

New hope sermon shalom shalom perfect peace 6/2/19



Theme Verse: **ESV** *You will keep in perfect peace the one whose mind is stayed on you*
NIV *You will keep in perfect peace the one whose mind is fixed, or steadfast because he trusts in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock eternal.*—

The Message: *People with their minds set on you, you keep completely whole, Steady on their feet, because they keep at it and don't quit. Depend on GOD and keep at it because in the LORD GOD you have a sure thing.*

NLT *You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!*

NIRV LORD, you will give perfect peace to those who commit themselves to be faithful to you. That's because they trust in you.

Perfect peace is translated shalom, shalom.

The context of the chapter is persecution by the surrounding nations but the promise is that those who trust God can know perfect peace.

I like this image because of the rainbow – which symbolizes God's covenant promise for his people. And because of the stillness of the water. Perfect peace is that inner stillness of mind and heart. That is very important again because the context of peace – in Old and New Testament is often in the midst of trouble – a rainbow, of course, only comes after rain- of persecution, of conflicting thoughts and loyalties and enemies who oppress.

Jeremiah the prophet lamented that even in his day there were many who told the people “*Peace, peace*” (Jer. 8:11 where there was no guarantee or give or peace. They said *Shalom, Shalom* but it was an empty promise. Here's how *the Message* translated that false hope:

Everyone's after the dishonest dollar, little people and big people alike. Prophets and priests and everyone in between twist words and doctor truth.

My people are broken—shattered!—and they put on Band-Aids, Saying, 'It's not so bad. You'll be just fine.' But things are not 'just fine'! Do you suppose they are embarrassed over this outrage? No, they have no shame. They don't even know how to blush.

There's no hope for them. They've hit bottom and there's no getting up.

As far as I'm concerned, they're finished.” GOD has spoken.

“In the O.T. peace of any kind is a wholeness determined by and given by God. (The Meaning of peace, eds. P. Yoder and M. Swartley, John Knox Press, 1992, p. 6)..The Hebrew word shalom is formed from a verb that means to make something complete, to make something whole (Ibid., p. 19).

And the verse tells us this kind of peace is a God-gift for those whose are fully trusting in Him. So it comes to those whose minds are fixed – that means where our “capacity for imagining rests. It comes to those whose minds are fixed on God. But why is fixing our minds on God so difficult? Commentator John Oswalt of the *NIV Application Commentary Isaiah* says:

“in many cases we find it difficult to trust God because our imaginations have been filled with anything else but God. We have allowed the culture around us, through the media domination, to saturate our vision. The result is that many of us know nothing of inner serenity. The scripture admonition “do not be

anxious about anything become almost laughable. We are anxious about everything, most of it far beyond our control. What must we do? We must first guard much more closely what we let into our minds....It is to trust in the Lord with all our heart and lean not on our own understanding but in all our ways acknowledge him” (Prov. 3:5-6) (Oswalt, Isaiah, p.304).

Think of it in terms of this illustration from Catherine Marshall:

[My friend Marge had an experience] aboard a plane bound for Cleveland, waiting for takeoff. As she settled into her seat, Marge noticed a strange phenomenon. On one side of the airplane a sunset suffused the entire sky with glorious color. But out of the window next to her seat, all Marge could see was a sky dark and threatening, with no sign of the sunset.

As the plane's engines began to roar, a gentle Voice spoke within her. *You have noticed the windows, He murmured beneath the roar and thrust of the takeoff. Your life, too, will contain some happy, beautiful times, but also some dark shadows. Here's a lesson I want to teach you to save you much heartache and allow you to "abide in Me" with continual peace and joy. You see, it doesn't matter which window you look through; this plane is still going to Cleveland. So it is in your life. You have a choice. You can dwell on the gloomy picture. Or you can focus on the bright things and leave the dark, ominous situations to Me. I alone can handle them anyway. And the final destination is not influenced by what you see or feel along the way. Learn this, act on it and you will be released, able to experience the "peace that passes understanding."*

(Catherine Marshall in Touching the Heart of God. Christianity Today, Vol. 39, no. 6.)

Perfect peace is an attitude of mind. And it is a direct result of the extent of our trust in God and what we choose to focus on in our minds.

So Paul tells the Philippians to closely monitor what they think about – *when we are thinking about what is pure and lovely and admirable and praiseworthy, plus put into practice the models of godly people, then the God of peace will be with you.* “ Phil.4:8-9

In the New Testament this peace comes directly through Jesus Christ. *He says Peace I leave with you/ My peace I give unto you, not as the world gives...let not your troubled b e troubled nor afraid.*

He also said, right before his crucifixion: Jesus says “*In Me you may have peace jn.16:33 – in the world you will have trouble, but take heart! I have overcome the world.*

The peace that Jesus gives “means peace of the heart, that is a confidence full of joy and peace from the God of hope Rom. 14:7 P. 139. It’s a peace that Jesus left behind for his own made possible by his victory over death. Jn. 14:27 p. 142 It is a freedom from a troubled heart, a fixed heart which lives with resurrection faith and power . He made peace thru the blood of the cross –col.120. This is peace of reconciliation – with G od a, with one another.

Therefore, it is “the *Lord of peace Himself who will give you His peace at all times by all means. 2 Thes. 3:16.*

This is the kind of peace Paul explains to the Philippians:

Do not be anxious about anything but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving present our requests to God. Then, the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Mount a garrison around = guard. Phil. 4:4-7. Why do we need that guard? Because of all the anxious thoughts that bombard our minds and hearts – from the culture, from Satan and even from ourselves.

The Message translates this as: ⁶⁻⁷ Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life

The Message (MSG) translates this as *Delight yourselves in God, yes, find your joy in him at all times. Have a reputation for gentleness, and never forget the nearness of your Lord. ⁶⁻⁷ Don't worry over anything*

whatever; tell God every detail of your needs in earnest and thankful prayer, and the peace of God which transcends human understanding, will keep constant guard over your hearts and minds as they rest in Christ Jesus. Philipps – notice “as they rest in Christ Jesus.” God’s peace is a resting of one’s thoughts and concerns. A releasing of these to Jesus – a fully trusting of oneself to Him.

This, it is discovered, is the most quoted passage of the Bible according to Amazon because it is striking a deep cord in today's worried world. Hear it again:

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Robert J. Morgan, *Worry Less, Live More* (Thomas Nelson, 2017), page xiii)

One reason for that peace comes from God’s complete forgiveness: *A Forgiving God in an Unforgiving World* retells the true story of a priest in the Philippines, a much-loved man of God who carried the burden of a secret sin he had committed many years before. He had repented but still had no peace, no sense of God's forgiveness. In his parish was a woman who deeply loved God and who claimed to have visions in which she spoke with Christ and he with her. The priest, however, was skeptical. To test her he said, "The next time you speak with Christ, I want you to ask him what sin your priest committed while he was in seminary." The woman agreed. A few days later the priest asked, "Well, did Christ visit you in your dreams?"

"Yes, he did," she replied.

"And did you ask him what sin I committed in seminary?"

"Yes."

"Well, what did he say?"

"He said, 'I don't remember.'"

What God forgives, he forgets.

(David H. Bolton, Anaheim, California. *Leadership*, Vol. 6, no. 3.)

One Psalm that pictures this peace for the believer is Ps. 16 –One of my Messianic Jewish commentators says, “This Psalm sings in my soul. A song of security and fullness of joy in God’s presence in this life and forever. David opens with a petition—for safety and shelter—and then proceeds to rejoice in all the ways his request is answered. Security is found first and foremost in relationship with “my Lord.” The path of eternal life begins by putting trust in Him alone as Lord of your life and settling it completely within your soul that “I have no good apart from You” (vs 2). Have you settled in your soul that He alone is everything? When I did that as a young man in Brussels after a long search, it changed everything starting with the company I kept. People I never would have associated with—the saints—became my delight rather than those who run after another god (vs. 3-4). Do you delight in the saints who love the Lord faithfully? Before I knew Him, I was chasing after vanities, things of no lasting value or significance. Now I know He is my portion within boundary lines that He alone can and will maintain. Moreover, He’s my cup of joy sharing with me an inheritance that endures for generation to generation (vs. 5-6). Even more wonderful is my intimate relationship with my Lord. When I thank and bless Him, His presence is there to guide and teach me...How awesome that He is always before me and also at my right hand (vs. 8), brushing my face with His unmistakable presence. When you are near Him, your soul rejoices—even your body though fail and fickle, rejoices. The saints settle their hearts totally on Adonai and come to know Him in a deep and abiding way. They just know he will not abandon His faithful ones to Sheol (vs. 10). And He has already made known to me the fullness of joy in His path of life” (Glenn Blank, *Shalom in Psalms*, Baker Books, 2017, pgs. 41-42).

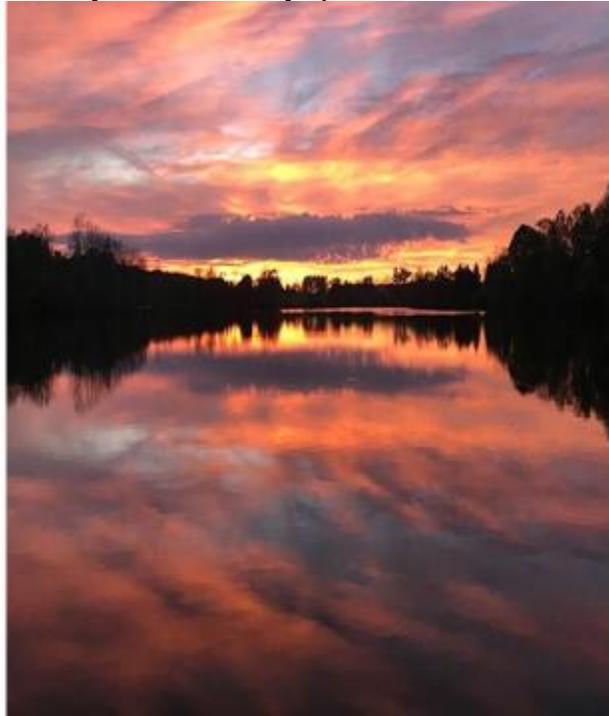
Let me share Marti and my experience in Wisconsin and how I lived out this Psalm this past week. I was exhausted by the 4 hour drive the first day of that trip, and we were on our second abort, but God had enabled us to fulfill so many of our goals. 1. When I couldn’t spend the night at the Inn we had booked because it was musty and not safe for me, Marti’s brother and wife took us in – a safe house – a sofa in the living room for me. 2. We had a lovely visit with her family in the area where she grew up which I loved, 3. We spent an afternoon strolling along the 12 mile bike trail along Lake Michigan between Manitowac and Two rivers with the sun shining and lovely weather. 4. I had successfully tested out my make-shift bed in the back seat of the car I

needed to try in preparation for the longer drive south. 5. And there was joy in just loving the countryside and God's creation.



Still, I had to keep scripture before me through the night because my body was so tired and Satan was lying in my mind. So I meditated on Ps. 16 and on the opening verse in Isa. 26: *You will keep in perfect peace the one whose mind is fixed, or steadfast because he trusts in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock eternal.* I just kept repeating the blessings of these scriptures over in my mind and trusting God for a safe sleep.

And I made it through the night. But before that sleep, as we were driving the one hour south to get to Larry and Jan's place, the Lord dazzled us with a sunset in the sky that was really spectacular.



He was present with us and His glories were so evident. As Ps. 16 says, *in thy presence is fullness of joy and at thy right hand are pleasures forever more.* That's what God did. Even though we couldn't spend the night at Lighthouse Inn.

Psalm 16: *Keep me safe, my God, for in you I take refuge.*

⁵ *LORD, you alone are my portion and my cup; you make my lot secure.*

⁶ *The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.*

⁷ *I will praise the LORD, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me.*

⁸ *I keep my eyes always on the LORD. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.*

⁹ *Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure,*

¹¹ *You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand."*

Amen and amen.

Let us pray.

Dr. M.L. Codman-Wilson 6/2/19