

PERFECT PEACE

Isaiah 26:3

The nature of present earthly physical existence constrained us to live in a fast-tracked, loud and noisy world in which everything is shifty and shaky; nothing is stable, nothing is certain and nothing lasts. Our work and walk sometimes comes with muscle tension, our eating with digestive issues, our plans, aspirations or expectations with booths of headache and fatigues. We find ourselves sometimes over-reacting over small things with anxious thoughts racing through our minds as we ponder over certain responsibilities and envisaged or associated difficulties. There is rarely a human being without history of overwhelmed, strained or drained emotions at one time or the other. Our text today transmits hope and provides a strong sustaining anchor for our faith and stability at such moments.

We shall consider three subtopics:

1. The giver of abundant and lasting peace
2. The attitude of believers who wanted peace
3. The dynamics and operation of God-given peace

1. The giver of abundant and lasting peace

Isaiah 26:3, Psalm 85:8, 29:11, 2 Thessalonians 3:16, Psalm 23:4-5 Jeremiah 29:11, Leviticus 26:6, Numbers 6:26

Our text situates in a portion of scripture written to the people of Judah in desperate need of Messiah and applies to God's people today. They are part of a song the redeemed will sing when Jesus returns. The word peace (shalom) as used in our text is much more than the absence of conflict. It signifies tranquillity, harmony, wholeness, completion, fulfilment, welfare and prosperity; a state of inward calm, reconciliation with God and security from worldly disruptions. Isaiah wrote in our text that God will keep in perfect peace the one whose mind is stayed on Him because He trusted in Him.

The word "*keep*" means to guard, protect or maintain. It is a military term and expresses the way they defend their territory, camp or Area of Responsibility (AOR) from intrusion or disruption. Here we find expressed a fact that God who is greater than any military commander is on assignment to make sure that those who belong to Him receives, owns and enjoys abundant and lasting peace. This is the implication of the word "*perfect*" annexed to the peace that God promised in our text. Actually in the original, the word translated "perfect peace" is "*peace, peace*". The word peace is doubled like this: "*He will keep him in peace, peace ...*" When a word is doubled in the Bible, it becomes very important. This text revealed that God is on our side and always is. His presence guarantees that His people will have peace and live in peace Psalm 85:8, 29:11.

Peace, lasting and enduring peace as described in our text cannot be found in anything physical and external no matter how powerful or pleasant. It is God's unique and exclusive possession. He is the God of peace 2 Thessalonians 3:16 and has all it takes to bestow it on those who belong to Him.

2. The attitude of believers who wanted peace

Isaiah 26:3-4, Psalm 91:2, Mathew 7:7-8, Philippians 4:6, Psalm 56:3-4, Hebrews 12:14, 1Peter 3:10-11, Proverbs 16:7

Our text presents to all readers God's offer of double and full dose of peace. The double dose of peace offered in our text becomes our heritage as we discipline our minds to remain focused on God. Isaiah 26:3 admits a weakness common to all men – we have shifty, straying minds. Our fears, worries and anxiety testified to it. We all need to make conscious and deliberate effort to keep our minds on God and on things that has eternal value. We are to be comforted by the fact that all problems of life have expiry date; it shall come to pass. You should remember that God cares, He is willing and He is ever ready to help you if you ask; your can do so right now Philippians 4:6. God wanted us to be participants in finding, keeping, using and enjoying the peace He offers us.

In our text we are given practical suggestion on what to do when thoughts races through our minds that disrupts our peace of mind. We are to allow our mind to focus on God rather than on our problems, the reasons for it or the cause of it. We are to focus on the greatness of our God and the sufficiency of His power to do all things and to supply our needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. We are to remember and reflect over and over in our minds others in the scriptures and contemporary times who have the same kind of problems that confront us or that we are trying to solve, how by adopting strategies of prayer and faith in God they overcame. You might even want to remember similar problem or other problems you had in the past and how God solved them for you. This redirection of mind will suddenly begin to make your problem shrink and will mark the beginning of the restoration of your peace of mind.

3. The dynamics and operation of God-given peace

Isaiah 26:3, Mathew 13:22, Proverbs 4:23, Philippians 4:7 John 14:27, 16:33 Galatians 5:22, Luke 1:79, Psalm 119:165

Jesus in Mathew 13:22 stated clearly that worries and anxiety can undermine and wipe out our productivity, initiative and capacity. Worry most times is a product of negative and wrong thinking. Wrong thinking often leads to wrong feelings and wrong feelings breeds wrong living.. The opposite is equally true. Guard your heart with all diligence Proverbs 4:23. Worrying has not succeeded in changing anything since the world began; but prayer and praying has. Our worries can easily be transformed into prayer points

that we present to God in faith. Many people did so and were never disappointed; you will not be disappointed. Worrying wastes valuable time and is a waste of time. By it we clutter up tomorrow's opportunities with yesterday's troubles. By so doing we deny ourselves of making the best use of today's blessings, time and privileges.

A leading university professor many years ago studied the things that people worry about. His research findings shows that 40% of things people worry about may not happen. 30% concerns the past they cannot do anything about. 12% are needless worries about health. 10% are petty insignificant issues and 8% are legitimate. This means 92% of our worrying time is wasted energy. But the Bible takes us further than that, it states that we should not even be worried about the 8% because God takes charge when we present them to Him in prayers. God promises to take care of us. Clear from our text is this affirmation that problems of life cannot frustrate God's purpose in the life of His children. He is ever in charge and in control. He will keep us in perfect peace. He will do it. This is what makes the kind of peace He gives to surpass human understanding Philippians 4:7.

God is God of peace; He releases this peace into our lives through Jesus Christ John 14:27. The victory of Jesus over the world guarantees us peace John 16:33. Peace of God, peace with God and peace from God is a fruit of the Spirit Galatians 5:22. It is available and granted to all who come to Christ, asking God for forgiveness of sins (including the sin of worrying!) Ephesians 2:8. When anyone does so, the prince of peace comes into his life Revelation 3:20 to begin to guide his feet in the path of peace Luke 1:79. There is no peace for the wicked Isaiah 59:8. Divine peace comes to us as we submit to the Lord, dedicate or rededicate ourselves to walk in His love and law Psalm 119:165. Peace comes to us as we surrender and place our entire life into the hands of the Lord, including the things that make us worry. Do it now!

Give to God your worries, your fears and your concerns; hand over to Him those things that keep you up at night. Ask Jehovah to give you peace; His peace, do it now and believe. God will keep in perfect peace those whose mind is stayed on Him because they trust in Him Isaiah 26:3 "*Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength*" Isaiah 26:4. It is well with you. Shalom!