

MARK THE PERFECT MAN



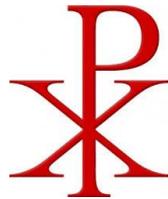
Psalm 37:37

*"Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of
that man is peace."*

B r o o k y R S t o c k t o n

Mark the Perfect Man

Version 2.0



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Dedication

Dedicated to Jo Ann Hartman Stockton who has been a perfect example of a woman governed by the peace God – a spirit that brought calm into the hectic life of our time – A wife, sister in the Lord, friend, and mother that carries with her ten (10) cubic feet of sweet shalom wherever she goes.

Preface

Busyness is the curse of our age. We are too connected to noise, news, sirens, chatter, people, and music coming through airwaves and cable TV.

If you are in search of peace in the midst of the rat race, this E-book is for you.

The perfect man is **not** one running frantically around and dashing to get his check list done — **not** one frustrated with the pace of life, but one whose heart is governed by the peace of God “that surpasses all understanding;” that is, one who is guided by the gift of calm — "in peace and quiet is your strength" is Isaiah 30:15.

May the God of peace be with you as you mark the perfect man as considered in this brief.



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May the God of Peace

“ . . . make you perfect in every good work to do his will . . . ”

Hebrews 13:20-21



Mark the Perfect Man

Psalm 37:7

“Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.”



The word “mark” is a Hebrew imperative that parallels the word “behold.” It has many meanings, but here it means “to observe” or “take note” of the end of a godly man’s life and the mature development of the man which is “shalom” (peace) — like the sweetness of fruit at the end of the season.

One of the challenges today in identifying a perfect man is that people tend to define perfection in terms of busyness, wealth, and social status. In defining the perfect man. If American were asked to point to the perfect man you might see a successful pro-quarter back with a Superbowl ring, an Olympic champion with a gold medal, a country music star with a CMA Entertainer of the Year Award, or even a billionaire.

Because Americans love movies like “Rambo,” “Die Hard,” and “Dirty Harry,” they underestimate the value of a man at peace with who he is and with God’s calling.

By peace, we do not mean peace with the world. Jesus came not to bring peace, but a sword (Matthew 10-45-36) — not to bring peace on earth between nations, but to establish peace between the elect and the Father. Men must chose between Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, Christ and Barrabus, Rome and the gospel, peace with men and peace with God.

Spiritual maturity has nothing to do with busyness, status, or accomplishments.

Scripturally, the perfect man is one governed by the peace of God; that is, one who sees the invisible hand of God upon his life and conflicts.

The word “perfect” does not imply moral perfection or absence of life stressing trials. Rather, the term refers to the man’s spiritual maturity — a composite of emotional strength, wholesome thoughts, and unwavering dependability. He is a man who sows peace and reaps a harvest of peace — like a finely-tuned instrument or a lantern in a long tunnel; like a man whose internal engines are fueled by peace and not rip fuel to enhance performance.

2 Timothy 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, **peace**, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.



By peace the Scripture does **not** mean moral compromise or complacency, Rather, it refers to a man with battles won — to a man who has worked through kinks in life and the struggles of his age. He is at peace with the journey and how God has made him. Power surrounds the man because he knows who he is in Christ.

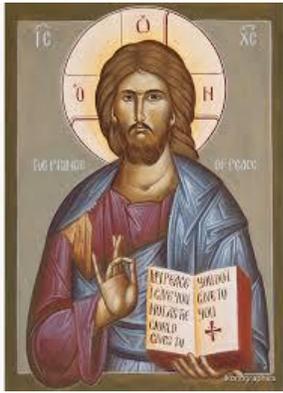
The perfect man is one guided by, ruled by, and led by the peace of God — the opposite of being ruled by fear, frustration, and frenzy. Because he takes a deep breath between heartbeats, he paces himself to the finish line of his pilgrim journey.

The beginning of piety and the end of piety is peace – peace with God and peace among brethren. The man in pursuit of holiness has shalom in his heart and good will toward men, women, children, and animals — like a small, secure candle left out on the porch so people can find their way home.

A Benediction of Peace

2 Corinthians 13:11

“Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.”



◆ The word "farewell" is a translation of the Greek word for "rejoice" meaning "joy to you." Joy comes to God's people when they bask in the sunshine of His love. But, because "farewell" (chairete) is an imperative, I am inclined to translate the Greek word "chairete" as a **command** to rejoice — a command consistent with four other imperatives in this verse.

Rejoicing was the remedy for the bickering, complaining Corinthians.

Matthew Henry: "He wishes that they may partake all the benefits which Christ of his free grace and favour has purchased; the Father out of his free love has purposed; and the Holy Ghost applies and bestows."

"Be perfect" — **the second command**. The word "perfect" (katartizo) means "to mend" as in mending broken fishing nets (Matthew 4:21); that is, give yourself to repairing fragmentations in your Christian-walk. Life's stresses breaks nets. So much of life involves repairing cracks in one's own character, fissures in the faith, gaps in the ministry, and ruptures in relationships.

"Be of good comfort" — **the third command**. Be consoled by the promises of the gospel. "Take comfort from the hopes which the gospel imparts" — Barnes. Perhaps, the failure to take comfort in the promises of God caused acts like a thief robbing people of peace — like a scantily-clad man depleted of warmth on a winter's night. Complain and be sour; rejoice

and be sweet. Believe God's promises and wrap yourself in the warm blanket of His love and peace.

"Be of one mind" — **the fourth command**. This imperative addresses the factions and parties in the church at Corinth; that is, work on being unified in the faith, dying to conceit, crafting harmony in relationships, and oiling the dry camshafts in the engine of the church.

"live in peace," — **the fifth command**, means "to avoid rivalry, pride, and a rudeness that stirs up ire in others. The church should be treated as a quiet garden -- you can't stop the rain, snow, and drought that comes with the seasons, but you can choose what to plant, what to prune, and where to sprinkle the most water.

Psalm 37:37 Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright:
for the end of that man is peace.

"And the God of love and peace shall be with you" implies God delights in love and serenity; that is, He has joy when His people seek love and a government of peace. Let the light of God's love and peace shine, and flowers will grow in your neighborhood and the garden of the church.

Rest and Trust — the Key to Power

Isaiah 30:15

For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.



◆ The background reason for this text is Israel's trust in man — forging alliances with Egypt to protect themselves from Babylon.

Because the nation's leaders were anxious and restless about Chaldean threats, the LORD challenged the nation to calm down and to trust

Him for their political salvation.

Through an inverted parallelism, the Lord exhorted the people to return and rest (quietness or tranquility); to be quiet (idleness) and to trust the Holy One of Israel to protect them from the rumors of war haunting their souls.

The word “confidence” (bitchah) expresses the settled confidence that rests in the covenant-keeping character of the LORD.

Trusting God Who they could not see and disentangling themselves from dependence on Pharaoh proved to be a difficult choice; that is, walking by faith and not by sight didn't seem very practical. Consequently, they rebelled (Isaiah 30:9, 11) against the way of peace and chose to flee upon horses to Egypt.

Isaiah 30:16 But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses . . .

The moral lesson of this chapter is to trust God and be at peace with His providential care while hearing the roaring waves crash against the hull;

that is, not to give into fear, anger, anxiety, restlessness, and panic over the sounds of ruination.

The secret to power is to return and to trust; to be quiet and to rest in the Lord's promises — "one shall chase a thousand" (Deuteronomy 32:30 and Joshua 23:10)

While we are required to steer our ship through the storm, the Lord orders the perfect man to relax his grip on the helm and to trust him to protect his vessel from the sea breakers and roaring waves. Being gripped by fear, controlled by anger, and shouting out orders with a vice grip on the wheel only weakens the man by scattering his precious resources across merciless waves.

When we trust the Lord and gain peace, He is with us, works for us, and preserves us from our worst fears. Trusting God in this violent chaos with our craft shuddering under the force of immense, towering waves that crash over decks and threaten to shatter the mast on which our sails hang is like dropping an anchor in a storm — not because the wind and waves stop, but because our ship stops drifting.

Shalom!

Shalom Shalom

Isaiah 26:1-3



◆ The picture on the left showing a mother bird under a waterfall represents peace in the midst of turbulence.

The power of (double) peace is a gift of God for troubled souls -- a peace given to those who enter the gates of the kingdom.

Salvation offered:

Isaiah 26:1 In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.

"In that day" refers to the entrance of the kingdom of God into history to defeat man's enemies (Satan, sin, and death) and to bring salvation to God's people in Christ.

Isaiah uses metaphors to impress the mind with the coming kingdom. He compares this day to a great feast (25:6), the removal of the black veil of death that grieves all nations (25:7), wiping away tears, and the removal of hostilities against the godly (25:8) — a day of great joy (25:9). This feast is provided by the Lord of Hosts.

Death is man's fundamental enemy, and when the kingdom arrives death will be crushed . . . and, it was on the cross where "death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Corinthians 15:54).

The arrival of the kingdom:

"This mountain" (25:10) is Mt. Zion — a figure of Heavenly Mt. Zion. Remember the arrival of the Ark of the Covenant in Jerusalem in David's time (2 Samuel 6; Psalm 24) — a day of rest for the Lord, of joy for the

people, and a proclamation regarding the defeat of God's enemies (Moab) (25:11).

"Moab" is used 19 times in Isaiah as the implacable adversary of Israel . . . but, in this text we have mystical Moab — a reference to the wicked who like mystery Babylon will be destroyed at the arrival of the kingdom of God. Here and in Jeremiah 48:2, the Spirit calls "Moab" a *dunghill* (*madmenah*). Like Egypt, Esau and Babylon, "Moab" is used typically to refer to God's enemies (25:11).

Isaiah 26:2 Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.

"Open ye the gates" is the Lord's invitation to the nations to come to Him for salvation. Salvation from the shroud (death) that covers all nations is not found with all so-called "gods," but only with the one, true God of the Bible and our Lord Jesus Christ.

"O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth" (25:1)

On "that day" (25:9; 26:2), **the first gift** offered to those "who enter the gates" is **peace with God** (26:3; Romans 5:1).

The arrival of the kingdom (in His Son) is compared to "a rest" (25:10) for the LORD -- a rest God passes on to His trusting people in the form of shalom, shalom (double peace) — like a bird folding its wings, not in defeat, but in trust that the air will be there when it's time to fly.

But, there is nothing restful about the arrival of God's kingdom for unbelievers. The day of judgment is compared to three events: (a) of men trouncing on dung in the street, (b) a swimmer in breast stroke style struggling to keep his head above water; and, and the tumbling of fortress like walls in a siege — a moment of terror for the inhabitants of the city (25:10-12).

Isaiah 26:3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

"perfect peace" is a translation from the Hebrew word, "shalom, shalom."

Literally, this text reads, "Thou will keep him in peace peace "or "shalom shalom" — a reference to double peace and the power of peace that holds a man together while the walls of an unjust society come tumbling down due to the judgment of Almighty God (25:12).

In Hebrew, the two shaloms are separated by a vertical line called a *peseq* to let us know the use of the two back-to-back words is intentional and not a translation gaffe.

Peace must be interpreted in its broadest form. The "peace" refers to peace with God, personal peace, and peace with men (traditional enemies).

In the New Testament the entrance of the kingdom of God into history and the crisis at the cross produced "peace with God" (Romans 5:1) and the blessing of the "peace of God" at work in the hearts of believers (Colossians 3:15; Philippians 4:7).

The Lord announces the title "God of peace" (Romans 15:33; 16:20; Philippians 4:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; and Hebrews 13:20).

Thus, Christian-power to conquer enemies comes from the peace that passes all understanding. Peace does not refer to the want of troubles, but rest of soul during those matters which stir frustrations.

The Benedict rule of peace¹ (pax) urges every member of the community to be ruled by the peace of God and to put the needs of others over and above expressing one's displeasure over disruptive matters.

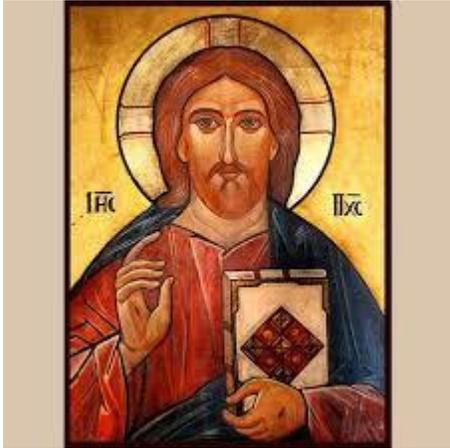
¹ The Rule of St. Benedict, written in the 6th century, offers a guide for living a life of peace, order, and prayer, centered on community life, obedience, and moderation.

Rest, soul, rest! Wrap yourself in the warm blanket of double peace.

Shalom, shalom.

The Superiority of Peace

Philippians 4:6-7



◆ Life is filled with troubles, and when they come our way, God's Word instructs us how to prevail.

In a sea of troubles, there is peace to be found.

Seize the opportunity

Philippians 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

The first verb "be careful" comes from the Greek word *meimnao* which means "to be troubled.". It is translated "take no thought" in some texts. The word is a present, active imperative or command.

The adverb "nothing" (*medeis*) negates the action; that is, "do **not** be troubled . . . anxious . . . or worried." It could be translated, "Stop being troubled, right now!" Halter the horse and go on foot.

The subordinate conjunction "but" (*alla*) is a strong adversative. In contrast to being worried, God gives this order: "Let your requests" (prayers and supplications) be made known to God because necessity is already pressing you to do so. He is not asking men to sink below the crested waves of anxiety, but to sail above the surf and foam until their ship reaches port.

The second verb "make known" (*gnorizo*) is a present, active imperative meaning "make known and keep on making known your needs" to God through prayers and petitions.

In praying about pressing needs, it helps to add incense to supplications. Requests adorned by the sweet incense of "thanksgiving" have more power at the throne of grace than muttering complaints.

The apostle is not saying the future has no troubles or that you are to deny the gravity of your circumstances. He seeks to purge nervous anxiety from the soul that sweats over all potential problems so common to humanity.

The Old Testament example of this is wearing wool. Aaronic Priests were not permitted to wear wool lest they sweat. Soul-sweat hinders effective service (Ezekiel 44:17).

He is not asking men "to make believe" and "pretend" everything is good. He orders men to lay hold of God with one hand and to do their duty with the other . . . to let go of worry, to trust, and to accept responsibility.

Claim the promises

Philippians 4:7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

You can enjoy God's presence . . . and have a peace from God . . . a peace that surpasses human understanding . . . a peace that will keep (*phroureo*) your heart and mind.

The word "keep" (*phroureo*) means "to guard" or "garrison." A future, active indicative, Paul assures the Philippians that God has sentinels guarding their future.

The noun "peace" refers to "tranquility" and "rest of soul" in the midst of a storm; that is, a man can have peace in bad weather as well as good weather; in winter as well as the summer. God is not only on duty during the day time, but at night time.

Claim the Authority of Peace over Mind

The participle "passes" refers to something superior or of higher rank and authority than reason and mental acuity (nous); or "of more value" than money. Our Founding Father placed a great emphasis on the power of reason . . . but, there is **an asset higher than intelligence.**

The word "surpasseth" (huperecho) is translated "superior" in Romans 13:1; "better" in Philippians 2:3; "excellency" in Philippians 3:8; and "supreme" in 2:13.

It is a peace that surpasses all thought, thinking, intellect, emotion, analysis, logic, and reason; that is, God's peace can't be explained because there is nothing that "sight" can see to sustain it . . . yet, it is there working underneath the hustle and bustle of this world to settle and quiet our souls for good — like a well in the middle of a desert; or like a garden hidden behind a city wall where noise on the street can't follow.

Shalom, shalom! Rest, soul, rest.

Let Peace Rule

Colossians 3:15

And let the peace of God (Christ) rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.



◆ The original text has “Christ” and not “God;” that is, let the peace of Christ rule the heart.

The heart is an ocean of emotions and the captain of the ship on this stormy sea is the peace of Christ – a captain superior to one’s intellect (Philippians 4:6-7).

There are **two commands** in this text: “Let the peace of Christ rule” and “be thankful;” that is, thankfulness is the believer’s first mate on this voyage and evidence the peace of Christ captains the ship. Let peace rule in order to foster unity among the brethren.

The word “**rule**” (brabeuo) is an imperative that means “to govern,” or “to umpire;” – a metaphor appointing peace of mind to referee, arbitrate, and negotiate charged matters –Every man needs an umpire to decide controversies, disputes, and questions in the contests of life. This umpire is the dove-like “peace of Christ” – gentle, mild, controlled, sensitive to matters involving right and wrong.

The following verse (3:16) exhorts believers to "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Thus, the "peace of Christ" seems to be the subjective referee for matters of dispute while the "Word of Christ" appears to be the moral compass of our faith.

Moreover, this text is preceded by the matter of “**quarrels**” and the participial commands, “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another.”

“which also ye are called in one body” — “You” is plural indicating that not only individuals need to be governed by peace, but the whole church needs to be ruled by the peace of our Lord; that is, contention, strife, and division is evidence the church is not ruled by the peace of Christ. When individuals are ruled by the peace of Christ, calm settles on the ship like sunbeams on a cold day or like an anchor holding steady while the sea roars.

The Triad of Joy, Peace, and Hope

God's Remedy for Conflict

Romans 15:13

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.



◆ Who can understand the deep differences between loveless, rule-based Jews and permissive, me-centered Greeks – these parties were like two flints striking in a dry forest?

Untouched by despair, the Apostle Paul extinguishes the dueling fires burning in this church with the holy triad of joy, peace, and hope.

While inert gases such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), argon, and nitrogen are used to extinguish fires, God's triad of godliness: joy, peace, and hope are used to extinguish fires in the church.

Three titles of God are mentioned in this chapter: The "God of patience and consolation" (15:5); the "God of hope" (15:13); and the "God of peace" (15:33) -- a reference to His work in Christ to reconcile men with the Father and one another (5:1).

Men have problems with differences, divisions, and disagreements (Romans 14:1-15:12). The "God of patience and consolation" gives men grounds of peace in Christ -- like tuning forks humming to the same note - "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus" (15:5);

As the "God of hope" He empowers men to have joy and peace on the stormy sea — to have the light of hope even in darkness as they rest in His promises - abounding in these graces like flowers after a gentle rain - " (15:13 above); and,

As the "God of peace" He imparts power for settlement of differences among men refreshing souls like a warm breeze after a winter's snow -- "Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen" (15:33).

The elixir of joy, peace, and hope (15:13) are spiritual provisions for the journey into an unknown future . . . of darkness, pain, suffering, or ease. This eternal triad empowered by God keeps the Christian upright and warm as he travels through dark forests on starless nights smothered by the bitter winds of adversity. These provisions are a compass in a magnetic storm; a steady light in the darkness; a warm blanket on cold nights where the fires of hope seems extinguished.

Moreover, the Christian life is even more bewildering when contentions among brethren erupt. The bridge over troubled waters is constructed of timbers from joy, peace, and hope. When disputing brothers are trapped in the flood waters of contention, God fills disputing parties with a deeper life in Christ. Then the torrent of their differences begins to recede as they walk in the candle light of joy, peace, and hope provided by the God of all hope and peace.

There are no imperatives² in these verses. Conduct and obedience are **not** in view here. **The remedy for division is deeper than action.** God has to give peace. The Spirit has to work in hearts. The remedy for conflict involves following the root down into the soil; that is, going deeper by faith into hope, peace, and joy in Christ; like turning a gemstone over in

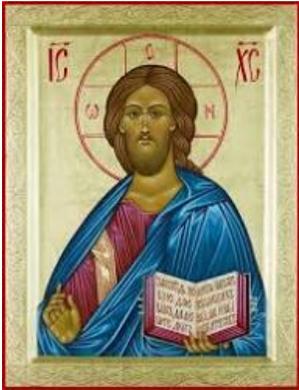
² There are only about four or five imperatives in chapter 15 and three of them are quotes from the Old Testament(15:10-11). The key commands in this chapter are found in verse 2 and verse 7 having to do with the brethren accepting each other.

your hand to see the different facets of the jewel; or like walking into a cave trusting the candle to show you where to walk.

Romans 15:33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

The Presence of the God of Peace

Romans 15:33



◆ Paul requested prayer that (a) he might be delivered from Jewish persecutors, and (b) that he might be able to come and visit the Romans — a church feeling the friction between rule-based Jews and freedom-loving Romans. Little did he know that he would be delivered from the obstinate Jews in Jerusalem by being arrested and sent to Rome as a prisoner. His main prayer was answered. He made it to Rome howbeit in chains and fetters.

Having addressed the need of the Romans to receive one another and to go deeper into joy, peace, and hope, Paul pens his benediction.

Romans 15:33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

This benediction was not intended to close the epistle; but, it did end St. Paul's doctrinal exhortation to the saints.

He wants peace in the church particularly between legalistic Jews and permissive Romans — peace that can only come when men commune with the God of peace.

We must learn the difference between "peace with God" (Romans 5:1), the "peace of God" (Philippians 4:6-7), and the "the God of peace." He is the Source of peace, Maker of peace, and the One who gives peace to those who believe in His love (15:7).

Paul wishes the "God of peace" might impart power for settlement of differences among the Romans — that men might be refreshed by the presence of God and extend the right hand of fellowship to one another (15:7).

The man of God achieves perfection (sanctification) when he claims peace with God by faith; fellowships with the God of peace; and he reaps the benefits of having the peace of God rule his actin by the power of the Spirit during the challenges of loving one another (5:1, 15:1-5, 13).

For early Christian monks breathing peace in the heart was a central spiritual goal; that is, they sought to maintain a sound state of inner tranquility and clarity of mind while seeking a quiet life of service to mankind. This inner stillness was cultivated through rigorous spiritual practice of humility, and detachment from worldly desires. Such a condition of soul was considered a requisite for spiritual growth and a deeper connection with the God of hope.

Real, lasting peace doesn't come from controlling our external conflicts, but from patiently and compassionately managing our inner ones.

Buddhist monks search for inner peace, but never find it because true peace is found only in Christ -- the ground of peace.

The God of peace sent His Son to the cross being made sin for us that we might find peace with the Father; that is, the gospel is about how man can cease His battle with the Creator and accept the offer of peace made by the Lord through the cross.

To think our Lord came to bring peace on earth is stinkin' thinking! Our Lord is the "God of peace" and the foundation of our peace (Ephesians 2:14), but He did not come to bring peace to rebels: ""Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matthew 10:34). He extends no peace offer to proud politicians, swindlers, fornicators, feminists, and globalists because they are still at war with God.

The Roman-Christians, once at war with God, obtained peace with Him through faith (5:1); therefore, Paul prays the believers in Rome might enjoy the presence and comfort of the God of peace: *Vaya con Dios*. But,

this benediction is not for Congress, the president, or the Supreme Court who wage war against righteousness everyday of their existence.

Secondly, the Jews and Greeks in Rome were uncomfortable with one another arguing over issues of the faith, cultic food laws, and matters of conscience (14).

Paul does not pray they would experience the "peace of God" but that they might follow the root into the soil to find the God of peace. The former being an attribute of God guarding the heart (cardia) and mind (nous); the latter referring to companionship with the Lord of peace.

Peace does not refer to the lack of problems, but to rest of soul during the storm; that is, peace is not the absence of a downpour, but the power to enjoy the warmth of lighthouse standing calm while crests of sea water crash around it. The wind and the waves do not cease. The rain does not stop. But, the light holds steady – unmoved, undaunted, quietly burning away so others can see.

“Amen!” does not end the book. Rather, it is the Apostle’s way of saying, “Yes, let it be! Let the God of peace be with you.”

Shalom, shalom! Rest, soul, rest!

A Crushed Snake

Romans 16:20



◆ MacClaren titled this verse, "A Crushed Snake" and many of his thoughts are recorded here.

Piety is achieved by the reign of peace in a man's heart. It is peace at work in a man's heart that squashes evil . . . confuses the enemy . . . and that crushes Satan.

Romans 16:20: And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

There are three other Scriptural sayings which may have been floating in the

Apostle's mind when he penned this triumphant assurance.

(1) "Thou shalt bruise his head" — the first great Evangel where believers are promised salvation:

(2) "The lion and the adder thou shalt trample under foot" — all the strength that was given to ancient saints is ours to enjoy now; and

(3) "Behold! I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy" — the charter of the seventy is the perennial gift to the Church." (MacLaren)

Echoing all these great words, Paul promises the Roman Christians that 'the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.' Satan is not

all-powerful nor must evil prevail among men. Moreover, this text does not appear to reference the Parousia.

The apostle saw a day in the near future of the Roman church where the God of peace would crush this master of strife.

Note that it is the God of peace that crushed the adversary. Though we cannot separate the attributes of the Almighty, Paul does not link the God of War or the God of power to this triumph. Rather, he draws our attention to His attribute of peace.

Likewise in the Book of Hebrews: It is the God of peace that sanctifies the man and not His wrath or even his love. The foundation for victory is His peace (13:20).

“Paul is gazing on all the great things in God which make Him the God of peace, and in them all he sees grounds for the confident hope that His power will be exerted to crush all the sin that breaks His children’s peace” (MacLaren).

These words shed light on the struggle that goes on in the soul of every Christian; Satan’s forces of darkness versus our Lord’s forces of righteousness. At times, it seems the sun will never come up, but St. Paul assures us the God of peace shall triumph over Satan’s dark discord.

A Christian at peace with God and governed by it has the power to tread on the enemy:

“For the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet. Yes, it is God that bruises, but He uses our feet to do it. It is God from whom the power comes, but the power works through us” (MacLaren).

To achieve victory over Satan, a man must be at war against sin. He is called to hate evil, love righteousness, and have peace with God. God does not respond to fear, worry, or anxiety, but to a man is ruled by the peace of God – a man walking with the God of peace.

The promise and pledge of victory comes in the name of the God of peace.

The "God of patience and consolation" gives men courage to enter the battle (15:5); As the "God of hope," He empowers men confidence to clash swords with the enemy; As the "God of peace" He imparts power for settlement of differences among men.

MacLaren notes that Christians are neither the field nor the prize in this contest but the agents of Satan's defeat; that is, God uses the "tension of your muscles, and the downward force of the believer's heel," to keep the wiggling reptile impotent in his desire to fang each one of us.

Victory is assured. Enter the contest, lay hold of the God peace and Satan's poison head will be crushed under your feet. Resist the Prince of darkness and victory will come like sunlight breaking through a dark cloud after a spring rain — warm, cleansing, and triumphant.

The Gift of Peace

2 Thessalonians 3:16



◆ Peace is used 429 times in the Bible; 111 times in the New Testament; and, six times in Paul's letters to the Thessalonians. The word "peace" is used twice in this one verse.

It seems the great need of every man is peace; peace of mind and peace in the heart; peace in marriage and peace at work; peace with friends and peace with enemies; peace during the daytime and peace during the nighttime -- inner calm in the middle of internal struggles and relational conflict.

But, how do we get this peace?

This text informs us that peace is a gift from the Lord of Peace; that is, it must be gladly received.

2 Thessalonians 3:16 "Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all."

"Now" equals "and" or "but."

"Lord of peace," i.e. Jesus Christ. He is the God of peace, the Proprietor of peace, the Custodian of peace, and the Master of peace; that is, everyone calling Him "Lord," would do well to seek the gift of peace, to be ruled by His peace, and to spread peace among the brethren. If the aim of an action is not peace, why do it?

The first epistle refers to the "God of peace." In 2 Thessalonians St. Paul ends his letter wishing peace from the Lord of peace -- possibly a more

authoritative admonition to seek peace among the conflicted Thessalonians.

"of" indicates the Source of peace. It comes from the highly exalted Lord and Savior.

"himself" (autos) is in the first word in the sentence we call the emphatic position; stressing the fact that peace comes from the Prince of Peace, the Lord in His present risen state on the throne; that is, men need His royal peace -- peace that comes all those having a daily walk with Him. This peace is not manufactured by men nor is it the result of the absence of conflict. Its Source is in the highly exalted Son -- the Lord Jesus Christ.

"give" is an optative verb expressing a wish and not a fact; a hope without extravagance. Peace is His to give and for us to receive.

With Paul's exhortation on the coming judgment (1), the coming of apostasy (2:3), and his condemnation of brothers walking disorderly (3), the Thessalonians needed a measure of peace.

"peace at all times" means "in every way and in all forms; " literally, "always in every way" -- during the daylight and at midnight; in prosperity and in persecutions; in accords and in quarrels; in wealth and in poverty; in health and in sickness; in good times and bad times; on a full-stomach or on an empty-stomach; well-heeled or penniless.

"The Lord be with you all" is a benediction, a wish that every believer in the pew might not only have peace, but enjoy the presence of the Lord of peace. Peace is not just for the cleric, but for the common man.

Rest, soul, rest! Shalom, shalom!

Peace that Sanctifies

1 Thessalonians 5:24



◆ The pursuit of holiness is the pursuit of piety; and, the pious seek freedom from sin and dedication to God in matters that pertain to their spirit, soul, and body.

"The apostle prays that they might be sanctified more perfectly, for the best are sanctified but in part while in this world; therefore we should pray for, and press toward, complete holiness" (Matthew Henry, October 18, 1662, to June 22, 1714).

Both epistles begin with a salutation of peace to the Thessalonians and close with a benediction of peace. Shalom, pas, pes, and eirini are terms of peace. Thus, peace is the sign of holiness, maturity, and perfection. It is the starting point and the "finish line" of the Christian-marathon.

Likewise, it is the opposite of what the world seeks. Sinful men and women pursue conquest, war, power, pleasure, wealth by any means, and fame. The Christian pursues peace which leads to holiness.

23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This passage is preceded by ten or more short piety imperatives - duties that challenge the best of holy men. Who has the wherewithal "to rejoice evermore," or "to give thanks in everything?"

The word, "sanctify" means "to make holy;" that is, to separate something of value from profane matters and to dedicate it to God. The word implies being separated from evil, not from the duties of life: chores, work, daily

patterns, relational bonds, or physical maintenance of matters related to the spirit, mind, and body.

"Sanctify you wholly" implies the whole man. The order of "spirit," "soul," and "body" is important as it instructs men how to order their life. Directions must be discerned in the "spirit," analyzed and digested in the "soul," and then acted on with the "body." Profane men are blind to this. The "soul" and "spirit" of common people in the world follow the impulses of their "body."

"sanctify you wholly" is in the optative mood meaning the statement is a wish -- the slightly removed from reality (hypothetical). It is possible, but not necessarily probable. Unlike justification where God does all the work, sanctification requires our cooperation with His will. Thus, holiness in all matters exist in the stratosphere of human endeavors.

The One Who does the sanctifying is called "The God of peace." Holiness comes to those who have peace with God, and pursue the peace of God; moreover, peace does not come to the frantic nor the hurried nor those angry with conditions in this sinful world, but to those who are at rest in their soul. Sanctification comes from the God of peace (the happy, content, orderly God in love with His people). The emphasis here is not on the God of war . . . nor the God of righteousness . . . nor the God of wrath, but from the God of peace, contentment, calmness, and serenity.

24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

He calls us to be holy — a mountain to climb and a raging river to cross for many.

The good news at the end of these pithy commands is that duties of sanctification do not rest on us alone. The willing have assurance of His help. In this text, the pious are called to trust Him Who is faithful to do what He calls men to do.

"Your sanctification after all depends on him, and as he has begun a work of grace in your hearts, you may depend on his faithfulness to complete it" (Barnes).

His work of sanctifying the man is **not** substitutionary. It requires the willing participation of the Christ-seeker. Because the "quickenened" one is alive in Christ, He has a new capacity to pursue high and lofty matters pertaining to the will of God.

In justification, Christ is the doer and Savior. In sanctification, the Triune Spirit is our helper. He is faithful. His commands contain the power to do it; that is. there is no decree in Scripture, no matter how difficult, where the Lord will not empower the aspirant to achieve His purpose. What God orders, He proffers; what He instructs, He constructs; what He voices, He produces; what He commands, He supplies.

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul. (Horatio G. Spafford -
1873)

1 Thessalonians 5:27 I charge you by the Lord that this
epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

Holiness is not just for the cleric, but the common man. Likewise, the promise. It is not only for the ministerial privileged, but for all people in the pew.

"This epistle was to be read to all the brethren. Not only are the common people allowed to read the Scriptures, but it is their duty, and what they should be persuaded to do"
(Matthew Henry).

With God's help, let us trust and obey.

The God of Peace Perfects the Man

Hebrews 13: 20-21

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.



◆ This is a prayer for the complete restoration of the sheep; as silver is refined in the furnace; let us be revived so we might perfectly reflect His image under heat of trials.

The title “God of peace” is the subject of the sentence and “make you perfect” (katartisai) is the optative verb; that is, it is a wish, not a command; a hope that is not yet a fact. Perhaps, Paul addresses the God of peace because of perceived turmoil among the Hebrews (1 3:17). Possibly, this community was closer to a shipwreck than a peaceful cruise in the harbor of His love.

Though we can’t separate God’s attributes, the Spirit draws our attention to the God of Peace and not the irresistible, crushing power of God that perfects the man.

Thus, the “peace of God” is a lighthouse on rocky shores; a candle in the dark; the chord that produces pleasant harmony where there is discord and dissonance among the saints. See Romans 15:33; Romans 16:20; 2Corinthians 13:11; Philipians 4:9; 1Thessalonians 5:23; 2Thessalonians 3:16.

“Perfect” (katartisai) means “to mend what is broken; to make whole or complete; to sew a rip in a garment”

Paul’s prayer is grounded on the work of the “God of peace” — not the God of truth or the God of righteousness, but the “God of peace.”

This “God of peace,” having been propitiated by the death of His Son on the cross; and, our debt having been fully discharged by the blood of Christ; and, God having forgiven us of our sins by the mediation of the Savior, reached into hell and raised the Lord Jesus from the dead.

Use of the title “God of peace” implies there was some kind of strife or conflict to which His work was needed. Possibly, (a) the strife and division among the Hebrews needed repair or (b) the conflict regarding God and sinners having ended through Christ, God being at rest restored the life of His Son. Walking with the “God of peace” is like sailing with the wind at your back.

Jesus is called “the great shepherd of the sheep.” He is great in character; great in righteousness; great in love; great in holiness; great in courage; great in His accomplishments, and great in Shepherding of God’s flock.

Believers are called “sheep” probably because we do not understand what the Shepherd did for us at Calvary and does for us in His present exalted life. As the good shepherd, our Lord died for the sheep and protects them from Divine wrath (Psalm 22); as the great shepherd He lives and provides for His sheep (Psalm 23); as the Chief Shepherd he reigns . . . and rewards the servant-sheep with eternal blessings (Psalm 24).

“The blood of the everlasting covenant” implies that God works to mend us completely based on His covenant promise and consideration of the price paid for our salvation; that is, since blood is the currency of the spirit world, and we were purchased with His blood, “making us perfect” in His sight is a continuation of His salvic work.

There is an illusion here to Isaiah 63:11 — “Where is He that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of His flock?”

Here the shepherds are Moses and Aaron (Psalm 77:20). God having delivered the people from death also brought Moses and Aaron out of the Red Sea to lead His flock to the Promise Land via Mt. Sinai.

His salvation at the Red Sea was based on the covenant of blood — a completion of His promise to deliver His people from bondage. The blood that saved the people from the death angel secured all other blessings including their redemption from Egypt by way of the Red Sea.

The great work of mending and bringing the people to perfection must have a strong foundation: God of peace, blood, covenant, raised from the dead, a living Shepherd, great in power, love, and peace.

The great work of conforming us to His will is total reconciliation of the total man to the total image of Christ; that is, that there might not be any part of the man that is not committed to the will of God. To wake up thinking one has a choice whether to do good or evil demonstrates the lack of reconciliation of the man to God. The perfect man has no choice. Like the pressure of an artesian well, has an internal force inside directing “every good work” and what is “well pleasing in his sight.”

You don’t always see it on the surface, but deep below, pressure is building. Slowly it pushes upward—steady, persistent—until it breaks through the ground and becomes a flowing stream. No one has to turn it on. No one has to cheer it forward. It moves because that’s what it was made to do.

When praying we do not look at ourselves, but to the resources of Another — the God of peace. We start with the fact of God’s accomplishments through the Son, and reach for the impossible — perfection. Let us remember, the Good Shepherd died for us to save us from the penalty of sin and that the Great Shepherd lives to save us from

the power of sin. One day the Chief Shepherd will save us from the presence of sin.

The “God of peace” is used six times in Paul’s epistles (Romans 15:13; 16:20; Philippians 4:7; 4:9; Colossians 3:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:23)

“The title “God of Peace” acts like a benediction over our restless lives, unsettled hearts, and heated conflicts to bring us peace that we might walk where angels walk” (MacLaren).

His peace is like a calm sea – undisturbed by winds and waves; like a still forest at dawn – the hush before life stirs.

Tapping into the “God of Peace” would calm their fears, temper their anger, repair relationships, and restore their ability to pursue holiness.

This “God of Peace” dwells above the conflicts, gloominess, and irritations common to men; and in His presence the restless heart can find shalom and shelter from the anger of men. His peace can shed light on our shadows, calm the waves on our turbulent seas, minister sweetness where there is bitterness, and bring a dove’s wing where there are clenched fists and tight jaws. “My peace” I give unto you declared Jesus.

The only way to obtain peace is to do good – “Make you perfect in every good work to do his will . . . ” There can be no peace on earth where there is not conformity to Heaven’s will. Want peace? Then lighten the load on your ship and throw your mutinous captain-self overboard, your iron anchor attached to the underside of this world, your heavy burdens of collecting silver and gold, and your steel desires to have your way on this voyage.

Philippians 4:9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you

Moreover, the peace of God orders our holiness (See: 1 Thessalonians 5:23). What a man needs for peace is to surrender his vessel to be

captained by the Lord Jesus Christ, to allow His peace to be the steersman, and to debar frivolous anger, lusts, and bitterness from standing at the helm.

Moreover, some problems are not solved by doing, but believing; that is, going deeper into faith, into Christ, and His hope (Romans 15:13)

Exercising the peace of God impacts our relationships for good (Colossians 3:15).

The peace of God acts like an umpire guarding and protecting our hearts (Philippians 4:7).

This peace can only come by prayer. The heart is like a stormy sea tossing our ship on top of white caps and then burying our vessels under tons of wet darkness, fear, and marine debris. Only Christ can say, "Peace, be still!

Come Thou fount of every blessing

Tune my heart to sing Thy grace

Streams of mercy never ceasing

Call for songs of loudest praise

This passage is the only reference to the resurrection of Christ in the epistle. We do not serve a dead martyr, but a living Savior – the high priest of our profession within the veil – the living Shepherd – the Great Shepherd of God’s flock risen from the dead ready to perfect us.

We don’t have to live in the shadows away from the sunshine or sail our vessel on stormy seas during cold, windy nights. Believing in His peace and praying to the Great Shepherd increases the possibilities of happy, holy service. The power that raised Christ from the dead is available to us. There is no mountain we cannot climb; no river we cannot cross; and, no burden we cannot carry when the sunshine of His peace is at our back.

So, like a little bird, open your mouth and let him fill it. He lives to provide for you; to protect you, and to perfect you. Don't worry about storms on the sea, or getting lost in the forest, or wolves in the pasture, or thorn bushes near the path. The Great Shepherd of the sheep leads. Will you follow?

Rest, soul, rest! Peace, Peace!

The Man Guided by the God of Peace

Proverbs 3:5-6

Conditions for Guidance

Proverbs 3:5-6 “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”



◆ We are living in an age of toxic feminism where the church is led by Christianettes — a society where we hear the roar of the liberated woman followed by confused men.

Where are the men who eat Iron Man Wheaties and who are led by nail-pierced hands?

Before us is the advice of a loving father-king to a beloved son-prince. He wishes the future prince to be guided by the wisdom of God so he will become moral and ethical, tough and tender, strong and stately, intelligent and perceptive.

The word “direct” is the Hebrew word *yashar*. It means to “make straight” or “to make smooth.”

His direction does not mean protection from sea billows swelling like monsters on rough seas as much as it does preservation from rocky reefs and the graveyard of sunken ships. There are missions where the Lord sends his crew in the dark of midnight to face ice-cold, wet sprays and exhaustion from battling with oars. The disciples in the boat on the Sea of Galilee comes to mind.

Even though the Lord does not graduate “fair weather Christians” and “sunshine patriots” from His training academy, this wise father exhorted

his son to surrender to God as the Captain of his vessel, and to trust Him to navigate his ship from port to port over uncertain seas.

The conditions for Divine guidance contain a triad of Christian responsibility.

The first condition for Divine guidance is to trust God.

The phrase "in the Lord" is in the emphatic position in this sentence informing us of the object of trust in contrast to frivolous trust alternatives.

The word "trust" (batach) in this text is an imperative exhorting us to seek protection in the Lord. The word "trust" is translated "safety" in Leviticus 25:18-19, "dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree," in 1 Kings 4:25, and "dwell between his shoulders" in Deuteronomy 33:12. Moreover, "safely" is associated with sowing, vintage, eating abundantly after a harvest in Leviticus 26:5, and "sleep" and "rest" in Psalm 4:8.

Who doesn't want to have the hand of Providence ruling over their destiny? Even though we know that the perfect life is not a painless life, we all want God to winnow the chaff from the wheat and "to direct our paths." While we pray that our Father will deliver us from evil, we do not pray that He would save us from the kind of struggles that make us strong.

The second condition for guidance is to shun a rebel's stubborn self-reliance.

The opposite of trusting God is to trust self. We are trained by humanists to install self as the captain of our soul and the master of our fate. There is even a song bragging about how "I did it my way." But, my-wayism is the way of death (Isaiah 53:6; Proverbs 14:12).

Hebrew poetry utilizes the skill of parallelism in teaching principles, and this author wants us to know that trusting God is opposed to the self-

made man (“Lean not unto thy own understanding”) in Proverbs 3:5 and the man who “trusts in riches” in Proverbs 11:28.

The word “lean” (sha’an) is translated in Genesis 18:4 as “. . . rest yourselves under the tree.” One can find rest from the “rat race” and shade from the heat of the day by seeking shelter under His branches.

The idea here is to trust in the Creator, not the creature; in God, not man; in the Master, not money; in the Savior, not self.

We trust in His love for acceptance; in His righteousness for justification; in His blood for pardon; in His power for protection; in His authority for dominion; in His wisdom for our wisdom; in His pastures for happiness; and in His goodness for guidance.

The third condition for guidance is found in the imperative “in all thy ways acknowledge him.”

The word “acknowledge” (yada) means to “know” or “perceive” or “learn.”

The idea is to wake up each day with a conscience toward God exposing our ways to Him and seeking His counsels; that is, to let the peace of God rule our hearts (Colossians 3:15). And, the opposite of this is “living life my way.” If we live dependently upon Him, we can expect “God to make our paths straight.” This is His promise and our hope (Philippians 4:6-7).

But, this does not mean that life is all sunshine and no rain or all pleasure and no pain. God has to toughen the tender and strengthen the weak. There has to be trials on this journey. Where there is no grief, there is no grit: no lumps, no love. If life is all sugar and no salt, God’s children would turn into caramel Christians.

The great among us are forged on an anvil of iron with heat and hammer. Great men seem to arise off a bed of nails but never off a bed of roses.



Stress creates strength in stout men. How much pressure must a man endure under the hand of Providence? Just enough to fuse steel into his soul and love into his heart.

We know that strength is forged the way steel is: through fire, pressure, and the steady hand of the God of peace guiding the process.

Double Peace

John 14:27

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you:”



◆ In 2 Kings 2:1-15,19-22, Elisha prayed for a double portion of the spirit of Elijah.

Because we live somewhere between sheer terror and the soft patter of rain upon our windows, some of us need to pray for a double portion of the Lord's peace.

Who can serve God in this unstable, maddening world without peace?

Shalom! Shalom! See Isaiah 26:3.

(1) The kingdom of God is characterized by peace.

Where Christ is recognized as the King-Messiah, there is peace. Shalom marks his reign (Isaiah 9:6-7).

"The wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the goat . . . they will not hurt or destroy on my holy mountain" (Isaiah 11:6, 9)

The LORD, thou wilt ordain peace (shalom) for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us." (Isaiah 26:12)

Because God will punish the Leviathan (hostile nations to Israel), God urges men to make peace with him. The exhortation to seek peace with God is repeated twice (Isaiah 27:5; 26:3):

"Let him make peace (shalom) with me; Let him make peace (shalom) with me" (5).

Isaiah 26:3 Thou wilt keep *him* in peace peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

All of God's children can enjoy peace (Isaiah 54:13); But, there is no peace offer to the wicked (Isaiah 48:12; 57:20-21)).

Isaiah 57: 20-21 But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

Peace comes to those who accept the reign of Christ and His authority.

Peace comes when just men embrace God's Son by faith (Romans 5;1).

The pardoned have the certainty of double shalom (Isaiah 57:19), but there is no peace (shalom) to the rebel.

" . . . Peace (shalom), peace (shalom) to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him." –

The LXX reads, "peace upon peace to him . . . "

Note God offers peace to them that are near (Jews), and to them that are afar (Gentiles); to Jews in Babylon and to Jews in Jerusalem; to front row Christians and to back row Christians.

Peace comes to those who forsake lawlessness and embrace God's law-order:

"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend (stumble) them" (Psalm 119:165).

(Double) Peace comes to men who mind the things of God:

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah 26:3).

Literally, this text reads, "Thou will keep him in peace peace "or "shalom shalom" - a reference to double peace and the power of peace that holds a

man together while the walls of the unjust society come tumbling down due to the judgment of Almighty God (25:12).

(2) On the night of the Last Supper (Tuesday), Jesus announced:

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you:

Note: One could make an argument here that Jesus left them with objective peace (Romans 5:1 - peace with God) and His subjective peace (John 16:33 - the peace of God).

(3) In the evening of Resurrection Sunday Jesus comforted His disciples:

John 20:19-21 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

Our texts deals with two different occasions where the Lord had a double message of peace for his troubled disciples.

The first occasion where the disciples needed peace was on Tuesday night at the Last Supper before the Lord's all night trial and passion.

Who can fully grasp the whirlwind of emotion swirling within the hearts of the disciples at the Passover Supper? Something was wrong! Tension filled the air. Satan entered the heart of Judas. Jesus stripped down to his essentials to wash the feet of the disciples. Peter rudely objected. Jesus reported treason in their midst. Winds of doubt rushed through the hearts of the disciples. Jesus identified Judas as the traitor by giving him the sacred portion of the meal (the sop). Jesus announced He was going away; and, then he told Peter that He was going to betray Him three times.

Jesus silenced the wind and the storm while in the boat on the Sea of Galilee, but the gale tossing and twisting the faith and fear of these seminary students on this Passover night hit land like an ominous category 3 hurricane.

Double peace: Twice Jesus used the word "peace" to calm the storm stirring up doubt and fear in the heart of the eleven: "**P**ea**c**e I leave with you, my **p**ea**c**e I give unto you."

The second occasion where the disciples received double peace was on the evening of Resurrection Sunday.

Think of the waves of emotions that must have swamped the boat where the disciples birthed their hope on Passover Week: Jesus's arrest; Peter slicing off the right ear of the servant of the high priest; Jesus' healing touch; Peter's denial of Christ before a handmaid; The Lord's all night trial; the Sanhedrin's guilty verdict; Jesus' beatings before Herod; Pilate's condemnation and death sentence; His crucifixion on a cross; His death; His burial in the tomb; disciples hiding; and then . . .

Peter and John's shocking announcement the tomb was empty; Mary Magdalene's stunning report that she saw the risen Christ near the garden tomb; the chatter of doubt, wonder, and mystery by a small band of disciples gathered together on Sunday evening; the shutting of the doors while hiding from Roman authorities; and, then the sudden appearance of a dead man (Christ) standing in the middle of the frightened crowd.

Can you feel the unruly seas of fear, the lawless waves of doubt, doomed hope, sputtering faith, swells of unbelief, impetuous distrust, stern skepticism, and chaotic chatter colliding with sanguine hope, storybook faith, and intangible dreams of the followers of Christ?

Can you feel the calm reaching the shores of every soul in that room when the risen Christ appeared alive "in the flesh" behind shut doors saying to the stunned Galileans, "**P**ea**c**e be unto you"?

With those words, the Lord softly quieted the thunder of doubt and the roaring waves of fear crashing on the beach of the disciples' souls.

But, no sooner was the cold storm over that a tropical storm surfaced. When the Lord showed the paddling disciple his hands and side the mood shifted. Suddenly, the hearts of the mariners burst with wonderment!!

Paralyzed with happiness coupled with self-loathing the Lord said, "**Peace** be unto you."

When the bitters of life pound upon the shores our lives with angry shouting waves, we need His sweet peace.

When disappointment rushes in to fill an empty room of lost hopes, we need His peace.

When clouds of doubt darken our day, we need to bask in the light of His peace.

"If God be our God, He will give us peace in trouble. When there is a storm without, He will make peace within. The world can create trouble in peace, but God can create peace in trouble" - Thomas Watson (Puritan).

". . . Then were the disciples glad."

When the sweets of life excite our tastes with ecstasy, we need His clarifying peace.

When the dreams of life are realized and and the smiles of angels overwhelm us, we need His calming peace.

"Double your peace, to my soul, Oh Lord!"

(4) Double peace is found in Isaiah 26:3

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

As stated earlier, the literal translation of this portion of the song should read, "Thou will keep him in shalom shalom . . ." That is "double peace." The translators interpolated the phrase "perfect peace" to express double peace, "shalom shalom." The idea here is of impeccable peace. The one whose mind trusts in the Lord will experience optimal peace -- "shalom shalom" -- "perfect peace."

(5) Peace is the means through which God conquers Satan; that is, men must lay hold of the God of peace to defeat sin.

Romans 16:20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Satan is not conquered by anger or wrath or bulldozing determination . . . but by a heart at rest enjoying shalom shalom.

Part II



How Do We Get Peace?

We all need peace at various stages of our lives.

There are no 12 step programs to obtain peace, but obtaining peace does involve our consent and cooperation.

Here are a few actions we can take that will create a climate for us to enjoy the peace of God

(1) Distinguish between "peace with God" and the "peace of God."

Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Colossians 3:15 And let the peace of God rule (act as judge, umpire) in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

Peace with God is a benefit of believing the gospel. When a person hears and believes in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, the war between the man and God is over. Our Armistice Day is the day of our salvation.

It is not a feeling, it is a fact all Christians possess. It is an objective in nature, and represents a change in status from condemned to justified (Romans 5: see the benefits of justification, forgiveness, regeneration, reconciliation).

The peace of God is needed when when unwelcome events barge into our lives. The peace of God is a subjective feeling that all is well under His providence. It is the calm we receive from the Spirit when we trust God and believe that "all things are working together for good" (Romans 8:28) and that His "grace is sufficient in all things" (2 Cor 12:9-10).

(2) Distinguish between the peace of Christ and the peace of the world.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

The world offers peace to those who accept its temporal, earthly, fickle, superficial, sensual political views, control, and statutes. The peace that Christ offers is a gift of heavenly grace to those who believe His promises, trust Him, and are in a right standing with Him.

The world's peace comes by eliminating suffering; Christ's peace comes to those in the midst of suffering. The world offers peace to the complaint, Christ offers peace to the defiant - to those that defy the world with its lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and self-sufficiency (pride).

(3) Peace is a gift . . . and it must be received by faith. See John 14:1 and John 20:19

(4) Resist anxiety, anger, fear, and wrath:

James 1:19-20 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Fear (anxiety, worry, anger, cowardice) and trouble (agitations, irritations, anger, disturbances) are the opposite of peace.

The Greek verb "Let not your heart be troubled" (tarassesthō) is a present, middle imperative negated by the adverb "not" (me); that is, when trouble stirs up anxiety in our heart, we are under command to trust Christ for His peace and to participate in resisting the temptation to worry and fret.

Philippians 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. **7** And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

The verb "be careful" (merimnate) is another term for anxiety. It is present active imperative negated by the direct object adjective "nothing" (mēden). The Spirit forbids the believer to be anxious, troubled, agitated, irritated, and disturbed. Peace is king and it must reign in the tabernacle of the human heart.

(5) The opposite of anxiety is prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving.

Instead of worry and fret, the Spirit calls agitated Christians to pray (proseuché: general prayer and worship), make supplications (deēsei; formal, genuine, specific pleadings), and give thanks (eucharistia; gratitude) in the midst of troubled seas. See 1 Timothy 2:1-7.

(6) Claim the peace that passes all understanding that shall keep your heart and mind.

Note the definition of peace in Philippians 4:6 above: a peace that "passeth all understanding."

The Greek word "passeth" (huperechó) means "to rise above," "to be superior," and "to govern," It is translated "higher powers" in Romans 13;1.

The noun "understanding" (nous) refers "to reason" and one's "intellect." The promise is that a pious Christian can have a supernatural peace, a calm restful spirit, without a direct change in circumstances -- a peace that defies explanation — a peace greater than reason. It is a peace that calms the soul without calming the sea upon which one's ship is sailing.

The verb "keep" (phroureó) means to guard as on a military patrol; that is, God's peace stands guard over one's mind and emotions to keep the soul from doing something foolish and irrational.

(7) Think on holy things:

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

"Great thoughts of your sin alone will drive you to despair; but great thoughts of Christ will pilot you into the haven of peace" - Charles Spurgeon.

(8) Develop holy habits:

Philippians 4:8 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

"Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny" (R.W. Emerson).

A minor disturbance happened in an Italian village, and a woman came running into the chapel chattering away as fast as she could jiggle her tongue. The priest held up his hand and stopped her prattle. Closing his eyes, the priest slowly spoke, "May the Lord bless you and keep you and give you peace!" Dropping his hand, he spoke to the roused woman, "Now, you can speak."

A Benediction

2 Thessalonians 3:16 "Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all."

Shalom, shalom!

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