



WEEKLY DEVOTIONALS FROM PASTOR LYLE WAHL

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Peace

Peace. You probably know that dictionaries define it as freedom from noise or anxiety as well as freedom from conflict or the ending of war.

You may have heard the old story of a man who greeted his pastor at the end of a Sunday service and told him, “Pastor, today your sermon reminded me of the peace and love of God!” Since that was not his topic the pastor asked why that was so. “Well”, the man answered, “it reminded me of the peace of God because it passed all understanding, and the love of God because it endured forever!”



Peace.

The Old Testament word is *shalom*, with the basic ideas of completion, fulfillment, wholeness. It was and is used for peace and safety not being threatened, of being whole — as in uncut stones or a state of being. And so it pictures well being, harmony, *being as one ought to be*.

The New Testament word was more about a state, such as a time of peace. But the New Testament picked up the Old testament ideas. In the widest sense it refers to the normal state of things, or as they should be. 1 Corinthians 14 verse 33 states “God is not a God of confusion, but of peace.”

Think of three dimensions of peace from the New Testament. There is peace with God, declared in the first verse of Romans chapter 5, “having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” We are no longer enemies, strangers of God facing His righteous wrath and judgment for our sin. We *have* peace with God.

From that state of peace we can have peace with ourselves, peace within even in difficult, turbulent times. As Jesus told us,

“These things I have spoken to you so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world”
(John 16:33).

Then true peace from God enables us to have peace with others. As Paul wrote in Romans chapter 12, “If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all people” (18).

We know that objectively we have peace with God through Jesus Christ as His free gift. But a vital question is how do we experience true peace day to day?

Think of three key building blocks to experiencing it. The first is expressed in Isaiah chapter 26 verse 3, “The steadfast of mind You [God] will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in You.” The steadfast mind is one which is firmly and continually focused on God, His truth, His promises rather than, as James says, being “like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind” (1:6). How easy it is to lose our focus as we see and feel the stresses and storms of life.

A second key building block is choosing to replace uncertainty and anxiety with going to God in prayer and trusting Him. Remember Paul’s familiar words in Philippians chapter 2,

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and pleading with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus” (6-7).

A third key related building block is to have disciplined thinking, which Paul addresses in the immediately following two verses,

“whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, think about these things. As for the things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you” (8-9).

Living with God’s peace, Proverbs chapter 14 verse 30 tells us, brings life to the body. It also, the first verse in Proverbs chapter 15 tells us, turns away anger and conflict, and then it clears out confusion (see 1 Corinthians 14:33). It is God’s desire, as Paul prayed, to “Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance” (2 Thessalonians 3:16). God, who is the Lord of peace, is more than able to do that for you.

Peace. Thank God for His perfect peace for you. Trust Him completely and walk with Him closely so the Holy Spirit will produce an everbearing bumper crop of peace in you.

Pastor Lyle