

Day 4

Peace

Silence (2 minutes) Take some time to be quiet, to calm down, and to listen. What has God been teaching you? What are the next steps He wants you to take? How is your spirit doing?

Scripture *Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.* 2 Thessalonians 3:16

Discussion The above Scripture is one of Paul's final words of support in his short letter to the Church at Thessalonica, which Paul founded by sharing the Gospel with them. In the letter Paul praises them for their growing faith and love for each other in the midst of persecution. Paul instructs them about Jesus' return, saying to beware of incorrect teaching that Jesus has already returned. He will not return until *"the man of lawlessness is revealed"* (2 Thessalonians 2:3). They are also to work, not idly waiting for Jesus' return. Paul charges them to continue in the traditions and teaching they have been given, and to pray for Paul and his assistants. He then blesses that *"...the Lord of peace Himself give you peace at all times and in every way..."* The Lord of peace will also give us peace. We too, may be praised by other believers for our faith and love. May we have the Lord's peace and not become arrogant, praising ourselves for what the Lord has given us. We too, may have difficulties with nonbelievers, though most of us don't experience what we would consider to be persecution. May we have the Lord's peace, keeping our thinking on Jesus' endurance, as well as His faithfulness and love for us in all our circumstances. False teaching surrounds us also, in print, online, popular leaders, and churches, as well as in the cultural messages of music, movies, TV, and social media. Some false teaching is due to confusion and others are intentional. We protect our knowledge of the faith by reading and listening to Christian teaching, discussing and encouraging each other in our knowledge and faith, and checking everything against what the Bible says. So we read the Bible frequently and deeply, looking for themes across chapters and separate books, committing ourselves to obey what we are taught, and guarding ourselves from ignoring what we don't understand or what makes us uncomfortable. May we have the Lord's peace as we pursue His teaching in His Word. May we have the Lord's peace as we work, being productive, and actively loving each other. We enjoy rest and hobbies, while avoiding having entertainment and pleasure gradually replace God at the center of our lives. May we have the Lord's peace as we pray for pastors, missionaries, and all whom God uses to build His Kingdom. *"...let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart"* (Heb. 12:1-3). The Lord of peace does give us peace.

Application Peace can be found nowhere else than God Himself! The worries of life may not be the only things that rob us of God's peace - sometimes it can be good things that God has given us as well. Finding peace in listening to Christian teachers, or reading Christian books is good, even spiritually enriching - but we should always take time to ensure we are seeking peace from God and God alone! Take time today and consider: where are you currently finding your peace?

Prayer Father, I praise You that You are the Lord of peace and that real peace is only in You. Thank You that Your peace is available at all times, no matter what my circumstances. Father I don't know what difficulty will next surprise me. You know, Lord, that there are some crises that divide our lives into the time before and the time after the crisis happened, that our lives are forever changed. I praise and thank You that You are the God of peace in both times. You are real and alive and will not abandon me. I commit myself to abide in You; to stay in Your peace, praying to You, bringing concerns and decisions to You, and growing in knowing and obeying Your Word. Thank You that I belong to You. Amen.

Silence (2 minutes) Talk to God about what you are learning. What are your fears? Where are your hangups? Pray for direction.

Scripture memory for the week: *You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in You. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock eternal.* Isaiah 26:3-4