

The Everlasting Covenant of Peace

Teaching given by Peter Warren at FGPC, March – May 2017

1. Understanding Covenant

Isaiah 54.10

This verse and others (Numbers 25.12; Ezekiel 34.25) tell us that God has made a covenant of peace.

A covenant is a **legally binding** treaty, contract or agreement between two or more parties.

Covenants were made for several reasons, including:

- If a strong tribe/nation lived next to a weaker tribe/nation there would be a danger of the weaker being attacked. The weaker would seek to make a covenant to insure their safety. The weaker is made stronger and the stronger made more stronger.
- Two businessmen entering into a partnership might make a covenant to insure that one would not take advantage over the other.
- If two people love each other and are devoted to each other, they may make a covenant for that love's sake (e.g. marriage) – David & Jonathan

First Mention of Covenant

Genesis 6.18

The first mention of covenant in the Bible is with Noah – God gave Noah instructions for the preparing of the ark because the flood was coming on the earth to destroy it. God made a covenant with Noah for his salvation.

Genesis 9.11-17

God reminds Noah about the covenant. Noah has come out of the ark, God establishes the covenant with him that He would never again destroy the earth by a flood.

- The sign of this covenant was the rainbow set in the cloud.
- The covenant God established was a perpetual covenant, an everlasting covenant.

The Blood-Covenant

Genesis 15.7-10; 17-18

The word *covenant* literally means 'to cut' and in almost all cases requires that a cut is made and blood shed.

We use the term covenant very loosely (to more fully understand what it means we have to add the word blood to it) – Abraham understood that blood had to be shed. The covenant of peace is a blood-covenant.

(vs7-10) The covenant God made with Abraham was a blood covenant. He told Abraham to bring a three year old heifer, a three year old female goat, a three year old ram, a dove and a pigeon. These were cut in two and placed opposite each other, so that the blood mingled between them

(vs17-18) In the evening, when the sun went down, a smoking oven and burning torch passed between the pieces. This was commonly called 'the walk of blood'. God passed between the pieces, He took the walk of blood and cut the terms of the covenant with Abraham.

A sign of covenant – When a covenant was cut there was a sign left on the skin, a scar. This would be visible for all to see that a person was in covenant with another.

- For Abraham the sign of the covenant was circumcision (Genesis 17.9-11), a cut in the foreskin of the flesh.
- For Noah it was the rainbow – the sign in the heavens (Genesis 9.13)
- In marriage, the sign of that covenant is the ring we wear on the finger.
- Today, the sign of a covenant is usually our signature.

Although it doesn't actually use the term covenant, the first real blood-covenant with man was made in the Garden of Eden – God clothed Adam with animal skin. The practice of blood covenants perpetuated to every generation, and now there isn't a primitive people in the world, as far as we know, that have not practised it in some form.

The 'civilized west' has done away with the blood aspect of covenants – we have embraced 'opting-out', 'get-out clauses' and annulments - thus our word cannot be guaranteed or believed, and therefore we have difficulty believing God's Word (because we do not understand, value and fully appreciate blood-covenant).

This is one of the reasons why the African and Indian peoples receive from God so readily because they understand covenant – blood covenants are part of their culture and history.

A covenant, once made, has to be honoured; there can be no breaking of the terms or annulment - the penalty of which is death. So when God promises something through His word, they believe it and receive it (because they understand covenant)

Isaiah 53.5

God's covenant of peace was ratified in blood – the blood of Jesus.

“But He was wounded for our transgressions, *He* was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed”

Jesus said about his death on the cross that it would usher in the new covenant - “this is My blood of the new covenant” Matthew 26.28

Jesus death on the cross was a blood-covenant – a covenant to bring us peace (wholeness, completeness, lacking nothing).

Chastisement – (Hbrw. *musar* – to chasten, chastise (with blows), punish, instruct, discipline, rebuke). It carries the idea of a parent lovingly correcting a child in order to produce good.

Jesus was sinless and did not need chastisement, but He became sin for us and therefore endured the chastening of that sin. Jesus was chastened to procure peace for us. He took the blows so that we could be made healthy and whole (peace)

Colossians 1.20

We have peace through the blood of the cross. The death of Jesus was the cutting of the covenant of peace, blood was spilled.

The Resurrection Secures Our Peace

Romans 4.23-25; 5.1

The resurrection of Jesus secures our justification:

“Who was betrayed and put to death because of our misdeeds and was raised to secure our justification (our acquittal), [*making our account balance and absolving us from all guilt before God*]” (vs 25, Amp)

Having been justified (acquitted) we enter into the covenant of peace (v1)

Hebrews 13.20-21

God of peace who raised Jesus from the grave, will make us whole and complete (peace) – through the blood of Jesus (blood-covenant)

An Everlasting Covenant

Ezekiel 37.26

This covenant of peace did not end in the Old Testament, or die out with the apostles. It is an everlasting covenant.

Peace (shalom - wholeness, completeness, well being, happiness, prosperity, health and forgiveness – lacking nothing) is still available to us today.

Covenant is parallel or equivalent with the Hebrew words for “word”, “statute”, “precepts”, testimony” and “law”.

We have the Old and New Covenant, written down in a book (Exodus 27.4-7). When Moses wrote down the words of the covenant, he sprinkled it with blood.

Psalms 89.34

God cannot break His word. He will not break the covenant, He will not change or alter the words that have been spoken.

Isaiah says that even though the mountains and hills shall depart, even though all of hell itself is unleashed – we have a covenant of peace that is everlasting (Isaiah 54.10).

Psalms 105.8

God remembers the covenant He made forever, for all time. We have the promise that God's word, His covenant, stands forever, it is an everlasting covenant of peace (Isaiah 40.8, 1 Peter 1.23-25)

2. Keeping Our Minds Stayed on the Lord

Isaiah 54.10

“For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, But My kindness shall not depart from you, Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed,” Says the LORD, who has mercy on you.”

Last week we saw that God has promised to give us an everlasting covenant of peace. In our study we found out exactly what it meant to be under a covenant:

- there was protection and safety
- there was provision
- there was association
- there was relationship – marriage between tribes

We have a covenant of peace – this gives us safety and protection, under our covenant there is provision, there is also relationship and association.

But what is this covenant of peace? What is peace?

The word used in this verse is *shalom*.

shalom – not just rest, tranquillity or cessation of war and violence – shalom literally means 'to be safe, well, happy, healthy, prosperous. To make good, full, complete and whole'
wholeness (dictionary def) – lacking nothing, nothing broken or missing.

So we have a covenant with God which is an everlasting covenant for our wholeness, our completeness – to be in the place where nothing is lacking, nothing missing or broken.

One of the things we noted about covenant was that there were conditions – if you do something, then I will do something

God's part is to keep us in peace – there are things that we have to do:

- believe - we enter into the covenant through faith, and we partake of the benefits of that covenant through faith
- maintain that faith - through prayer, study of the word, fellowship with God and our brethren

Isaiah 26.3

“You will keep *him* in perfect peace, *Whose mind is stayed on You*, Because he trusts in You”

You will keep - the words in the original Hebrew literally mean to guard, protect, maintain or conceal

perfect peace - shalom shalom

The promise of God is that we will be kept, guarded and maintained in perfect peace if our mind is stayed on God.

(Amp) - "You will guard him and keep him in perfect and constant peace whose mind [*both its inclination and its character*] is stayed on You, because he commits himself to You, leans on You, and hopes confidently in You"

What Does It Mean to have Our Minds Stayed on Him?

Stayed – 'to lean or lay upon or against; rest on; support or brace oneself; to sustain, refresh or revive; to be established, stand fast'

(NIV) - "You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you"

(NLT) - "You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, whose thoughts are fixed on you"

(ISV) - "You will keep perfectly peaceful the one whose mind remains focused on you, because he remains in you"

(BBE) - "The man whose heart is unmoved you will keep in peace, because his hope is in you"

(CEV) - "The LORD gives perfect peace to those whose faith is firm"

(NCV) - "You, Lord, give true peace to those who depend on you, because they trust You"

Ephesians 4.23

["and be renewed in the spirit of your mind"](#)

Our minds are not automatically stayed on God. Our minds wander and think on many things so we must be renewed in the spirit of our mind so that it is stayed on Him.

Having our minds renewed brings a transformation in our lives.

Romans 12.2

Paul urges us not to conform to the world or it's system but rather to be transformed – we do that by 'training' our mind in the word of God.

Exodus 33.11

["So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle."](#)

On Sunday I read from this chapter and noted a few things about Joshua

- He was Moses' assistant, a 'minister in training'.
- He did not leave the tabernacle even when Moses returned to the camp. Joshua enjoyed the presence of God, He valued his time in God's presence. He was training his mind in the word of God. This was part of what qualified him to be leader of God's people after the death of Moses.

- He had an excellent spirit within him – this was noted when he returned with Caleb from spying out the Promised Land (Numbers 14.24, Numbers 27.18, Deuteronomy 34.9). Where did he get this excellence of spirit – it was formed in him in the presence of God.

Joshua 1.8

After the death of Moses, Joshua assumes leadership of the people of God. God tells Joshua to keep the Word of God in His mouth and before His eyes.

He tells him to meditate on it day and night.

- Bible meditation is not the same as that of eastern religions - It is not an emptying of the mind.
- Bible meditation is to 'repeat over and over, ponder, mutter, rehearse by speaking'

You cannot think on something and speak something differently at the same time, however you can speak and think the same things at the same time.

If we keep our minds stayed on the Word of God it will make our way prosperous and we will enjoy good success – that's the peace of God at work.

Psalms 16.7-11

“...In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” (v11)

David was another man who valued being in the presence of God. He declares that all the fullness of joy can be found in the presence of God

His younger years were spent meditating on the things of God. I believe he spent his time praying, seeking God, worshipping and meditating while he was watching over the sheep.

That is why he was so wise and full of the spirit of God when he came to face Goliath. David knew about the covenant of peace.

1 Samuel 17.36

“Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God.” - ‘this uncircumcised Philistine’ - he doesn't have a covenant.

- Circumcision was the sign of the covenant. Goliath may have been big, he may have been strong, he may have been a man of war from his youth but he didn't have a covenant with God – and David did, and he knew it.
- With that spirit, born out of the presence of God, Goliath had no alternative, he was going down. David made a claim on his inheritance under the covenant – peace had to reign.

The sons of Korah also enjoyed time in the presence of God - they could write in **Psalm 84.10**, “For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.” - one day in your presence is better than a thousand others.

Colossians 3.1-2

“... Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth”

Fix, establish and set your mind on the things of God, His Word, His purpose and call for you – this is keeping our mind stayed on Him.

Setting our minds, thoughts and affections on above it lifts our eyes and thoughts from off:

- the temporal things of the earth
- the problems and needs
- the difficult situations we face on earth

“too heavenly minded to be any earthly good” - I challenge this statement

Philippians 4.6-7

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

Paul urges us to bring our requests, petitions to God. Not to focus on them but to turn them over to God in an act of thanksgiving. When we lift our eyes to Him as the source of our provision, the Bible says that peace would guard our hearts and minds.

Keeping our minds stayed on Him will keep us in perfect peace – we will enjoy the fullness of *shalom* – nothing lacking, nothing missing, nothing broken.

3. A Covenant of Safety and Protection

Isaiah 54.10

“For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, But My kindness shall not depart from you, Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed,” Says the LORD, who has mercy on you.”

In this series so far we have seen that God's Covenant of Peace is a Blood-Covenant, paid for with the blood of Jesus. This covenant cannot be broken or annulled, the Bible calls it an Everlasting Covenant.

Last week we touched on the meaning of this word peace. The Hebrew word *shalom* has a number of various meanings, but the main context of *shalom* is that of completeness and wholeness – nothing lacking. If we break down *shalom* into it's variant meanings we see that it includes and encompasses:

- safety & protection
- soundness of mind
- forgiveness of sin
- man's welfare and well-being
- health & healing
- prosperity
- contentment
- fullness

- relationships and friendships – in particular covenant relationship with God
- rest
- peace – absence of strife, rest from war
- restoration
- recompense & reward

The Greek counterpart of shalom is *eirene*; whilst it also means to be at peace, the main emphasis of *eirene* in the New Testament is concerned with our relationship with God. However it also encompasses man's safety, security, prosperity and felicity [OED – intense happiness, joy].

Over the next few weeks we are going to look at some of these definitions and see from the Scriptures that God has made a covenant for our wholeness – our total well-being, spirit, soul and body.

To begin with we shall look at how the Covenant of Peace ensures our safety and protection.

A covenant was often cut between nations to ensure the protection of the weaker. In the Scriptures we see this happen on several occasions.

Joshua 9.1-15

(v2) Joshua was beginning to conquer the land. Jericho had fallen, so had Ai. News of this spread to the nations around. Fearful that they would lose their lands to Joshua, they conspired with one another to come and attack Joshua.

(v3-14) Certain men of Gibeon acted craftily and pretended to be ambassadors from a far country and came to Joshua to make a covenant with him.

(v15) So Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant to let them live. This peace was their protection and safety from the avenging armies of Israel.

(v18) The children of Israel did not attack them because of their covenant of peace they had made with Joshua.

In Joshua 10, the king of Jerusalem seeks help from the surrounding kings to attack Gibeon because of their treaty with Joshua. They march on the city.

The Gibeonites call on Joshua to fulfil his covenant role. Joshua attacks and protects the inhabitants of Gibeon. (Joshua 10.7-11)

Judges 18.6

Here is an account where some men of Dan were seeking a place to settle. Five of them enter Micah's house and take his idol. When the priest saw what was happening, they asked him to inquire of the Lord

(vs6) Go in peace (shalom). The presence of the Lord be with you on your way.

“The LORD is taking care of you on this trip” (TEV)

“Go in peace. The way in which you go is before (under the eye of) the Lord” (AMP)

(vs27-29) The people of Laish had “no ties with anyone”. They were without a covenant and because of which there was no deliverer to protect them.

Job 5.23-24

In the midst of his troubles, Job is told to seek God's help. Eliphaz says to him that he has a covenant and that he shall be at peace. Because of the covenant nothing can touch his dwelling.

“For you will be in agreement with the stones of the earth, and the beasts of the field will be at peace with you. And you will be certain that your tent is at peace, and after looking over your property you will see that nothing is gone” (BBE)

(vs24) *“Your home will be secure, and your sheep will be safe” (CEV)*

David also recalls the protection that comes from the Covenant of Peace

Psalm 4.8 - *“When I lie down, I go to sleep in peace; you alone, O LORD, keep me perfectly safe” (TEV)*

“I fall asleep in peace the moment I lie down because you alone, O LORD, enable me to live securely” (GW)

Psalm 55.18 - *“He redeems my soul in safety from the battle that I wage, for many are arrayed against me” (ESV)*

“He has taken my soul away from the attack which was made against me, and given it peace” (BBE)

Psalm 91 is a psalm of protection and deliverance, it tells how God protects and keeps those who are under the covenant of peace safe and secure.

Shadow – shade, covering, shelter.

In Psalm 17.8 David uses the term 'hide me under the shadow of your wings' – bring me into your protective care.

David begins this psalm by declaring that the Lord is a refuge and fortress. God is a refuge, He is a Rock, a Fortress – we can run to Him and be safe. That's what the Covenant of Peace affords.

Isaiah 59.19-21

“...When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him.... (21) ‘As for Me’ says the Lord ‘this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you.....”

When the enemy comes in – the Spirit of God lifts up the standard against him because we have the Spirit of God with us – part of the covenant of protection.

Lift up a standard.. military term meaning to go to war. The implication of this statement is that the Spirit will cause the enemy to take flight, flee, be driven away. In other words He will come to our aid in our moment of attack

When the enemy comes – the Spirit of God, like the waters of a flood, rises up against him.

Isaiah 48.18

“Oh, that you had heeded My commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea”

Philippians 4.7

Let's finish where we left off last week - The apostle Paul also encouraged the church at Philippi when they were facing needs, problems and difficulties of their own. He told them not to be anxious but to bring their needs to God in prayer. Then he went on to say that the peace of God would protect and guard their hearts and minds.

Guard – to set a garrison, to set watch, to hem in, protect.

Peace will bring safety and protection from the onslaught of anxiety and the pressures of daily needs.

The Covenant of Peace is your Covenant of Protection.

4. A Covenant of Harmony

Isaiah 54.10

“For the mountains shall depart And the hills be removed, But My kindness shall not depart from you, Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed,” Says the LORD, who has mercy on you.”

In this series of teaching we have already discovered that peace (*shalom*) has a root meaning of 'being complete and whole'.

If you look up the word *shalom* in a good Hebrew lexicon (Strong's #7965, #7999 (root)) * you will see that it really encompasses the whole welfare and well-being of man, which includes:

- his safety and protection
- his health and healing
- his prosperity
- his soundness of mind
- his contentment and happiness
- fullness of life, longevity
- his relationships with others and particularly with God

In this session we are going to see that this Covenant of Peace that God has given us is a Covenant of Harmony – God's peace enables us to live in harmony with others and more importantly our relationship with God.

First, let's look at our relationship with God.

- In the beginning man was created in God's image and likeness.

- He had a close relationship with God. He walked with God
- Sin separated man and God
- God's plan of salvation had to deal with sin, but God had another prize on His mind – the reconciliation of that relationship between God and man.

In Isaiah 53.5 we read that Jesus took the 'chastisement for our peace'. Jesus died so that we could have peace.

Romans 5.1, 6-10

- (v1) "having been justified... we have peace with God"

justified – acquitted of all charges.

The blood sacrifice made by Jesus fully acquitted us of all charges – cleared on all counts that were against us - Colossians 2.9-15

We are justified by faith – *if we believe* (see Romans 4.23-25). Jesus died and rose again for our justification.

Therefore, Paul writes, seeing we have been justified by faith, we have **peace** with God – we are recipients of that peace.

The word translated peace in this verse is *eirene* (Strong's #1515)* – peace/harmony between two individuals, and also security, safety and prosperity (because peace and harmony make and keep things safe and prosperous) - whilst it also means to be at peace, the main emphasis of *eirene* in the New Testament is concerned with our relationship with God (being joined to Him). The most probable root is *eiro* meaning 'to join'*

- (vs 6-10) As we look further into the chapter we see that God's purpose in sending Jesus to be our Saviour was not just our justification but also our reconciliation.

*reconciled** – to exchange (as coins for others of equivalent value), receive/return into favour.

We are reconciled to God – not the other way around, God did not need to be restored to us, we needed to be restored to Him (***illustration of the Bringing Britain Back to God leaflet***)

But this reconciliation involved God moving towards man – He sent Jesus to die for us while we were still sinners (v8). He moved towards us; He left the glory of Heaven and stepped down into our realm; He became a man so that He could die for us and pay the penalty of sin. All this was done that we might have peace.

This Covenant of Peace requires us to move towards others in reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5.14-18

(v14-15) He died for us that we might live for Him – relationship

(v16-17) We are no longer the same, we are no longer in the flesh, but all things have been made new. Grace and peace have been at work in us transforming us.

(v18) He has reconciled us and given us the ministry of reconciliation. We should move towards others to bring them into peace.

“But all things are from God, Who through Jesus Christ reconciled us to Himself [received us into favour, brought us into harmony with Himself] and gave to us the ministry of reconciliation [that by word and deed we might aim to bring others into harmony with Him]” (Amplified)

This shows us that the Covenant of Peace is not only at work in us to bring us into harmony with God but also with one another

We cannot win others for Jesus if we do not live in peace and harmony with them – all that achieves is alienation. Many of today’s evangelistic efforts involve some form of bridge-building/social relationship initiatives e.g. over a meal.

Jesus taught us to live side by side in peace/harmony with one another. As with everything, this Covenant works by love. Love is the foundation of it.

We love others, no matter what their background, race, or culture – that's the extension of the Covenant of Peace.

Paul writes, in **Galatians 3.28** that we are all one in Christ. We do not make exceptions depending on a persons ethnicity or gender – we are all one. We are to live in peace with them.

Romans 12.18-21

Writing to the Christians living in Rome, he put it like this:

“If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men” (v18)

Paul quotes the Proverbs (25.21-22) to show that simple acts of love and kindness cultivate peace.

Living in peace with one another was the expected way for the child of God. The Romans were known for their harshness and abruptness, but Paul challenged them to be at peace.

1 Thessalonians 5.13 – Paul writes to them *'be at peace among yourselves'*

Ephesians 4.3 – he writes that we should *“endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”*

Colossians 3.12-15

There may be complaints and frictions from time to time, but here we are told to “[let the peace of God rule](#)”. This peace restrains anger, wrath and revenge, and moderates heated spirits. This peace is the ruler, the umpire of our lives.

This metaphor is taken from the Olympic games where the umpire kept the peace and determined who the victor was and who had won the crown. In this verse Paul states that we must let peace be the umpire in all our dealings with others.

We may feel we are in the right, or deserve to be heard – it does not matter how we feel, we should cultivate peace, let peace rule.

However fierce the storm may rage, we should let peace rule.

We have seen here that the Covenant of Peace is a covenant of harmony with God and with others.

*Lexical resources:

Strongs Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries / Brown Driver Brigg's Hebrew Definitions / Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words / Thayer's Greek Definitions

5. A Covenant of Soundness of Mind

Isaiah 54.10

We have been seeing in this series that when God cut His Covenant of Peace it was an everlasting covenant. Our text verse tells us:

[“For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of peace be removed..”](#)

His covenant of peace shall never be removed. It is an everlasting covenant (Ezekiel 37.26) – that means it lasts forever, it is still in force today. We can still appropriate all that this covenant encompasses by faith.

We began a few weeks ago looking at shalom in the light of its' meaning the whole well-being and welfare of man. So far we have seen that *shalom* includes our safety & protection, and last week, harmony in regards to our relationships (i) with God and (ii) towards others. But today we shall direct our thoughts towards soundness, another one of the variant meanings of shalom.

By soundness I mean, soundness of heart and mind, clarity of thought

1 Corinthians 14.33

[“For God is not *the author* of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.”](#)

- God is not a God of confusion but of peace (shalom).
- The Greek word (*akatastasia* #181*) means “instability, disorder and confusion”

- God does not bring instability, He is not the author of it. God is the author of peace – soundness of mind and soundness of heart.
- He is not the author of disorder, He is not the author of confusion - He is our peace, our *shalom*, our soundness.

John 14.27

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

- Jesus speaks these words to His disciples just hours before He is arrested
- The disciples are about to go through their greatest trial – something they are not expecting is going to shake the foundation of their faith.
- Jesus bequeaths the best thing to them for their hour of need – peace, *shalom*, soundness of heart and mind.
- The world cannot offer this peace, it cannot give this soundness – what the world offers is shallow and falls far short. The world's peace is very transient and unstable (the very opposite of *shalom*)
- “Let not your heart be troubled – let it not be afraid” - let not your heart be agitated, troubled or confused by fear. Receive the soundness of heart and mind that comes through *shalom*.

Mark 5.1-15

- In this chapter we read of a man whose life consisted of instability, confusion and disorder.
- He spent his life in the tombs; every time he was bound by chains he would break the shackles; He would cut himself with knives
- His heart was in a state of confusion and disorder
- Just one word from Jesus and the peace of God floods his heart and mind and set him free

“Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one *who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind*. And they were afraid” (v15)

The peace of God brought soundness of mind to the demon possessed man.

Philippians 4.6-7

Over the last few weeks we have finished with these verses.

In his teaching, the Apostle Paul writes that our needs and cares (those things that cause our hearts to be troubled) should be made known to the Lord in prayer.

Attached to this is a great promise –

“and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”

surpasses – to be higher, superior, better; to transcend

my paraphrase:

“the peace (shalom) of God which is higher and superior than all of our understanding (the mind and intellect which can be troubled by our needs) – that peace will guard and garrison your hearts and minds – that peace will give you soundness.”

The Covenant of Peace is a covenant of soundness of mind and clarity of thought

6. A Covenant of Health and Healing

Isaiah 54.10

“For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of peace be removed..”

Let me remind you what we have been saying these last few weeks about the Covenant of Peace

- It is a covenant cut in blood – Jesus blood ratified the covenant.
- It is an everlasting covenant. It shall never be removed, that means it lasts forever, it is still in force today.

We began a few weeks ago looking at shalom in the light of its' meaning the whole well-being and welfare of man. So far we have seen that *shalom* includes:

- our safety & protection
- harmony in regards to our relationships (i) with God and (ii) towards others
- soundness and clarity of mind.

Today we are going to look at shalom – our covenant of health & healing

Isaiah 53.5

In Isaiah we read that Jesus took the chastisement for our peace. Jesus died so that we could have peace. This same verse puts it quite clearly

“.. the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed”

It is by His stripes, by His wounds that we receive healing.

In the previous verse (v4) we read:

“Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows..”

There are two important words we need to understand in this verse, they are *griefs* and *sorrows*.

griefs – (Heb. *choliy* #2483); literally means maladies, sicknesses, diseases, anxieties, weaknesses and griefs. BDB* gives us a one word definition – sickness

sorrows – (Heb. *makob* #4341); literally means anguish, affliction and pain (physical and mental).

*(BDB – Brown, Driver & Briggs Hebrew Lexicon)

When Jesus went to the cross he took our sicknesses, diseases and our pains. This word translated *borne* can alternatively mean 'accept, take upon, carry away'.

What we have here is the image of Jesus taking our sin upon Himself, accepting our sicknesses and pains as well, and carrying them far away from us.

If He took them to give us peace, then health and healing must form part of the Covenant of Peace.

Psalm 29.11

“The Lord will give strength to His people; The Lord will bless His people with peace”

Them that are afflicted and without strength – He blesses with peace.

Isaiah 40.29

“He gives power to the weak (faint and fatigued), and to those who have no might He increases strength”

The Lord gives His *shalom* to the weak and sick, weary and fatigued and rejuvenates them, restores them and blesses them with peace.

Jeremiah 30.12-17

Jerusalem was suffering tough times, things were getting worse and worse.

- Her people were in exile.
- There were no medicines for healing
- There were those with 'incurable' diseases

But God promises (v17) “I will restore health to you, and heal you of your wounds”

In **Jeremiah 31.25**, God says, “For I have satiated (*fully satisfied, filled to the full*) the weary soul, I have replenished every sorrowful soul”

Jeremiah 33.3-6

Although these verses are addressed to Jerusalem, it typifies the church, you and me.

- God invites us to call on Him.
- He promises that He will answer us
- He will show us great and mighty things

(vs6) I will bring it (Jerusalem) health and healing, I will heal them and reveal to them the abundance (overflow) of peace.

Even though the situation was bad, people had many diseases and afflictions, there was no medicine for healing – yet God says I will give an abundance of peace that brings health and healing.

Mark 5.34

The woman with a flow of blood, pressed through and touched Jesus – (she called on the Lord)

Her faith drew on the virtue that was in Him and she was healed of her affliction.

“Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction”

Every one that came to Jesus for healing were recipients of peace. Jesus came preaching peace -

Luke 4.18-19

The message Jesus was anointed to preach is recorded in this verse

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable Year of the Lord”

God sent Jesus (the Prince of Peace – Isaiah 9.6) to preach to Israel the message of peace.

Ephesians 2.17

“And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near”

Isaiah 57.19

“I create the fruit of the lips: Peace, peace to *him who is far off* and to *him who is near*,” Says the LORD, “And I will heal him.”

– proclaiming peace to those who are afar off – I will HEAL them.

As He went about preaching the good news of peace, He healed all those who were oppressed by the devil (Acts 10.36,38)

Health and healing are part of our Covenant of Peace

7. A Covenant of Prosperity

We began a few weeks ago looking at shalom in the light of its' meaning the whole well-being and welfare of man. So far we have seen that *shalom* includes:

- our safety & protection
- harmony in regards to our relationships (i) with God and (ii) towards others
- soundness and clarity of mind.
- health and healing

Today we are going to look at shalom – our covenant of prosperity

Ezekiel 37.26

“Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore.”

Ezekiel calls the covenant of peace an everlasting covenant – it will not be removed (**Isaiah 54.10**), it is still active and in force today. We can appropriate all that this covenant encompasses by faith.

Jeremiah 29.11

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope”

God's thoughts toward us are thoughts of peace (shalom). The word shalom in the context of this verse is understood to be prosperity and blessing - the welfare and well-being of man.

“For I know the plans I have for you' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (NIV)

“I alone know my purpose for you, says the Lord: prosperity and not misfortune, and a long line of children after you” (NEB)

“For I keep in mind my purpose for you, a purpose of weal, not of woe, to let you have hope for the future” (Moffatt)
weal – prosperity and welfare, weal-th

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end” (AV)

(1) the future that God expects and longs for you, and (2) completion of your expectation.

God's thoughts toward us are thoughts of prospering us in all areas. Not the type of prosperity that will harm us. Prosperity is not just about money – money can destroy a person.

Look at how many people have gained huge amounts of money (through gambling, inheritance etc) and have said that it destroyed them – because they don't know how to handle money. Mishandled prosperity destroys, the Bible gives warning about that.

Proverbs 1.32 “For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.” (AV)

- The Hebrew word (*shalvah* #7951) means ‘abundance, prosperity, security, ease’
- Prosperity in the hand of a fool will destroy him – he doesn't know how to handle or use money.

1 Timothy 6.9-10 “But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of evil*, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

- Money and prosperity in itself is not harmful – it is a blessing
- However, mishandled prosperity and the love of it bring destruction
- This verse, which is often misquoted, says the **love of money is a root** of all kinds of evil.
- vs6-8 talk about being content with what you have – I don't believe this means that you should be happy that you are in a state of need and destitute, but they you enjoy the prosperity that God gives and not desiring more and more.

Let me give you a Biblical definition of true prosperity - **2 Corinthians 9.8-11**

“And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may have an abundance for every good work. (9) As it is

written: "HE HAS DISPERSED ABROAD, HE HAS GIVEN TO THE POOR; HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ENDURES FOREVER." (10) Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, (11) while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God."

true prosperity is -

- *having all sufficiency in all things* – you have your needs met
- *may have an abundance for every good work...* - you have more than you need so that you can be a blessing to somebody else.
- 'us 2 that'll do' or 'us 4 and no more' attitude is not in the spirit of Christ – (11) *'you are enriched in everything for all liberality'*

We are looking at the covenant of peace as a covenant of prosperity.

Judges 19.16-21

- This passage tells of a traveller that sought lodgings for the night in Gibeah
- No one would take him in.
- An old man met him and provided for all his needs (v20) "And the old man said, 'Peace *be* with you! However, *let* all your needs *be* my responsibility; only do not spend the night in the open square.'"

Lamentations 3.17

The prophet laments that at the removal of peace, there is no prosperity - "You have moved my soul far from peace; I have forgotten prosperity"

There are other verses in the Old Testament where the word *shalom* is translated as prosperity:

Psalm 35.27 – "Let them shout for joy and be glad, Who favor my righteous cause; And let them say continually, "Let the LORD be magnified, Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.""

God takes pleasure in prospering His children

Jeremiah 33.9 – "Then it shall be to Me a name of joy, a praise, and an honour before all nations of the earth, who shall hear all the good that I do to them; they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and all the prosperity that I provide for it."

God is the one who gives prosperity – since prosperity is from God why are so many Christians against it?

God's Covenant of Peace is a covenant of prosperity. The Jewish people are renowned for their wealth and business acumen, they know God prospers His people, they know the covenant of peace.

Exodus 3.15-22,

- When God brought His people up out of Egypt, He brought them up in prosperity. They were slaves, serving the Pharaoh, struggling to survive, lacking in every area but God blessed them with abundance.

- Where do you think all the gold, silver, precious cloth etc. came from that was used in the wilderness to make the golden calf, or brought for the offerings for the construction of the Tabernacle? – it came from Egypt, the prosperity of God, the Covenant of Peace upon them.
- God's thoughts toward them were thoughts of peace and prosperity – to bring them out of bondage, out of poverty into a land that flowed with milk and honey, a land of abundance.

Poverty is not a blessing it is a curse. Poverty is a bondage, it keeps you oppressed and bound.

We don't have to fear prosperity – it is the blessing and favour of God.

- Prosperity is part of the covenant of peace
- In just a few hours the Covenant of Peace can take you from poverty to the most prosperous in the land. (look at Joseph – from prison to Prime Minister in one morning)
- It will take you from the land of not enough into the land of more than enough.

8. A Covenant of Contentment and Rest

We began a few weeks ago looking at shalom in the light of its' meaning the whole well-being and welfare of man. So far we have seen that *shalom* includes:

- our safety & protection
- harmony in regards to our relationships (i) with God and (ii) towards others
- soundness and clarity of mind.
- health and healing
- prosperity

Today we are going to look at shalom – our covenant of contentment, happiness and satisfaction and rest.

Isaiah states in Isaiah 54.10

“For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of peace be removed' says the Lord, who has mercy on you”

This verse is describing some major geological events that would change the scenery of the earth.

- It is describing some turbulent times – times of unrest and instability – times of confusion – times when the storm is raging and it looks like we shall sink
- Even though we can be faced with such situations and circumstances, we can know the covenant of peace and the contentment and rest that it affords us.

Mark 4.35-41

- Jesus is in the boat with his disciples after a full-day's teaching
- As they cross the lake Jesus falls asleep in the stern

- a great windstorm arose, the waves beat into the boat and began to fill it
- Jesus is woken by the disciples – 'don't you care that we are perishing' – don't you care we are in trouble.
- Jesus rebukes the winds and speaks peace to the sea
- there was a great calm – not just of the weather conditions, but also among the disciples.

“... and there was [*immediately*] a great calm (a perfect peacefulness)” (vs 39, Amp)

The peace of God brought a contentment upon a troubled situation

John 14.27

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

- Jesus speaks these words to His disciples just hours before He is arrested
- The disciples are about to go through their greatest trial – something they are not expecting is going to shake the foundation of their faith.
- Jesus bequeaths the best thing to them for their hour of need – peace, *shalom*
- The world cannot offer this peace, it cannot give this contentment
- The world's peace is very transient – governed by other factors eg, feelings, certain conditions
- “Let not your heart be troubled – let it not be afraid” - let not your heart be agitated, troubled or confused by fear or uncertainty. We can live our lives in total contentment, rest and satisfaction because of the covenant of peace.
- You can live at peace in the midst of a storm

Philippians 4.11 Paul could say “...I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content”

“... for I have learned how to be content (satisfied to the point where I am not disturbed or disquieted) in whatever state I am. I know how to be abased and live humbly in straitened circumstances, and I know also how to enjoy plenty and live in abundance. I have learned in any and all circumstances the secret of facing every situation, whether well-fed or going hungry, having a sufficiency and enough to spare or going without and being in want” (vs 11-12, Amp)

Paul says that he has learned the secret of facing every situation. Paul had learned the secret of the covenant of peace – that was his teaching a few verses earlier (vs 6-7)

- be anxious for nothing
- let your requests be made known to God
- rest – knowing that the peace of God will guard your hearts and minds

David had learned the same secret:

Psalm 4. 6-8

- many will say 'who will show us any good' – 'O that we might see some good' (Amp) – if only things would change – when are things going to get better?
- 'you have put gladness in my heart' - “But the joy that you have given me is more than they will ever have with all their grain and wine” (TEV). gladness – joy that comes as a result of something.

- 'I will lie down in peace and sleep' - I am contented, I am in peace – David didn't lose any sleep, he rested – he had learned the secret of the covenant of peace

Psalm 23. 1-4

- verses 1-3 describe a man who is contented and satisfied, a man at peace
- 'though I walk through the valley' – though turbulent times may come, 'I will fear no evil' - I am still at peace – 'You are with me' - the Prince of Peace is in the vessel
- 'your rod and staff, they comfort me' – shepherds rod and staff protected (*rod*) and guided (*staff*) the sheep - the peace of God guards and garrisons the heart - we are lead by the still waters of peace

Proverbs 19.23

"The fear of the LORD leads to life, And he who has it will abide in satisfaction; He will not be visited with evil."

- fear of the Lord – a reverence, respect; devotion, worship of God
- those who fear God abide in satisfaction
- life – (plural) – resurrection and eternal life

"The fear of the Lord leads to life: Then one rests content, untouched by trouble" (NIV)

'Godliness (fear of the Lord) with contentment is great gain' (1 Timothy 6.6)

True peace (contentment, rest and satisfaction) comes from knowing and fearing God.

Genesis 17.1

"When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless"

blameless (Heb #8549) – perfect, complete, whole, entire, sound - *the definitions of peace*

He is the All-Sufficient One (El-Shaddai) – He will take care of everything

- we don't need to fret or be anxious
- we don't need to worry or fear
- we can be calm and at rest in the midst of troubled circumstances
- He is the Prince of Peace.

Those who fear God, rest and abide in full contentment – they have learned the secret of the covenant of peace.

9. A Covenant of Fullness and Longevity

Isaiah 54.10

Over the last few months we have been going through this series on the Covenant of Peace. We have been basing this series of studies on the meanings of the word *shalom*, translated as peace in our verse and through the Old Testament.

Through these studies we have seen that the Covenant of Peace is a covenant of blessing and life prosperity including health and healing, material prosperity, soundness and clarity of mind, safety and protection, rest and contentment in the midst of life's trials and storms.

One important thing we saw was that this Covenant of Peace is an everlasting covenant, that means that it is still in force today – we can appropriate the benefits of the covenant today. We can lay claim to the benefits of health and healing, material prosperity, soundness of mind and so on.

Another important thing about this Covenant is that it is a blood-covenant – it was ratified with the blood of Jesus. Jesus took the chastisement so that we could have peace – he took the stripes, the curse of sin, death and hell so that we could have a prosperous life living in the benefits of this covenant. We can enter into that covenant through faith in the finished work of Calvary.

Today we are going to look at just one more of those meanings: *shalom* is fullness.

We can understand fullness to mean a variety of things. It can mean:

- to fill up or make full
- abundance
- to be satisfied
- perfect or make whole
- completed or finished

Another understanding of fullness is to do with time. This word is often used in the Bible in relation to time. For example:

“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law” Galatians 4.4

“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place” Acts 2.1

“And seven days were fulfilled, after that the LORD had smitten the river.” Exodus 7.25 (KJV)

And this is our focus for this study. As we go through the Scriptures we are going to see that the Covenant of Peace is a covenant that fills our life with time – or we could put it another way: The Covenant of Peace is a covenant of fullness and longevity of life.

Psalm 91.11-14

“With long life I will satisfy him, And show him My salvation.” (v16)

God promises long life to the one who has set his heart on God (v14). God will satisfy him with a long life and show him His salvation -

“For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways.” (v11)

He gives His angels charge of him to protect him, to keep him and give him a life that is full of days.

It is not just about living long, but living a full life.

We use the terminology '*live life to the full*' this means that we live our lives with meaning and purpose. Especially where the kingdom of God is concerned.

The Bible tells us to “*redeem the time because the days are evil*” (**Ephesians 5.16**). In these last days we are to live our lives, making the most of every opportunity to live purposefully and meaningfully for the Lord. That is living a full life – knowing that you've accomplished what God purposed for you.

Some people in the Bible lived long lives, but we don't know much about them apart from the very little that the Bible tells us, eg Methuselah (969 years). Others lived much shorter lives but the Bible records that they lived to a good old age and full of days. They lived out the purpose of God for their life.

Abraham – died at 175 years

Genesis 15.15

“*Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age*”

- What a beautiful statement – “*you shall go to your fathers in peace.. at a good old age*”

God promises Abraham that His covenant of peace would bring him a full life. He would die at a good old age, he would go in peace.

Genesis 25.8

“*Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people*”

- Abraham breathed his last, he died at a good old age – full of years.
- Abraham, the man of faith, who lived out God's purpose for him and became the father of many nations.

David – died at 70 years

1 Chronicles 29.28

“*So he died in a good old age, full of days and riches and honor; and Solomon his son reigned in his place*”

- David died in a good old age, full of days. Israel's greatest king, a man after God's own heart.
- Yes he had his faults and failings but he accomplished all that God had purposed for him.

Gideon – no record of his age

Judges 8.32

“*Now Gideon the son of Joash died at a good old age, and was buried in the tomb of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.*”

- Gideon died in a good old age. Another mighty warrior of God, a mighty man of valour who defeated the Midianites.
- A man who served the purpose of God in his generation and brought peace to the land for forty years.

Jehoiada – died 130 years

2 Chronicles 24.15

“But Jehoiada grew old and was full of days, and he died; *he was one hundred and thirty years old when he died*”

- Jehoiada died and was full of days. A man that served God as High Priest, who fulfilled his purpose for God.
- His quick thinking and presence of mind spared the young child-king Joash from massacre.
- He was the longest living man since the days of Moses, by this time very few lived to such a great age.

Simeon – no record of age

Luke 2.29

““Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word;”

- Waiting in Jerusalem for the appearing of the promised Messiah was this old man Simeon. A prophet of God who had stood firm on the Word of God through a long time in Israel's history.
- Now that he had seen the Messiah he could die in peace. He had fulfilled his purpose, he had kept the spirit of prophecy alive for Israel.

Proverbs 3.1-2

“My son, do not forget my law, But let your heart keep my commands; For length of days and long life, and peace they will add to you.”

- If we keep the Word of God and walk in His ways we will enjoy a full life – The covenant of Peace will give us length of days and long life.

(Amp)

“MY SON, forget not my law or teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments; For length of days and years of a life [*worth living*] and tranquility [*inward and outward and continuing through old age till death*], these shall they add to you”

That's FULLNESS of Life

Job 5.26

“You shall come to the grave at a full age, As a sheaf of grain ripens in its season.”

- Shortly after everything had been taken from Job, one of his friends (Eliphaz) reminds him that he has a covenant and that he shall be at peace.
- He reminds him of some of the benefits of that covenant – you shall come to the grave at a full age, like a sheaf of grain ripens in its season.

You don't take the grain to the threshing floor while it is still green, it needs to ripen and come to fruition. When ripe it droops down ready for picking. - While there is a job to do, God will add length of days to you.

I will not die! - Psalm 118.17

“I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord”

- The psalmist knew what it was like to be surrounded by trouble, with men seeking his life, but he also knew there was a work to do, so he could utter this statement. I will not die, I still have work to do for God.

Philippians 1.21-26

Paul writes here that he had an earnest desire to die and be with the Lord – but he chooses to stay because it was more needful for the church.

John Gill writes in his commentary (Psalm 91.16) *“In this world: the saints live in it as long as they choose to live; and when they come to die, be it when it will, they are, like Abraham, full of years, or satisfied with them”*

God has covenanted shalom to us and that includes a long and full life.

So why do some die early?

There is a lot of nonsense spoken at the time of a person’s death, particularly if that person was young. These may include statements such as -

- God needed another angel
- God wanted to put another star to shine in the sky

A lot of people often say that it was God's timing for them, but what does the Scripture say:

Psalm 31.15

'My times are in Your hand' – does not necessarily mean that the time of our departure is foreordained. It means that our days are ordered by the Lord, we are upheld by Him, He keeps us through the seasons of life.

Ecclesiastes 3.2

“...time to die..” - again, this does not say that our time is fixed, this word is *season* (see vs1). The same word is used in Psalm 1.3.

- We have an enemy that is out to destroy us – **John 10.10**
- Some people live lives that are contrary to the word of God, and die as result – **1 Corinthians 11.27-30, Ecclesiastes 7.17**
- Some are ignorant concerning the word and their authority as believers under the covenant – **Hosea 4.6**
- Some talk themselves into an early death. God takes our confession to be what we believe. **Numbers 14.2-3, 28-29, Psalm 90.9-10**
- Some people may just lose the will to go on.
- Others are just ready to go. Their race is run and the course finished – like Simeon **Luke 2.26-32**. Whenever we die, we should die in faith pleasing the Lord.

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