

THE WAY OF PEACE
Isa. 59:8a

Intro: This statement was first made by Isaiah, but it is quoted by the Apostle Paul in Rom. 3:17.

In the two passages the context is the same -- each climaxes a description of what men do hoping to find the completeness, the inner harmony, which is peace. But they do not find it in doing what their hearts desire. Jeremiah teaches us that,

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9).

Twice in Isaiah's prophecy he says,

"There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked" (Isa. 48:22; 57:21).

In the latter passage Isaiah precedes ^{this verse} with,

"But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt" (Isa. 57:20).

Our text concludes (in Isa. 59:8) with,

"They have made them crooked paths; whosoever goeth in them shall not know peace."

Therefore, we can see three things from these passages:

- 1) That all men want peace -- personal, inner peace.
- 2) That all men have a natural tendency to seek it in their own way -- following the desires of their own hearts, ignoring what God has been pleased to tell us in His Word.
- 3) All attempts to gain peace in man's way are utterly fruitless!

They have not known the way of peace and they never will as long as they are looking for it in sin. Sin and peace never go together.

But, what is "the way of peace" -- the life of peace? How can we experience it? Even if we have found peace, we can always experience it in a greater measure.

The subject is too great in the Word of God to give an exhaustive answer, but we can get the main points in the time that we have tonight.

First, let us spend a few minutes on

I. PEACE WITH GOD.

It is plainly taught in the Word of God that before we

can enjoy "the peace of God" we must find "peace with God." Peace comes from God alone and it is only through a right relationship with Him that we can have peace.

And just as SIN keeps men from peace when we experience it, so it continues to block our way to peace until it is forgiven and removed.

This is where Rom. 5:1 is extremely important.

"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Every word in this verse is important! It is only "through our Lord Jesus Christ." And it is only "by faith" in Him. Then and only then can we be declared "justified" in God's sight. The result is "peace with God."

It is a very firm teaching of Scripture that there can be no peace in any heart until his relationship with God is settled through the forgiveness of his sins.

But, having said this, to be perfectly honest we have to admit that it does not always follow that those who have "peace with God" are enjoying "the peace of God" in their daily lives. Therefore, let us notice a few of the basic things that the Word of God teaches about . . .

II. THE PEACE OF GOD.

Always the place to start is with the Word of God. There are many passages which link together peace and the Scriptures.

A. The Word of God.

Let us start with . . .

1. Psa. 119:165, "Great peace have they who love thy Law (the Word), and nothing shall offend them."

But how do you "love" the Word of God?

Cf. Psa. 119:97, "Oh, how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day."

Cf. also Psa. 1:2, 3.

Obviously if we are going to meditate we must read. But reading is not meditating unless we

are taking the time to think as we read.

This is the way we learn the great truths of the Word of God -- and knowing these truths is the foundation of our peace.

"And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children" (Isa. 54:13). What have you read today? How much have you gone over it? Have you been careful not to miss a single day this past week? It is only as we give ourselves to reading and meditation that the Word of God will bring us to a place of "great peace" -- and also will keep us from sin. Cf. Psa. 119:11.

2. Isa. 48:18, "Oh, that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! Then had thy peace been like a river, and thy righteousness like the waves of the sea."

What does it mean to hearken to the Lord? Cf. Deut. 4:1,

"Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the ordinances, which I teach you, to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers giveth you."

To hearken is to obey!

The result of the above will be that some great changes will come about in our lives -- not changes that we make, but changes that are made in us and for us. These have to do with . . .

B. The Lord.

Take, for example . . .

1. Heb. 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 (this is obedience), working in you (this is personal change) that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

One of the great reasons we do not have more peace is because we always want the Lord to do things for us, but we do not want Him to do anything in us. Cf. Psa. 37:11,

"But the meek . . . shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace."

Pride is a form of sin, and so you never find the two together, i.e., pride and peace. But you do find it with humility and meekness.

And this brings us to another point having to do with the Lord.

2. Isa. 26:3, 4, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever; for in the Lord God is everlasting strength."

If we are carefully seeking to do all that has been mentioned up to this point, two things will be happening to us:

- 1) We will be paying more attention to the Lord. We will be thinking about Him more. We will be noticing what He is doing and saying.
- 2) We will be trusting Him more. What we do will grow less important and what He does will be our great delight!

We will be like the Psalmist in Psa. 104:34,
"My meditation of him shall be sweet; I
will be glad in the Lord."

This is peace!

But there is a third great feature we need to be concerned about in "the way of peace." It is . . .

G. PRAYER.

What could be better here than . . . Phil. 4:6, 7,
"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

I start with the Word. This brings me to the Lord.
And then I pray. THE COMBINED RESULT: PEACE!

Have you prayed today? How much have you prayed?
Do you pray every day? How do you pray? Do you
pray the prayers of Scripture -- for wisdom, for
guidance, for protection, for blessing, for peace?

Do you pray for others? Do you pray for your
family? Children, do you pray for your parents?
Could I ask, do you pray for me and the other mem-
bers of the Staff?

What is it that you are worried about tonight? Have
you prayed about it -- remembering the One who is
listening to your prayers?

Concl: I have had a special reason for speaking on this
subject tonight. It is this: WE ARE LIVING IN DAYS
WHEN SERIOUS PROBLEMS ARE TO BE SEEN IN THE LIVES OF THE
LORD'S PEOPLE. MANY ARE FALLING INTO THE HANDS OF THE
ENEMY. SIN SEEMS TO BE LESS SINFUL TO MANY OF US. PEOPLE
CAN SIT UNDER THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD, AND YET BE NEGLECT-
ING IT IN THEIR DAY TO DAY LIVES.

Why?

Perhaps because of our busyness which is always accompanied
with weariness.

The influence of the world with all of its sins has never
been stronger.

But most of all because we do not have the peace that the
Lord wants us to have through the Word
as we see Him
and spend time with Him in prayer.

One of the awful verses in the book of Hebrews for me is
found in 13:17,

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit
yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that
must give account, that they may do it with joy, and
not with grief; for this is unprofitable for you.

Some day I am going to stand before the Lord to give an
account. Then things which may seem so important to us now
will appear very insignificant. And I want to be able to
tell the Lord that I gave myself to the Word and to prayer,
and I want to be able to tell Him that I urged you to do
the same! With the Word and prayer, things fall into their
right place. Without the Word and prayer, nothing is really
right. Begin with me tonight, or continue with me, walking
in "the way of peace."