

## A Word of Encouragement and Comfort

Scripture Reading: Isa. 26:3-4; Eph. 6:11, 17; Phil. 4:6-7; Psa. 46:1-5; Gen. 49:10; Rev. 21:2

### **I. You will keep the steadfast of mind / In perfect peace / Because he trusts in You. / Trust in Jehovah forever and ever, / For in Jah Jehovah we have an eternal rock”—Isa. 26:3-4:**

- A. This verse speaks of one whose mind is steadfastly on the Lord—v. 3:
  - 1. Our spirit is the very organ, the very center, for us to contact the Lord and for the Lord to contact us; therefore, Romans 8:6 says that the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.
  - 2. The proper direction for the mind is to be toward the Lord, but the enemy entices our mind to be directed toward something other than the Lord; when our mind is set on something other than the Lord, we are under attack.
  - 3. We should not separate our mind from our spirit; rather, we must let the spirit become the spirit of our mind (Eph. 4:23); when our spirit and our mind are blended together, we can praise without any worry, we can be full of peace without any anxiety, and we can be at rest without any agitation (Phil. 4:6-7); otherwise, we will have worry, anxiety, fanciful thoughts, and wild imaginations.
- B. We should trust in Jehovah forever and ever, for in Him we have an eternal rock—Isa. 26:4:
  - 1. The worldly people are always in haste, in panic, whenever things happen to them.
  - 2. Every human being apart from Christ has nothing to trust in, but we have the Lord as the eternal rock to trust in—v. 4.
  - 3. As the rock of our stronghold, Christ is the God of our salvation in whom we should trust—17:10; 30:15; Psa. 56:3; 62:8; 91:2; 112:7; Prov. 3:5; Jer. 17:7-8; *Hymns*, #568.

### **II. “Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the stratagems of the devil...And receive the helmet of salvation”—Eph. 6:11, 17a:**

- A. Receiving the helmet of salvation is for covering our mind, our mentality, against the negative thoughts shot in by the evil one; such a helmet, such a covering, is God’s salvation.
- B. Satan injects threats, worries, anxieties, and other weakening thoughts into our mind; God’s salvation is the covering that we take up against all these.
- C. Such a salvation is the saving Christ whom we experience in our daily life—John 16:33.

### **III. “In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses every man’s understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus”—Phil. 4:6-7:**

- A. The source of anxiety is Satan; anxiety comes from Satan to frustrate the fulfillment of God’s purpose:
  - 1. Anxiety is Satan’s incarnation; if we welcome anxiety, we will welcome Satan, the Devil; therefore, we need to be watchful—1 Pet. 5:7-8.
  - 2. If we give way to anxiety, we shall also give way to the adversary; whenever we are anxious or worried, we should say, “Satan, you are exposed. This anxiety is really you. This is not anxiety—this is you, the Devil. Satan, get away from me!”
  - 3. The Devil is a roaring lion, walking about, seeking someone to devour; pride and anxiety make us delicious prey to fill the hunger of the roaring lion—v. 8; cf. Luke 22:31.

4. There is no anxiety in the divine life and the divine nature; our human life is a life of anxiety, whereas God's life is a life of enjoyment, rest, comfort, and satisfaction; to God, anxiety is a strange term; with Him, there is no such thing as anxiety—Rom. 16:20; Phil. 4:9; 1 Thes. 5:23a; Heb. 13:20.
- B. The result of practicing fellowship with God in prayer is that we enjoy the peace of God—Phil. 4:6-7:
1. Prayer is general, having worship and fellowship as its essence; petition is special, being for particular needs; both our prayer and our petition should be accompanied by our giving thanks to the Lord—v. 6.
  2. The peace of God is actually God Himself as peace infused into us through our fellowship with Him by prayer; through the divine dispensing the peace of God guards our hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus (v. 7); this peace is the counterpoise to troubles and the antidote to anxiety (John 16:33).
  3. This does not mean that the troubles will disappear; the troubles may remain, but we have a counterpoise; furthermore, the poison of anxiety is still within us, but we have an antidote—the peace of God transfused into our being through our fellowship with God in prayer.
  4. When we enjoy God as peace, we are made calm within—Rom. 8:6; 15:13; 2 Thes. 3:16; *Hymns*, #719.
- IV. **“God is our refuge and strength; / A help in distress, He is most readily found. / Therefore we will not fear, / Though the earth change, / And the mountains slip into the heart of the seas... / There is a river whose streams gladden the city of God, / The holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. / God is in the midst of her; she will not be moved”—Psa. 46:1-5a:**
- A. The city, which cannot be moved, is the unshakable kingdom, which is Christ Himself with His enlargement, His increase—Heb. 12:28; Dan. 2:34-35, 55, and note 35<sup>3</sup>, par. 2.
  - B. Christ, the King, is Shiloh, which means Peace-bringer; when our King comes back, He will bring peace to the whole earth; but there is no need for us to wait until that day to enjoy Him as our Shiloh; we may enjoy Christ as Shiloh today—Gen. 49:10:
    1. We may be in a stormy sea full of turmoil, like the disciples in the boat on the stormy sea; however, when the Lord entered the disciples' boat, the wind ceased because there can be no storm where Jesus is—Matt. 14:22-33.
    2. In the midst of a stormy situation we should not pray in a begging way; instead, we should exercise the authority and say, “Lord, You are walking upon the sea. You are the King and You have authority. Now I exercise Your authority over this stormy situation.”
- V. **“I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem”—Rev. 21:2a:**
- A. The title *Jerusalem* is composed of two Hebrew words—*Jeru* means “foundation,” and *Salem* means “peace”; thus, *Jerusalem* means “the foundation of peace”; Jerusalem is something grounded, founded, and safeguarded in peace.
  - B. The Lord Jesus told us, “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you” (John 14:27); He also said, “These things I have spoken to you that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have affliction, but take courage; I have overcome the world” (16:33); since the Lord has given us His peace and left us His peace, today we should live in His peace.
  - C. Jerusalem is the Triune God to be our peace, to be our safety; the whole New Jerusalem will be an entity of peace; it will be solidly grounded and safeguarded in the Triune God as peace and safety, and we will enjoy the Triune God as peace forever—Rev. 21:2.

## **Excerpts from the Ministry:**

### **CHRIST BEING THE ETERNAL ROCK FOR HIS PEOPLE TO TRUST IN**

Every human being apart from Christ has nothing to trust in, but we have the Lord as the eternal Rock to trust in. Isaiah 17:10 says, “For you have forgotten the God of your salvation, / And the Rock of your stronghold you have not remembered. / Therefore you plant plants of delight / And set them with plant cuttings to a strange god.” Christ is the God of our salvation. Actually, He Himself is our salvation. He is the Rock of stronghold for His people to remember Him as their salvation. If we forget Christ as our God, we will be like those who plant plants for another god. We have to pray, “Lord, we do not ever want to plant plants for another god. We want to always remember You.” As the Rock of our stronghold, Christ is the God of our salvation in whom we should trust. (*Life-Study of Isaiah*, msg. 41, p. 285)

We need to learn always to turn our mind to the Lord. This is clear not only in the New Testament but also in principle in the Old Testament. Isaiah 26:3 says, “You will keep the steadfast of mind / In perfect peace / Because he trusts in You.” This verse speaks of one whose mind is steadfastly on the Lord. Today the Lord is in our spirit. Our spirit is the very organ, the very center, for us to contact the Lord and for the Lord to contact us. Therefore, Romans 8:6 says that the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

The enemy’s attack today is on our mind. It is very hard for our mind to be focused on the Lord. The proper direction for the mind is to be toward the Lord, but the enemy entices our mind to be directed toward something other than the Lord. Whether that thing is good or evil, it is the same. When our mind is set on something other than the Lord, we are under the attack. Therefore, we all must learn to repent, which in the spiritual language means to turn the mind. (*CWWL*, 1964, vol. 4, “Practical Lessons on the Experience of Life,” ch. 12, p. 485-486)

### **THE PEACE OF GOD GUARDING OUR HEARTS AND OUR THOUGHTS IN CHRIST**

Philippians 4:7 says, “The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.” This guarding of our hearts and thoughts is a matter of the Father’s intimate dispensing. Through the divine dispensing the peace of God guards our hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus. The peace of God is actually God Himself as peace (v. 9), infused into us through our fellowship with Him by prayer. This peace is the counterpoise of troubles and the antidote to anxiety (John 16:33).

Bad news or difficult situations may cause us to worry or to be anxious. We find the antidote to this anxiety when we pray, practice communion with God, and enjoy the Father’s dispensing in His love. Then spontaneously, even unconsciously, the peace of God is transfused into our inner being. This transfused peace becomes the counterpoise of trouble and becomes the antidote to anxiety. From experience we know that through prayer we receive the antidote to anxiety when the peace of God is infused into us. Having the peace of God as the counterpoise to our troubles does not mean that the troubles will disappear. The troubles remain, but we have a counterpoise. Furthermore, the poison of anxiety is still within us, but we have an antidote—the peace of God transfused into our being through our fellowship with God in prayer. When we enjoy God as our peace, we are made calm within.

In Philippians 4:7 Paul says that the peace of God will guard our hearts and our thoughts in Christ Jesus. The Greek word rendered “guard” may also be translated “mount guard over.” The God of peace patrols or stands guard before our hearts and thoughts in Christ. The heart is the source, and the thoughts are the issue. The peace of God guards both our hearts and our thoughts. This means that in Christ Jesus the peace of God patrols as a guard who goes back and forth before our hearts and our thoughts. The peace of God which patrols within our inner being in such a way keeps us calm and tranquil. Even though we may have many troubles and much

anxiety, nothing will disturb us. From experience we know that the peace of God infused into us through His dispensing keeps us calm. This is truly an experience and enjoyment of God as the Father in His love. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, msg. 138, pp. 1513-1514)

### **THE AUTHORITY AND KINGSHIP OF CHRIST**

Christ's victory brings in the kingdom ([Gen. 49:10]). Even on earth today, wherever there is a victory, there is also a kingdom. Christ ascended to the heavens, and there He was given all authority. There He also received the kingdom. If we have the divine sight, we shall see that the entire earth is the kingdom of Christ. The nations today use Christ's calendar. According to history, the kingdom belongs to the one whose calendar is used. The fact that the nations use Christ's calendar indicates that they are His kingdom. Even the nations who oppose Christ follow His calendar. For this reason, Christ may laugh at them and say, "Although you oppose Me, you are using My calendar. In this way you are recognizing Me as your King." Christ is the King, and everyone is under His rule. If you do not believe this, I would ask you to wait for a period of time. Eventually you will see that the whole earth will be the kingdom of Christ.

Christ has been commissioned with all the authority in heaven and on earth. This should not be merely a doctrine to us. We must realize that we are under His authority. Verse 10 says, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet" (Heb.). It is correct to translate the Hebrew word rendered "scepter" as "authority." To say that the scepter will not depart from Judah means that the authority will not depart from Judah. The scepter here signifies royal, kingly authority. Christ has this authority, and we all must come under it. We, the kingdom people, are under the heavenly ruling of Christ.

We Christians also need to learn how to exercise the authority of Christ. As we face certain hardships and difficulties, there is no need to pray in a begging way. Instead, we should pray with the exercise of authority. When the children of Israel were pursued by the Egyptians, the Lord told Moses to lift up his rod and stretch out his hand over the sea (Exo. 14:15-16). Moses did so. That was an exercise of divine authority. Likewise, instead of begging, we should exercise the authority of our King and command the difficulties to flee. Because we are under the heavenly ruling, we have the position and the right to speak to difficulties, hardships, and attacks. We may say to them, "You must flee. I do not allow you to remain." We all must learn to exercise such authority.

In order to exercise this authority we must first be under the ruling of Christ. If we are rebellious and command Satan to flee, he will say, "Who are you? I will not obey you because you don't obey Christ. As one who does not obey his King, you have no position to command me." Therefore, we must be the obedient kingdom people. Our obedience gives us the position to exercise the King's authority. This is the kingdom. In the kingdom everything has been accomplished, every enemy has been defeated, and every problem has been solved.

### **CHRIST COMING AS THE PEACE-BRINGER**

Verse 10 says that the scepter will not depart from Judah nor the ruler's staff from between his feet until Shiloh comes. Shiloh means Peace-bringer. The proper kingdom is a realm of peace. If you do not have peace, you are not actually in the kingdom. The King must be the Peace-giver, the Peacebringer. When our King comes back, He will come as the great Shiloh who brings peace to the whole earth. But there is no need for us to wait until that day to enjoy Him as our Shiloh. We may enjoy Christ as Shiloh today.

Consider the example of family life. In a sense, family life is a stormy sea full of turmoil. We never know when a storm will come. I have been sailing on the family-life sea for many years, and I can testify that it is often very stormy. In Matthew 14 we read of the disciples' experience on a stormy sea (Matt. 14:22-33). When Jesus was about to go up into a mountain to pray, He charged His disciples "to step into the boat and to go before Him to the other side" (Matt. 14:22). When evening had come, the boat was being tossed by the waves. Eventually, after praying there

on the mountaintop, the Lord came to the disciples in the boat, walking on the sea (Matt. 14:25). When He entered the boat, the wind ceased (Matt. 14:32). This is very meaningful. The storm ceased because there can be no storm where Jesus is. The storm is not afraid of us, but it is afraid of the heavenly King. Although the storm may trouble us, it cannot trouble Him, for He walks upon the waves. In the midst of the stormy family-life sea we should not pray in a begging way. Instead, we should exercise the authority and say, "Lord, You are walking upon the sea. You are the King and You have the authority. Now I exercise Your authority over this stormy situation." Try to pray like this.

In the eyes of God the victory has been won, the kingdom is here, and peace is present. Everything has been accomplished. Therefore, we should not look at our environment. In Matthew 14:28 Peter said, "Lord if it is You, command me to come to You on the waters." Peter seemed to be saying, "Lord, if it is You, give me the word and I'll come to You. You are walking on the sea, and I'll walk on the sea also." The Lord said, "Come," and Peter came out of the boat and walked on the water to go to Jesus (Matt. 14:29). Peter had the faith to jump out of the boat and to walk on the waves. But when he began to look at the environment, his faith disappeared, and he began to sink. Peter's experience is a lesson to us not to look at our environment, but to stand on the Lord's word. Faith is a matter of standing on His word. Faith is not based on the environment; it is based on the word of the Lord. If you jump out of the boat and stand on the Lord's word, many problems will be solved. You have prayed too many begging prayers. Instead of begging, issue a command to the environment and say, "I will not allow you to disturb me. Jesus is King. The kingdom is His, and He is Shiloh. Therefore, I must have peace in my surroundings."

Often before troubles come our way, we have accepted them already. This is entirely a matter of psychology. Before Satan, the subtle one, attacks you, he first takes you over in a psychological way. Job said, "For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me" (Job 3:25). Before Job's difficulties came upon him, he thought about those difficulties and became afraid of them. To be afraid of something means that you have already received it. Whenever you are fearful, you must immediately say, "Satan, get away from me. I am not afraid of anything. I do not accept this fear." Fear is Satan's calling card. If you accept his calling card, Satan himself will come. Every fear is a calling card. Before Satan sends you the actual difficulty, he first sends the fear of that difficulty. Do not accept Satan's calling card of fear—throw it away. This is a matter related to spiritual warfare. Some brothers have been afraid of being laid off from their jobs. A few days after they accepted this fear, they were laid off. Do not receive the thought of being laid off, but say, "Satan, I will never be laid off. Although everyone else may be laid off, I will still be employed. Because I am in the kingdom, I don't accept this fear." Christ has won the victory, and the issue of His victory is the kingdom. (*Life-Study of Genesis*, msg. 100, pp. 1276-1279)

### **JERUSALEM—FOUNDATION OF PEACE**

The title *Jerusalem* is composed of two Hebrew words—*Jeru* means "foundation," and *Salem* means "peace." Paul tells us in Hebrews 7 that the King of Salem is the King of Peace (v. 2). *Salem* refers to peace, and *Jeru* refers to something founded, something built, something laid as a foundation. Thus, *Jerusalem* means "the foundation of peace." Jerusalem is something grounded, founded, and safeguarded in peace. The Bible indicates that peace is God Himself. In the New Testament are two titles—*the God of peace* (Phil. 4:9; 1 Thes. 5:23) and *the peace of God* (Phil. 4:7). Both of these titles indicate that God Himself is our peace. Also, Ephesians 2:14 indicates that Christ Himself is our peace. This peace is God into whom we have been grounded. This is not an outward peace but an inward peace in which we are safeguarded. In eternity we will enjoy peace forever.

The Lord Jesus told us, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you" (John 14:27). Our Lord also said in John 16:33, "These things I have spoken to

you that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have affliction, but take courage; I have overcome the world.” Since the Lord has given us His peace and left us His peace, today we should live in His peace. Actually, the Lord Himself is still here as our peace. Jerusalem is the Triune God to be our peace, to be our safety. The whole New Jerusalem will be an entity of peace. When we consummate in the New Jerusalem, we will be in peace, that is, in the Triune God. The New Jerusalem will be solidly grounded and safeguarded in the Triune God as peace and safety, and we will enjoy the Triune God as peace forever. (*CWWL, 1984*, vol. 3, “God’s New Testament Economy,” ch. 27, pp. 362-363)

#### **References and Further Reading:**

1. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1964*, vol. 4, “Practical Lessons on the Experience of Life,” ch. 12.
2. *Life-Study of Isaiah*, msg. 41.
3. *Life-Study of Philippians*, msg. 61.
4. *Life-Study of 1 Peter*, msg. 33.
5. *Life-Study of Matthew*, msg. 22.
6. *The Conclusion of the New Testament*, msg. 138.
7. *Life-Study of Genesis*, msg. 100.
8. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1984*, vol. 3, “God’s New Testament Economy,” ch. 27.