

How to Find Rest and Peace of Mind

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Many years ago I heard brother Rolfe Barnard bring a message on the subject how to find peace of mind and freedom from worry. That message was a special blessing to me. I have not brought one on that subject in many years and I feel that God has given me one for you tonight.

Now this is a scriptural subject. I want you to turn to the book of Numbers first. The Bible has a lot to say about peace, the peace of God, peace in the heart, rest in the soul, in the mind. In Numbers chapter six verse 24 here is the benediction, the blessing upon Israel. God said, "Speak," verse 23, "unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace, and give thee peace."

Turn to Isaiah chapter 32. And here the Scripture tells us that the work and the effect of righteousness is peace. The work and effect of righteousness is peace. In Isaiah 32 verse 17, "And the work of righteousness," that is the righteousness of Christ, the work of redemption, the work of sanctification, "shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever." That is the effect of righteousness. That ought to be the mark and the characteristic of the redeemed. They have peace of heart. They have a quietness of Spirit.

And then in John chapter 14 our Lord said in John 14:27, if you will turn with me to the 14th chapter of John verse 27 he says, "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 and neither let it be afraid."

In John 16 verse 33 listen to this Scripture. "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye will have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

And here is something that I noticed in studying for this message. Turn to the book of 1 Corinthians chapter one. Now we believe that Paul wrote, including Hebrews, 14 of the New Testament books. And do you know that he begins 12 of these books, 12 out of the

14 he begins this way, 1 Corinthians chapter one, “Grace be unto you, and peace and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.”

So this is a Scriptural subject that I have selected, a needful subject. It is the Lord’s blessings upon Israel, the Lord keep thee, be gracious to thee and give thee peace. The effect and work of righteousness is peace. If I don’t have the peace of God in my heart, I am to question whether or not I have a work of righteousness. This is the effect of it.

Our Lord said, “I give you peace: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled.”

And then the apostle Paul, every church he writes to he says, “Grace unto you from our God and Father and peace.”

Now I am troubled that so many of us who call ourselves Christians do not have this peace which is promised, this peace which is given. In the book of Colossians—and I want you to turn to this Scripture—I have a star by this one. I think it is most important. In Colossians chapter three verse 14, now listen carefully to this. Colossians 3:14.

“And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule, let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”

And then Philippians, our text, chapter four verse seven, our Lord said, “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

And then one other Scripture, Isaiah chapter 26. In the 26th chapter of Isaiah verse three and four, now listen to this. They wrote a song about this, a little chorus. We used to sing it.

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.”

I didn’t have time to look all of these Scriptures up this week when I was preparing this message, the but the Lord is given several names in the Old Testament. We talk about the Lord our righteousness, Jehovah Tsidkenu. We talk about the Lord our banner. We talk about the Lord our Savior. But also one of his names is this: Jehovah Shalom, the Lord what? Our peace. The Lord our peace.

All right. We have the Lord our righteousness and we make much of it. We have the Lord our banner to rule over us, our sovereign king. We have the Lord our Savior to deliver us. Where is the Lord our peace? That is what I want to know. Where is the Lord? In all of this confusion and chaos and frustration, where is the Lord our peace?

I have three points that I want to deal with in the message tonight and I think they will be a blessing to you. Here they are. First of all I am going to deal with this question. What are the steps to peace, this peace of God? What are the steps to this peace that passeth all understanding? What are the steps to this peace that shall rule in your heart, the steps? I think I have found them.

And then the second question will be this. What is this peace? What are the marks of this peace of God that passes understanding? And then, thirdly, how can it be maintained?

Now turn with me to the book of Psalms chapter 37. What are the steps to this peace that passeth understanding? This peace that seems to be eluding so many of us? Well, here in Psalms 37 I believe that the psalmist David gives us one, two, three, four, five, six. The first one is found in verse one.

He says, "Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity."

Now if we are going to find rest of mind, peace of heart, we are going to have to be weaned from this world, this world and its vanities. We are going to have to rise above this natural world. We are going to have to set our affections on things above. We are going to have to seek first.

He said, "Take no thought, no anxious thought what you shall eat and what you shall drink and what you shall wear. These are the things that the Gentiles are interested in, the heathen, the lost, those who do not know God. Seek ye first, first, set your affection first on things above. And all these things shall be added to you."

Now if we fret ourselves and if we agitate ourselves to gain what natural men lust after and what natural men seek for, then we must expect the cares and the unrest that goes along with these vanities, because that is what they are. Vanities.

Look at verse two. For they shall soon be cut off, these workers of iniquity, these evil doers. They shall be cut down like the grass and wither as the green herb. All of this worldly vanity and worldly glory shall fade away. It shall pass away. Don't be envious of them. Come apart, come away. The first step to finding rest in the Lord, the first step for a believer to find that true peace that passeth understanding is to turn loose of this world. And I am talking about all of its relationships and all of its vanities and all of its so-called luxuries and all of its temporary treasures. Just hold so loosely to these things that when God slips them out of your hand, you won't even miss them. Become so wrapped up in Christ and his glory, so wrapped up in Christ and his redemption, so wrapped up in Christ and his love that when these things that the worldly people, the evil doers, the workers of iniquity think are so important they are just not important to you at all. And any time God wants to take them he can just slip them out of our hands because that is not where our interests and our affections and our love lies. It is in Christ and he can never be taken

away. We can never lose him. Our relationship with him is grace and mercy to us. We can never lose these things. But all of these things of the earth, let them go. Turn them so.

Fret not thyself and do not be envious of the workers of iniquity. Turn loose of these things. Just consider them as already dead, already crucified with Christ.

I am crucified with Christ and the world is crucified to me. As far as I am concerned the world has already had its funeral and we have gone away from the graveyard and buried it.

All right, the second step, verse three.

“Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.”

Fret not thyself, but trust in the Lord. You believe in the Lord’s covenant grace. I do. I believe in the Lord’s covenant love. He said, “I have drawn you with an everlasting love.”

He said, “Before the world was created, I loved you. I foreordained you. I predestinated you. I made you my child.” He said, “Jeremiah, before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee. Before thou camest out of thy mother’s womb, I separated thee sanctified thee.”

Paul said, “God who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me by his grace.”

I believe in God’s covenant grace, God’s covenant love, God’s covenant mercies, don’t you? Well, let’s trust in him. Let’s trust those covenant purposes and that covenant love.

I believe in the Lord’s atonement. He shared his blood to put away my guilt, to cleanse me from my sin, to redeem me from all iniquity. Trust him. Trust him. I believe in the risen Lord and his promises, the precious promises of God in Christ Jesus. I believe those things, don’t you? Trust him.

I was speaking this morning to the church over in Winston Salem and I said this. All of the grace of God for the believer and to the believer and in the believer is in Christ our Lord. All of the grace. Back yonder before this world was ever created God loved us. God chose us. God set his affection upon us. Back before the world had a [?], back before the world had a foundation God chose a people in Christ and set his love upon, chose us in Christ, predestinated us in Christ, accepted us in Christ, all of it in Christ. And God performed the work of grace for us. Our Lord in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sin who enlightened us and made known to us the mysteries of his grace, who gave us an inheritance undefiled that fadeth not away, in Christ.

And then one day he called us and gave us confidence and faith and assurance and worked redemption in our souls. Trust him. He who did all this for thee, be not discouraged when your work of faith brings poor returns, for God moves in a mysterious

way his wonders to perform. He plants his footsteps on the sea and rides upon the storm. Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take, the clouds you so much dread are rich with God's grace and will break with blessings on your head. The purposes of God will ripen fast unfolding every hour. The bud may have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the flower.

Do you trust him? Trust in the Lord.

All right, the third thing. He said, "Fret not thyself because of evil doers. Trust in the Lord."

And then look at verse four.

"Delight thyself also in the LORD. Delight thyself also in the LORD."

Think how good God has been to you. Think how good God has been to me. You know most of our unrest comes because we dwell not on God's blessings, but upon our disappointments. All of us are given to that. We dwell on our frustrations. We dwell on our disappointments. We dwell on our failures rather than on our blessings.

The song write said, "When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed, when you are discouraged thinking all is lost, count your many blessings, name them one by one." That is the way. Delight thyself in the Lord.

God has not left you in darkness, but God has given you knowledge of his grace. God has not left you in sin, but he has delivered you out of the miry clay. God has given his Son to be your Redeemer. God has given you new life and hope of the resurrection. My friends, if we have to be continually reminded of what God has done for us, is it possible that it hasn't yet been done? Huh?

If we have to be continually reminded of God's grace, isn't it a good sign that we don't even have God's grace?

The last words that David said on this earth before he died were these. "The Lord hath made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure although it be not so with my house, yet this is all my salvation and all my desire."

Count your many blessings. The way to peace, look at the fourth thing.

"Commit thy way unto the Lord."

Now, brethren, even our master prayed, "Not my will, but thy will be done." Even our master in the agonizing garden of Gethsemane prayed, "Not my will, but thy will be done."

And I certainly will find no peace and no rest until I can sincerely commit my will to Almighty God and commit my way to God.

Samuel came to Eli. Eli said, "What did the Lord say to you, Samuel?"

Samuel said, "I would rather not say."

Eli said, "Well, Samuel, if you don't tell me what the Lord said to you, may the Lord do the same thing to you."

And Samuel said, "Well, Eli, the Lord is going to bring judgment upon your house. The Lord said that he was going to slay your sons because they have sinned against him. And do you know what Eli said? He committed his way unto the Lord. He said, "It is the Lord, let him do what he will."

And I am going to find peace when I come to this place that I can commit myself and all that I have and all that I am and all that I hope to be, that I can commit it to the Lord.

You know, when Paul was in prison, when he wrote the book of Philemon and when he also wrote the book of 2 Timothy he called himself the prisoner of Jesus Christ. He never called himself the prisoner of Nero nor the prisoner of Rome nor did he ever call himself the prisoner of the religious Jews. Oh, they were the second causes. They put him there. But he called himself the prisoner of Jesus Christ. I am here because my Lord wants me here. I wouldn't be here. I am here because this is the will of my God or I wouldn't be here.

So if this preacher is going to find rest and peace, the peace of God that passeth understanding, I am going to have to commit my way to the Lord. I am going to have to learn how to pray, "Now, Lord, this is my desire, but if it be not thy will, Lord, don't hear my prayer. Our Lord, this is what I want and I feel impressed to pray this way. But, Lord, I am saying this. If this is not your will, don't grant it. Don't even answer my prayer. Don't even hear my prayer. Thy will be done."

I have got to commit my ways.

I like this poem. Listen to it.

There is a richer, sweeter rest than the soothing rest from pain. We think when we are hurting and we take a pain pill and the pain goes away how good it is, but there is a richer, sweeter rest than the soothing rest from pain.

There is a deeper peace than that which sleep sheds over the heart and brain. We think sometimes lying there, two, three o'clock in the morning I wish I could go to sleep and finally sweet precious sleep closes our eyes. But the song writer says there is a deeper peace. It is my soul's surrendered choice, the surrender of my will lying broken at the cross praying, God's purpose be fulfilled.

I can come to that place I will find peace. God will speak peace to my life. God will speak peace.

All right, the next step. He says, "If you want peace, fret not thyself because of evil doers. Fret not thyself because of the vanities of this world, the workers of iniquity. Come apart from them. Come apart. Trust in the Lord. Delight thyself in him. Find your joy and pleasure in his presence, in his mercies. Put no confidence in the flesh. Flesh will fail, your flesh and everybody else's. Put no confidence even in doctrine. Put no confidence even in organizations or ordinances or even churches. Delight thyself in the Lord. Commit thy way to him."

And then he says, "Rest in the Lord."

Let me show you a beautiful picture. Turn to Genesis chapter eight. Old Noah, the flood waters had risen, destroyed everything. It rained so long and the old ark was floating up there on top of the water days and days and days it passed 40 days. And it says in verse eight that Noah sent forth a dove out of that ark to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground. Genesis eight, now verse nine.

"But the dove found no rest, found no rest for the sole of her foot."

She flew out there here and there and yonder and found no rest. I can see that dove flying everywhere and there is no place to light. There is no place to find rest for her foot. What does she do? She returned unto him into the ark for the waters were on the face of the whole earth and Noah put forth his hand. That little dove flew back into the hand of Noah and he pulled her in unto him into the ark.

And, my friends, if any of you say that you have lost peace and you have lost rest and you have lost the joy, your trouble and you are anxious and you are fearful and you are willing. If you are a child of God, I will tell you why. You have flown from him. And you are out there trying to find rest in the vanities and luxuries and treasures of this earth and it is not there for a child of God. It is just not there. Just like that dove flying around everywhere, seeking some place to find some companionship or fellowship or rest or peace or some place to place a weary foot and found none.

You want to find rest? Return, return unto thy rest, oh my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.

He is my rest. He is my rest. And I have got to fly just like that dove, back to his hand. He will take me with him into the ark. And there I will find rest. There I will find comfort and there I will find peace.

Do you see it there Psalm 37? Rest in the Lord. That is the only place we are going to find it. Rest in the Lord.

And wait patiently for him.

And then verse eight, steps to rest. Verse eight says, “Cease from anger.”

Now there is no man, no man and no woman who can have the peace of God in his heart as long as he has ill feelings in his heart. There is no man and there is no woman who can have the peace of God that passeth understanding, the peace of God that rules in the heart, that rests in Christ Jesus as long as he has malice towards someone, ill feelings towards someone because peace is not only the peace with God in Christ, but it is a peace with my fellow man.

Now anger can take many forms. He tells us here, “Cease from anger.”

Anger can take many forms. If you think anger is only when you are pitching a mad fit, you are wrong. Anger takes many forms other than hatred and other than wishing vengeance. Hurt feelings harbored in our hearts, that is anger. When we refuse to be reconciled that is anger. Misunderstandings continued. A misunderstanding occurs and rather than forgiving it and forgiving it and erasing it from our minds, that misunderstanding stays in there and continues. That is anger.

The only way that a misunderstanding can prosper, the only way that misunderstanding can grow and continue to survive is to be fed with the water of anger. It is the only way.

Anger takes this form, refusing to fellowship with someone, refusing to speak to someone. Anger takes the form of envy, petty jealousy, an attitude of self pity.

Everybody is against me. Nobody loves me. Everybody hates me. That is anger. You want peace? You have got to cease from these things.

Let the peace of God, the love of God and the rest of God rule, rule. Let it dominate. Let it reign in your heart. That is the steps to peace.

Well, what is this peace? What are some of its marks? Now I will give you some of the marks of this peace that I feel personally. First of all I believe this peace that passeth understanding, this peace that causes the things of this world to love their attractiveness...

Turn your eyes on Jesus. Look full in his wonderful face and the things of this world will grow strangely dim. Do you know what does that? First of all, the mark of peace is to have strong convictions.

Paul said, “I know whom I have believed.”

I know. I know that Christ is my Redeemer. I know that he is my Lord. I know that he died for me on Calvary’s cross. I know whom I have believed. I am persuaded. I am convinced that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him. That is my conviction.

John said, "We know that we have passed from death unto life."

We know it and a firm belief in the gospel and the Word of God and in Christ Jesus our Lord is essential to peace. The man who is wishy washy, a man who is like this chaff that the wind bloweth away, the man who is disturbed by every wind of doctrine that comes and goes can have no peace. Peace is found when we are anchored in Christ Jesus, anchored within the veil.

And then, another mark of this peace, strong convictions. And another mark of this peace is contentment. Paul said, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content, therewith to be content. Having food and clothing, I am therewith content."

Ambition spoils race. Ambition. Greed spoils peace. When we worry over accumulating this world's goods we can say goodbye to God's peace. God hath appointed my portion. God hath ordained my ways. So let it be. I am content.

Paul said, "I know how to be abased and I now how to abound. I know how to be full and I know how to be hungry. I know both extremes. I know how to be glad and I know how to suffer. I am content."

And then the third mark of this peace it is conviction, strong conviction. It is a strong contentment.

And then, thirdly, it is confidence. Whatever trials may come, whatever loss I suffer, I have perfect confidence in my God will work it out for my good. Whatever trials may come, whatever loss I suffer, I have perfect confidence that my God will work it out for my good.

This is the peace that believes God can do no wrong. He is too wise to make a mistake. He is too good to do evil. He cannot forsake me. He cannot change. He cannot cease to love me. He said, "All things work together for good to them who love God, to those who are the called according to his purpose."

No matter how dark the valley, no matter how heavy the load, no matter how lonely the way, it is going to work out if I know him, if I love him, if I am one of the called according to his purpose. It is all going to work out for my good. I believe that.

And then the fourth mark of this rest, this peace that passeth understanding is submission.

Somebody said the Hebrew word for submission is be silent before God. Be silent before God.

One of the old versions reads this way. "Hold thou still before God."

Now we see some examples of this when God took everything Job had away from him. The Scripture says that in all this Job did not charge God with foolishness. He did not

charge God foolishly nor with foolishness, but he said, “Naked I came out of my mother’s womb and naked I shall return. The lord gave, the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.”

That is submission.

We cannot find peace resisting God. We cannot find peace replying against God. It is be silent before God. It is hold thou still before God.

Here is another example. When Aaron’s loved ones died before the wrath of God, the Scripture says just five words. “And Aaron held his peace.”

Got nothing to say. When his loved ones died before God under God’s judgment and Aaron held his peace.

We are people of many words. Our tongues get us into so much trouble, trouble not only with ourselves, and trouble with one another, but trouble with God. We talk ourselves into a mess. We talk ourselves into a prison. We have talked ourselves into frustration. We have talked ourselves into predicaments that we can’t get out of. Hold your peace. That is the key.

I wish I could learn that. Be silent before God.

Now that is the mark of peace. It is a man with strong convictions. I shall not be moved. I shall not be moved. I am like a tree planted by the waters. I shall not be moved. Whatever wind blows I shall not be moved. It may blow all my leaves off, but I shall not be moved. I am anchored in Christ Jesus.

The old tap root reaches down into the well of living water and I shall not move. I shall not move. I am in God’s place and I am content. I am content. It may be battles 24 hours a day. It may be imprisonment.

John Bunyan, how many years? Twelve years, David, 12 years in prison. Paul sitting there chained to guards, his friends forsaking him. We don’t know what suffering is.

A preacher was talking to me this week about rewards in heaven. I said, “Who in God’s name deserves a reward? Who has done any suffering for Christ? Who has done any agonizing under the whip of persecution?” I haven’t. I don’t know what it is.

We murmur and complain and find fault. We will have no rest till we can say with Paul, “I am content.”

And I have got a strong confidence that whatever trial comes it is going to be for my good and God’s glory.

And I will tell you this. Under any trial, under any burden, I am going to keep my mouth shut before him. I am going to hold my peace. And I want it to be said of me as it was said of Aaron, when all of this swept down upon him and Aaron held his peace.

All right, how is this peace maintained? All right. If God is pleased to grant it, God is pleased to give it, we are successful in attaining it, it has got to be maintained. The battle isn't over. There is no discharge in this war. I have got some more years to live. I have got some more conflicts to go through, some more battles to fight. How am I going to maintain this peace, now? Well, I maintain it by resting, first of all, in three things. Resting, first of all, in Christ my substitute.

Oh, what a blessed resting place Christ my substitute. The old timers said, "Rest, weary soul, the penalty is borne, the ransom is paid for all my sin satisfaction has been made. Strive not to do what the Lord Jesus has already done. Claim the free gift and make his joys thine own. No more let guilt and fear distress, res, my soul, in Christ, sweetly rest."

Keep on coming back to Calvary.

Wherever you start, come back to Calvary. That is where we will find the rest, resting in the substitutionary work of Christ, always back to Calvary both here in our preaching, in our singing, in our witnessing. Whatever we are doing, let's get back to Calvary. In our business, in our conversation, in our fellowship, in our social life, let's get back to Calvary, back to Calvary.

And then I will maintain this peace by resting in the substitutionary work of Christ and resting in the unchangeable attributes of God.

He said, "I am the Lord, I change not. That is why you sons of Jacob aren't consumed."

That is the reason. The reason you aren't swept away, the reason you aren't destroyed is not because you don't change. It is not because of your faithfulness. It is not because of your honesty and integrity, because of mine. I change not.

The gifts and calling of God are without change.

One old timer, a man came to him one time and old white haired gentleman right on the brink of eternity, right into the sunset years of life and said to him, "Old man, are you a Christian?"

He said, "Yes, sir. I have been a Christian a long time, resting in Christ."

"Old man, what if after all these years of believing on Christ and resting in him you should finally be lost?"

Well, the old man without a moment's hesitation said, "Well, God would suffer the greater loss."

He said, "What do you mean?"

He said, "I would lose my soul, but God would lose his glory. God would lose his glory."

He said, "The soul that believes on Christ shall never perish and I have his Word for that. I have his Word."

God says, "I change not."

And I can rest in that. The attributes of God and maintain my rest. And then, last of all, and here is where we mention it, one place among many, rest in the Word of God.

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his ways? Taking heed to the Word of God.

As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow thereby.

You can't have rest and peace and live apart from this book. Now I know we preachers, we have to study, but woe unto us if we study because we have to. Woe unto us if we read the Word of God because we have to. I look at this book like a pilot looks at a compass. It is my guide. It is my comfort. It is infallible. It is my Lord's directions. It is his Word.

You see what it has done for you already tonight as you sat there and I read these verses.

Fret not thyself. Fret not thyself. Trust in the Lord. Delight thyself in him. Isn't that sweet? Doesn't that calm your soul? Commit thy way unto the Lord. Lean not to thine own understanding. Rest in him. Cease from anger.

You will find if you will flee to this book you will find a strength you can find nowhere else. It is not just for information. It is for inspiration, too. It is not just for edification. It is for sanctification, by taking heed to the Word of God.

Make much of God's Word and maintain that peace. I want it. Oh, Lord, give me faith. Give me love for people. Give me a humility. Break my heart. Give me a contrite spirit. Empty me of myself. But, Lord, give me that peace. I need it more all the time, don't you? Peace that passes understanding to keep my heart.

Our Father in heaven, thank thee for thy Word. Thou hast spoken so graciously to us. What strength we find, what comfort we find, how we have been blessed because we have felt thy presence and thy Spirit speaking to us through thy Word. Now take this message and let us not soon forget it. Let not the things of this earth take the seed too quickly away that it bear not fruit. Let us not become now so concerned over ourselves and our enjoyments and our entertainments that we forget what we have heard. But go home and pray about it, sleep upon it and determine within our hearts we are going to do

something about it. But confrontation with the Holy Spirit. Speak, Lord, thy servant obeyeth. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.