

Faith Is Action

December 2017 • USPS 184720 • Volume 56 • Number 12



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PEACE-SHALOM

שָׁלוֹם P E A C E

THE PROMISE & THE PRINCIPLE

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"...Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal him" (Isaiah 57:19).

This is one of the great OT prophecies fulfilled in Jesus Christ, Whom this same prophet, Isaiah, identified as *"The Prince of Peace"* (Isa. 9:6). This is confirmed by both Peter and Paul in the NT. On the day of Pentecost (even before the full impact of these words was realized), Peter proclaimed that the gift of the Holy Ghost was given to all who would repent of sin saying,

*"For **the promise** is unto you (his Jewish brethren), and to your children, and to all that are afar off (the Gentiles), even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 3:29).*

Then Paul, looking back to the atoning work of the cross for all mankind, revealed, *"But now in Christ Jesus, Ye who sometimes were afar off (Gentiles) are made nigh by the blood of Christ. **For he is our peace**, who hath made both one... that he might reconcile both unto God... And*

*came and **preached peace** to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh" (Eph. 2:13-17).*

God's **promise** through His Son is *Shalom*! This is a very weighty word in the Hebrew and means far more than a casual "Hello" or "Good Day." In fact, many Jews today still greet one another with, *"Shalom, Shalom."* This pleasing word that we translate *"peace"* in English cannot be understood by this one word definition, as we will see. When Jews greet one another this way, they are speaking for the blessings of Jehovah to be upon one another *both physically and spiritually*.

As the spiritual heirs of Abraham, we have also received the promise of God's *Shalom*, and having believed on Jesus, the Prince and Lord of *Shalom*, we have become the present heirs of His Kingdom of *Shalom*.

The Kingdom of Shalom

"For the kingdom of God is not meat or drink; but righteousness, and

peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Romans 14:17). What Paul is talking about here (Read all of the 13th and 14th chapters of Romans) is that the kingdom we are in is not like the OT kingdom which consisted mainly of feasts and holy days, convocations, and in the letter of the law. But our kingdom is a spiritual kingdom. Instead of the carnal ordinances and feast days of the old Jewish covenant, we have righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. These are the primary conditions of God’s kingdom. When He saved us, He reached into the devil’s kingdom where we were slaves, rescued us out of that kingdom of darkness, and translated us into *the kingdom of His dear Son* (Col. 1:13). The atmosphere and the condition of His kingdom are righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. These are **the principles** that you and I, children of God, should be governed by.

Therefore, we shouldn’t be afraid of satanic power, because the only people who are in the kingdom of God that we are in, are righteous people. I don’t have to worry about anyone sneaking up on me or robbing me or murdering me, because like David said in the 23rd Psalm, *“only goodness and mercy follow me.”* We’re living in this kingdom where there are only righteous ones; where there is nothing to fear; therefore, we are to have the attitude of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Nothing on the outside can take this righteousness or peace God has given

us, or the joy of the Holy Ghost. These are not affected by outside circumstances.

Our English word *peace* doesn’t quite translate the true meaning of the Greek **EIRENE** or the Hebrew **SHALOM**. The English translation gives us a negative understanding, meaning “no hostilities,” or “the absence of war.” But this is not the biblical meaning of **EIRENE** or **SHALOM**. It is possible to have absence of war but still not have peace. Take North Korea for instance: They’re not having a war, but those people do not have Bible peace. They are oppressed, suppressed, and beat down. They are deprived of many human rights. That’s not the biblical meaning of peace.

Threefold Well-Being

The biblical principle of peace means *“perfect well-being in body, in soul, and in spirit.”* Paul wrote in 1 Thess. 5:23, *“And the very **God of peace** (the God of Shalom Himself) sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Perfect well-being in body is to be free of sickness and disease, to have healing and health. Perfect well-being of soul is freedom from inner conflict. Some people are at war with themselves mentally and emotionally. They may be trying to serve God on one hand and self and the world on the other hand, and they’re torn by the

turmoil this brings emotionally. They are always in an inner conflict. But when you have God's *shalom*, you have tranquility. All is at rest. Like the song writer said, "*It is well with my soul.*" (This was written by a man on a ship overlooking the spot where his four daughters had drowned. This demonstrates true *shalom*!)

Perfect well-being of the spirit, or the spirit mind, is not to be tormented. Torment is the effect of fear: "*There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love...*" (1 Jn. 4:18). Jesus said, "*Let not your heart be troubled; neither let it be afraid*" (John 14:27). If you have God's *shalom*, you're not troubled. You're not afraid; you're not fearful. You're in harmony with God, yourself and your fellow man.

This peace also means "perfect relationships." This includes perfect relationships with others, to be in harmony with mankind, and to work for their total well-being. It also means to have a perfect relationship with yourself, and the third perfect relationship is with God. Paul said, "*Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God*" (Rom. 5:11). In Rom. 8:1 he said that there is *no condemnation*, no discord to those in Christ. Perfect fellowship with Almighty God is knowing that He is working for your perfect well-being.

A Hebrew synonym for peace is *good* (TOV) and another is YESHUA, which means *salvation*. When you have God's peace, everything's good.

The biblical definition of good is: "*There is none good but God.*" When you have God's *shalom*, you're in a condition like God. God's not afraid of anything. God's not shook up about anything, not even the evil system at work in this world. He's in perfect harmony with Himself, and that's the peace God has given to us.

My Peace I Give Unto You

Paul said, "*Don't you see the grace of God, brethren, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich*" (2 Cor. 8:9).

This is what constitutes our having perfect well-being. Jesus gave everything heavenly away, and then came and put on the robe of flesh and walked where we have to walk, experienced the things that we have to experience, to qualify as our High Priest. Then when He was getting ready to go back to the Father by the way of the cross, to finish His earthly ministry of being the perfect Lamb and sacrifice to take away our sins (the thing that kept us from having peace with God, with ourselves, and with mankind), He said, "I don't have anything earthly to leave you. I've already become poor that you might become rich." He said, "But I do have *one thing* to leave you:

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world gives, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

This conveys another very effec-

tual Bible definition of peace: **The active presence of God working for good.** God's active presence is at work for our good. An OT verse that paints this word picture is Ex. 33:14 where God promised Moses that He would lead them in the wilderness: *"My presence shall go with thee, and I shall give thee rest."*

Jesus told His disciples in John 14, "I am going to be actively present with you working for your good. *I'm not going to leave you comfortless.* I'm not going to leave you bereaved of a parent like an orphan. I'm not going to leave you fatherless." This is the essence of the Greek word that we translate *comfort* where Jesus said, *"I'll not leave you **comfortless**"* (John 14:18).

In the other places in John's gospel (14:16, 16:7) the Greek word for *Comforter* is **PARACLETOS**, and it is a name for the Holy Ghost Who came to be our helper. The meaning is "to come along side."

But in this verse, the Greek word for *comfortless* is **ORPHONOS** from which we get our English word *orphan*. Jesus was saying, *"I'm not going to leave you as orphans."* An orphan is a dependent that has lost the supplier of his needs, that has been deprived of his mother and father. He might wind up in an orphanage or in a foster home with someone who doesn't love him. In fact, he may even be mistreated by them.

But Jesus was not only speaking to that first-century church, He was speaking to you and me, and He said

"I'm going to go away. I have to leave. My earthly ministry is finished, but I am not going to leave you as orphans. The Comforter is going to be with you, and He's going to be actively in operation to provide for your well-being, giving you peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." This was His promise before His death, but they did not fully grasp the import of His words until after He rose from the dead.

What was the first word Jesus spoke to His disciples after His resurrection? In John 20:19, He came to His disciples who were hiding behind closed doors in Jerusalem for fear of the Jews. They didn't have *shalom*! They thought they had lost the active presence of Jesus, and they were shattered. All of a sudden, in this deepest and darkest moment, when they were looking for a way to sneak out of Jerusalem back to Galilee to save their lives; when everything that they had built their hopes on for the last 3 1/2 years had crumbled, and they were full of dread, uncertainty, and fear, Jesus appeared in the midst of them and said, *"Shalom!"* Jesus and the disciples were Jews who spoke Aramaic and Hebrew, and when He said, *"Shalom"*, they knew what He meant: *"My active presence is here working for your well-being."* When He had showed them His hands and His side, He again said, *"Shalom."*

He had said before His death: "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. I am actively present with you working for your total

well-being. If I'm for you, who and what can be against you? My peace I give to you, not as the world gives, I give unto you. You are My sheep, and no one will pluck you out of My hand, and I give you eternal life, and you shall never perish." (Ref. John 10:28-29).

We Pentecostals sing a song, *"The world didn't give it to me, and the world can't take it away."* That's what Jesus meant when He said, "My *shalom* I give unto you, not as the world gives." The world will give you *shalom* on one side and then pick your pocket and take it away on the other side. Just when you think you have perfect well-being in the world, you have a good job, a good pension, a good hospitalization plan, what happens? We see all the time, the company takes away your insurance plan, your pensions are cut off, or corporate raiders raid the corporation and your pension is gone and sometimes your job. You have no *shalom*. But when Jesus gives you *shalom*, there are no corporate raiders to take it away! *Nobody but me can take my shalom with God*, and the only thing that can take my peace with God is sin, and I am not going to sin! I am not going to let sin reign in my mortal body.

The world can't take away my peace. Lying demons can't take away my peace. The devil can't take away my peace. Nothing can take away my peace. I don't care what happens on the outside, I have the active presence of Jesus on the inside saying in me: *"Greater is He that is in me than he*

that is in the world" (1 Jn. 4:4).

When Jesus said: *"Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid,"* He was not asking or coaxing you. *He was commanding.* In Greek grammar the imperative mood denotes a command: **"Let not** your heart be troubled; **Let not** it be afraid." When we let our hearts be troubled and fearful, then we are doing a disservice to Jesus, to God the Father, and to the Holy Ghost, because in effect we are saying to God that He is not able to solve our problems. He is not powerful enough to meet our needs. He does not have the ability to bring about our perfect well-being!

Is there anything too hard for God? Is there anything God cannot do? Is there any enemy that He cannot defeat? Is there any burden He cannot lift? Are there any cares He cannot carry? Peter said, *"Casting **all** care upon Him for He careth for you"* (1 Pet. 5:7).

Whenever we are fearful and troubled about the things of life, we're not believing God. Either we don't believe *He can*, or we don't believe *He cares*. We are not leaning upon the everlasting arm of the active presence of God to work for our well-being. We're saying that our circumstances, our problems, our bills, our needs, our sicknesses are greater than God.

God Is Working

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh

down from the Father of lights in whom is no variableness nor shadow of changing" (Js. 1:17). Our good God is working for our good, and if we keep our faith in the good God, everything is going to be good; everything is going to be well. Paul assured in Rom. 8:28, "*And we know all things work together for good...*" The *subject* of this verse is not "*all things*"—this is the *object* of the verb *work*. The subject is understood to be *God*. In other words: *God is working all things together for our good!* If we meet the two conditions: "*to them that love God, and are called according to his purpose,*" then God is working in our lives for our well-being.

No matter what comes along my path, if I love Him, He's actively present to work all things together for good. Romans 8:28 was one of my four foundational scriptures from the beginning of my salvation. Now Jesus is the chief and only foundation, and I built on Him. Paul said, "*For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation...*" (1 Cor. 3:11-12).

Upon this foundation I have built my building with four pillars, and one pillar is *Romans 8:28*. When I found out with Paul: "*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God,*" I had the assurance that God was working for my *shalom*. The main condition is that I love God, and the true biblical definition of loving God is: "*If you love Me,*"

Jesus said, "*You will keep My commandments.*" If I will keep God's Word, then He is working all things together for my good. A better translation is: *God is at work in everything for the good to them that love Him!*

Everything in your life; no matter what comes, God will work it in, and when He gets done, it's going to be good. If your own family sells you out like Joseph's sold him down to Egypt; when God gets done, it's going to be for your good! If Joseph had not gone to Egypt, the family in whose line our Savior was to come, would have died in the famine. But Joseph realized that, and when his brothers came for food, instead of being hateful and vengeful, he had *shalom*. He had *shalom* in his life, and he had *shalom* working for the well-being of his brothers. When he revealed himself to his brethren, they were scared, because they realized Joseph was in a powerful position and their lives were in his hands. They didn't know whether they had *shalom* or vengeance. They didn't know whether it was going to be well with their being, or whether they were going to be destroyed. But Joseph said, "Don't worry. It was all in God's plan. God sent me before you that I might preserve the family and preserve your lives by a great deliverance" (Gen. 45:7).

Years later when their father Jacob died, Joseph's brethren feared that he would at last take revenge against them for what they had done to him, but Joseph said, "*Fear not:*

*for am I in the place of God? As for you, you thought evil against me; but **God meant it unto good, to bring it to pass, as it is this day to save much people alive***” (Gen. 50:20).

Centuries later Israel was in captivity to the Persians, and the wicked Haman deceitfully got the king to sign a law to kill all the Jews. But God worked it all out for their good. First He caused the king to dislike his present wife, and He made him love Esther the Jewess and make her his queen. Then Haman wanted to kill her uncle, Mordecai. At her uncle's words, she put herself in jeopardy to approach the king, because when she walked into the king's presence, if he didn't extend his scepter in favor, it meant death. Mordecai said, “Don't stay back in safety. Go into the king and save your people, or die with them.”

In that great moment of trial and test, she stood in front of the king, and God made the king love her and extend his scepter, and ultimately spared the Jewish people. Now Haman had built a scaffold to hang Mordecai, but God troubled the king in his sleep. The king got up from bed and told his servants to bring him the Chronicles, the records of the kingdom. In there he found that Mordecai had once saved him from being poisoned. Wanting to honor his good deed, he called Haman in for advice on the matter. Ole Haman was so full of self; you know, when you get in self, you're blind; you don't see anybody else but self. The king said to

Haman, “What shall I do for that person I really love and admire and want to honor?” And right away old self thought, “He's talking about **me**.”

Haman said, “You should bedeck him with royal robes and put him on your mule.” (A mule in those days was the symbol of the king's power. When David made Solomon king when his brother was trying to steal the kingdom, he said, “Get my mule and put Solomon on him and lead him through the city and proclaim him king.”)

So the king said, “Well, get my mule and bring **Mordecai** and put him on my mule, and **you** lead him through the city and proclaim that **he's blessed of me**.”

Child of God, when God's for you, He'll make the enemy put you on God's mule of authority and lead you through His kingdom saying: “This is the one that is in power and favor with the Almighty God; fear him.” God's at work in everything for our good if you love God. I love the humor and irony of the Holy Ghost: God always hangs Haman on his own scaffold, burns the enemy in his own furnace, and feeds him to his own lions!

Peace is the Referee

The Christian is supposed to be ruled by peace, not fear. Colossians 3:15 says: “*And let the peace of God **rule** in your hearts to the which also you are called in one body, and be ye thankful.*” You and I are **called to peace**. Remember, I'm talking about

perfect well-being in every aspect of your life. *God's Shalom is to rule in our lives.* The Greek word for *rule* is translated into the English by *referee* or even *arbitrator*. It referred to the referee at the great Greek and Roman games who ruled who was the winner and who was the loser, who could compete and who couldn't compete. Whatever he ruled, his decision was final. Now God said, "Let peace, perfect tranquility, sit on the throne of your life." When the devil, or the world, or man, or sense knowledge, or anything else that you perceive with your physical senses, tries to bring anxiety or fear, don't let it reign in your heart, or govern your life.

Rather, let peace sit on the throne as the referee. When sight or sound, or any of your senses tells you to be fearful, to be afraid, to be uncertain and doubtful, ask Peace for a ruling, and the peace of God will over rule it. Peace will not let it come in. Peace will not let it govern your actions and responses to your circumstances. **Let** the peace of God reign. You see, it's a command, and you must allow the peace of God to give the final ruling. I am not going to let anything come into my soul to disturb its well-being. I'm going to let the peace of God over rule it. When bad feelings try to come, I am going to allow good feelings of peace to take over and reign in my heart.

Peace is to be a guard *to keep us*. Phil. 4:7 says, "*And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall **keep** your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*" The key is "through

Christ Jesus." *Through* means "*in the presence of.*" In the presence of Jesus, peace **guards** our hearts. In Greek, *keep* means to *guard*, like the English word *garrison*, as in a garrison of soldiers. When Paul was in Damascus, the governor surrounded the city with a whole garrison of soldiers to take him captive. But Paul had *shalom*; he had the active presence of God in his life. Even though Roman soldiers were garrisoned around him to take him captive, God's people snuck him out in a basket over the wall, because He said, "*With every temptation, every trial, every test, He will make a way of escape that you may bear it* (1 Cor. 10:13).

In the Spirit, God has a garrison of soldiers all around us, and Peter tells us who these soldiers are: "*We are they who are **kept***" (The same Greek word garrisoned—guarded), "*by the power of God.*" God's power is all around us, and knowing this brings His peace to our hearts.

Guarded by Peace

In Bible days, the cities were made like forts; they were walled with gigantic gates. At sunset they would lock the gates. I believe when archaeologists dug the city of Nineveh out, the walls were so thick they could have raced six chariots on top of them in a chariot race. This was so the enemy wouldn't be able to break the walls down, and they made gigantic gates so they wouldn't be able to break through them. At night

they would close the gates, and there was a garrison of soldiers on guard on the walls. If anybody wanted to come in after sunset, he had to go through *“the eye of the needle.”* Now we can better understand the saying of Jesus *“It’s easier for a camel to go through an eye of a needle than for a man that trusts in riches to enter into the kingdom of Heaven.”*

The eye of the needle was a little opening in the wall that allowed one to enter the city at night. In order for a camel to go through *the eye of the needle*, that little doorway, it had to be stripped of his load, get down on all fours, and then to be pushed through that opening.

We are to let God’s peace be at the gate of our inner man whenever anything tries to creep in that’s contrary to our well-being, any thought, any insinuation of fear. God’s word declares: *“Be not afraid of sudden fear when it comes”* (Prov. 3:25). Many of God’s people are oppressed and obsessed by the devil. Obsession is demon possession of the mind. When one is obsessed, the devil has possessed his mind with a thought, and all he is worried about is that thing. A lot of God’s children are obsessed in their minds with negative thoughts. They have failed to let peace guard the gate of their spiritual life. They let the devil come in with fearful thoughts, and they’re tormented and obsessed night and day by them.

To some he suggests, “You’ve got cancer; you’ve got tuberculosis;

you’ve got AIDS,” or “Your husband doesn’t love you anymore,” or “Nobody cares.” These are the lies of an obsessing melancholy spirit. “Nobody cares for you.” That’s the biggest lie ever hatched out of Hell. God so loved the world that He gave Jesus. Jesus so loved you that He left His throne, His glory; being rich, He became poor. He took on the same robe of flesh, and walked where we have to walk. Even though He was the Creator, He told one man that wanted to follow Him: *“The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man has no place to lay His head.”* He had nothing earthly that was His. He had to depend on people like Lazarus and Mary and Martha to take Him in. When He died, He had to borrow a rich man’s tomb. All He had to give mankind was love, mercy, grace, salvation, healing, deliverance. *All He had to give was shalom.*

Now it is up to you to decide to *let the shalom of God reign and rule in your life.* Let peace be the deciding factor. That’s what it means to referee, to judge. It doesn’t matter what objections there are, what the referee says goes. We have all seen the players or managers in sports games trying to call the play, but you better look to the referee. Don’t look at the player. The devil is always trying to call the play, but don’t look at the devil. Look to the referee: *Peace!* Look to the active presence of God. Look to the active presence of Jesus. Paul said, *“Looking unto Jesus, the author and finish-*

er of our faith, let us run the race before us"! (Heb. 12:2).

If you get bad news and lose your job, don't fret. The active presence of God is going to work it all together for good. If they shove you down and put you in a pit and sell you down to Egypt, don't worry. You might even have to go to jail down there in Egypt, but don't worry. The active presence of God is present and acting on your behalf for good, and before He is done, you're going to be ruling in Egypt. He said that if you're Abraham's seed, then you're heirs according to the promise, and God promised Abraham's seed: "You shall sit at the head of the gate."

Have you ever wondered what that meant? You see, the city rulers and judges ruled at the gate, and God said that in the enemy's gate, in the enemy's kingdom, He'll make us the rulers! That's just what He did to Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Joseph! The devil said that he's the god of this world, but don't you know that God's put us at the head of the gate. We reign, Brother! We reign, Sister!

The Psalmist said, "*The righteous shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord*" (Ps. 112:7). When evil tidings come, take it to the Lord in prayer and say, "God, I know You are actively present. When You get done, even though I don't see it now, it will be to my good."

Joseph didn't see it when his brothers sold him down to Egypt.

He didn't see it after he passed the test of temptation in Potiphar's house and they sent him to prison for three years. But afterwards, when his brothers came, he told them, "Don't worry. I know it was God who sent me down here to preserve you and your posterity."

Dear Saint, sometimes you may have to go through the water; sometimes you may have to go through the flood, and through the fire, but if you're covered with the blood, you're going to come out with victory and *shalom*! (Isa.43:2).

Prescription for Peace

We must decide in those times in life when confronted by circumstances and events that defy our ability to understand, challenge our faith, and test our love. We can succumb to our doubts and questions, murmur, become embittered or indifferent. When we do, peace is evicted from our hearts by confusion, fear, and despair. What God's Word instructs us to do in these situations is to make the decision to let His peace, His active plan for our well-being, rule in our thoughts, quenching the fiery darts of doubt and unbelief through faith in His Word. We do this by "*thinking on these things*" that gender peace: Things that are "*true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praise worthy.*" It is then that "*the peace that passes understanding*" is activated, called to duty to guard our hearts (Phil. 4:7-9).

The Greek terms denote that

there is a peace that supersedes, that is far superior to our intellectual and logical reasoning. When circumstances dictate our being distraught, confused, worried, fearful, instead, our minds and thoughts are flooded by thoughts of peace! When we would be expected to become emotionally shaken, hysterical, and despondent, instead we are calm, tranquil, and expectant of good things. *This is the peace that **surpasses** human understanding*, nourished by faith in God.

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee because he trusteth in thee” (Isaiah 26:3).

Shalom! Shalom!