

How to Experience Perfect Peace

Key Verse: "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You" (Isaiah 26:3)

This wonderful promise was given during one of the darkest times in Israel's history, so it may be especially helpful to us today, when we are gripped by gloom and depression and are constantly threatened by the three great enemies of doubt, fear, and anxiety. When things are going well and the weather is bright, it is easy for us to read the above verses superficially; but when the thick clouds of trials, disappointments, fears, and worries pass over our sky and the sun is hidden, how precious these words will become to us! There is no promise in the Bible to support our belief that we can be free from troubles while we are still in the physical body; but there is something far better than this – the promise of peace in the midst of troubles. If we do not have inner peace, what good will it do us to be free from worries? Yet, wonderfully enough, the soul that trusts in the Lord can experience inner peace, a deep calm and a steady confidence in the midst of the fierce battle, even in the midst of the raging storm!

I. What is this great blessing God has given us?

It has been described as "perfect peace." But what is perfect peace? Can we define it? Yes, it is a state of freedom from disturbance in the mind; the mind is governed by perfect harmony. The Hebrew word for "peace" means good health, so to be filled with perfect peace is to be healthy in spirit and to have no disharmony in the soul. A mind filled with peace leaves no room for jealousy, envy, discontent, uncontrolled temper, selfishness, pride, or intolerance, all of which are factors that trouble the soul. They are discordant notes. The peace that God gives and that we can experience through His grace is quite practical. It is a great tranquility commanded by God (see Mark 4:39). God calls the peace He gives "perfect peace." In what ways is it perfect?

1. **It is perfect in quality:** that is, it is perfect in essence. Incomplete peace is like the peace of ignorance, when we think all is well when in fact, if we open our eyes and see the truth, we will find that all is not well (Jeremiah 6:14). There is also a kind of imperfect peace of stillness; the surface of the pool may be still and calm, but underneath it is turbid and muddy. Many people have only known peace similar to this, but one day the wrath of God's judgment will stir up the waters of their pool, and they will realize that they have never had any real peace at all. There is another kind of peace that is not complete dependence, which is a peace that

depends on certain things or people. This kind of peace is unsatisfying because "things" disappear and "people" die! Where is their peace after that? Compared with these three kinds of peace, God's peace is perfect.

2. **It is complete in quantity:** that is, it has an ample supply and is exactly sufficient to meet our needs. The marginal translation of "perfect peace" in the original text is "peace, peace", which means double peace. This is quite important when we look at Philippians 4:7, because that verse tells us that this twofold peace is peace of the heart and peace of the mind, and this is exactly the kind of peace we need, a peace that will guard our minds and calm our hearts. This double peace is double in the following sense:
 - (i) Peace with God (Romans 5:1)
 - (ii) The peace of God (Philippians 4:7).
3. **It is perfect in immutability:** that is, it is eternal and uninterrupted. God's promise says, "He will keep..." (compare Psalm 121:4).

II. How does this perfect peace come to us?

1. **Through Jesus Christ:** Turn again to Philippians 4:7, and notice that the Lord Jesus Christ is the channel through which God's peace flows into our hearts. This inner peace is possessed only by Christians. There can be no peace for those who do not possess Christ and who do not rest in the great work of redemption that Christ has accomplished. It was "His blood shed on the cross that made peace" (Col. 1:20).
2. **By the Holy Spirit:** The peace that Jesus accomplished for us on the cross of Calvary flows to us through the channel of His peace and is transmitted to our hearts and minds by the Holy Spirit (see Gal. 5:22). As the Holy Spirit fills and overflows our lives, He produces this wonderful fruit in us.
3. **By the Word of God:** (See Psalm 119:165 for the important promises made). The word "offense" is better translated as "disturbance" Things and people often disturb us, but for those who love, study, and obey God's Word, there is a promise of perfect peace.
4. **By our obedience:** (See Lev. 26:3-6, and note the most important word "if"). God assures us that if we obey His laws and keep His commandments, He will keep our hearts in perfect peace; if we do our part first, God will surely do His part.
5. **Through much praise and prayer:** The promise in Philippians 4:7 is based on the previous condition in 4:6.

III. Two Conditions for Obtaining Complete Peace

Who will God keep in perfect peace?

1. "Whose mind is stayed on you."
2. "Trusts in you."

Both sentences express faith, but one refers to the mind and the other to the heart. What is the difference? We believe with our mind and trust with our heart. We believe with our mind that God is the originator and giver of peace; we trust with our heart that He will give what He has promised.

To summarize: Notice that Isaiah 26:3 begins and ends with God; it begins with the subject "you" and ends with the object "you" – and the heart that trusts in God lies in between. Perfect peace is, through faith, staying within the boundaries of the two "you" and not going beyond them; perfect peace is the Lord Himself in us, it is not an experience, a doctrine, a "thing", but the Lord Himself. So, when we firmly trust in the Lord, our hearts will be filled with perfect blessing. Then, and only then, will we find what He has promised — "perfect peace and rest."