, God's kindness can and should lead us to repentance
 1. **Romans 2:4-5** Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? ⁵ But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,
 2. But Isaiah is saying that some people misread God's kindness and patience as approval on their lives.
3. You can have peace with God through **Christ** (Romans 5:1-2; 8:1)
- a. **Romans 5:1-2** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.
 - b. **Romans 8:1** Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
 - i. Scotty Smith said of this passage, it isn't an exaggeration, metaphor, or lie. We really can go to sleep tonight knowing there is no condemnation, no persistent guilt, no ax of judgment hanging over us.
 - ii. But, that isn't a promise for everyone. And if we take it that way, we're no better than the people Jeremiah warned about who said "peace, peace, when there is no peace."
 - iii. That promise is true for the one who is "in Christ," the one who has trusted in Christ alone to save them.
 - iv. Man has a problem. God has a solution. We have a responsibility.
 1. Man's problem is our sin – it separates from God and makes us deserving of judgment.
 2. God's solution is Jesus, who lived a perfect life in our place and died on a cross in our place.

3. Our responsibility is to repent and believe.
 - a. Not playing a game where we hold on to sin and then ask God to forgive us of that sin. But desiring to turn from sin, asking God for help and forgiveness.



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