



Weekly Newsletter: 14th February 2023

Reflection: Three Ways to Maintain a Peaceful Heart

By Joe Barnard

The Bible is filled with promises of peace for those who trust in the Lord. The Psalmist says, 'In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety' (4:8). Jesus says, 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you' (Jn. 14:27). Paul refers to a 'peace that surpasses understanding', which comes upon a believing heart through prayer (c.f. Phil. 4:6-7). From beginning to end, the Bible mentions peace as one of choice blessings that the LORD reserves for his people.

Yet, any honest Christian will admit that each day presents new worries that threaten to disrupt the repose of a heart resting in the love of God. This situation is not new. The Psalms, in particular, are filled with candid statements about just how difficult it can be to find peace in the midst of suffering, persecution, and spiritual anxiety. In view of such daily struggles, as Christians we need to know how to exercise our souls in the disciplines that quiet anguish and sooth mental and spiritual pain.

Here are three spiritual exercises that are a strong defence against emotional turmoil.

1 – Meditate on the Everlasting Rock

Isaiah 26:4 says, 'Trust in the LORD forever; for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock'. We don't think often enough about how strange it is that God is willing to describe himself as a rock. Rocks have no intelligence; they cannot love. In many ways, rocks seem altogether unfit to serve as a metaphor for anything divine. Yet, there is one thing that rocks can do, which is a beautiful lens through which to understand God. *Rocks are exceptional at supporting weight*. When standing atop a large boulder, rare is the person who fears that the ground will collapse under his feet. We have an intuitive sense that rocks are load-bearing.

And so it is with God to a superlative degree. God is not just 'a rock'; He is 'an everlasting rock'. He is the unique ground that will never crumble under the weight of a trusting heart. The more we meditate on this truth, the less vulnerable we will feel.

2 – Preach the Gospel to Yourself

There is an old spiritual discipline that has largely been forgotten. The Puritans used to counsel that, in times of spiritual anguish, a person should imitate the most powerful preacher that she had heard in applying the gospel to herself. The idea was that, rather than be a sitting duck for the fiery darts of the devil, we should take up a more aggressive posture. We should do for ourselves what the Psalmist often does by

interrogating his own soul. For example, in Psalm 42 we read, 'Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God'.

Of note is the way in which the Psalmist does two things. First, he does not passively accept his emotions. He questions the validity and basis of his sorrow. Second, he tells himself to trust in the Lord. Rather than accepting a condition of tenuous faith, he grabs himself by the scruff of the neck and points his doubting feelings back in the direction of God's promises.

This practice is something we should put to use in times of sorrow, despair, or worry.

3 – Make a List and Cast Your Cares upon the Lord

Negative feelings flourish in obscurity. Often, we feel anxiety, depression, or dread without knowing what precisely is feeding the moods. One helpful exercise to combat such overcast feelings is to pause for a few minutes and take inventory of the heart. This is a two-step process.

Step one is to take out a piece of paper and to write out in a column all of the contributing factors of our underlying feelings. The goal is to make a list as comprehensive as possible of all of the things that are disrupting the heart. In truth, the end result can be a bit overwhelming. To pull out all of the troubles of the heart can be like emptying a junk drawer. It's not unusual to be shocked by the sight of just how much worry has been crammed into the heart.

Yet, step two is where shock gives way to faith. The next action is to pray through the list item-by-item. In doing this, there are multiple benefits. I Peter 5:7 says, 'Cast all your anxieties upon him, because he cares for you'. By lifting our worries before God we are actively reminding ourselves that he does indeed love us and care for us. He is the Father who knows the exact number of hairs on our head.

A further benefit is revealed by Phil. 4:6-7. These verses indicate that peace is a dew that falls on prayerful hearts. It is only as we speak to God about our struggles that a special blessing descends from heaven – a renewed sense that Jesus is saying to a troubled soul, 'Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest'.

Mission Prayer Meeting

Our next Mission Prayer Meeting will be on this **Saturday (18th February)** at 9am on Zoom. Our focus at this meeting will be on the Holyrood missionaries (Lorna, James and the Sorsamo family) and to enable them to have time to share with us. Zoom codes will be sent out nearer the time.

The following Mission Prayer Meeting will be on **Saturday 29th April** and will be for all our mission partners. This will give us the opportunity to hear an update on the work they are doing and pray together.

Welcome to Holyrood

We're having another Welcome to Holyrood session for anyone who has recently started coming along to our services. It will be **Sunday 26th February** after the morning service. Grab a cup of coffee and head downstairs to the hall for 30 minutes to hear more about what Holyrood has to offer and how you can get involved.

Prayer Meeting – Wednesday 22nd February

The prayer meeting next week will be in person at the church at 7pm. Isaac and Gloria Shaw will be joining us to share about the work in Delhi. Tea and coffee will be served from 6.30pm in the church to allow us to meet and chat to them beforehand.

We will have a Zoom option available for those who want to join the prayer meeting from home. The codes will be sent out as usual on Wednesday morning.

Book Group

The Book Group this month is on **Saturday 25th February** at 3.30pm and we will be reading *Sleeping Giant* by Tommy MacNeil.

Please note that the meeting this month will be at Sue Holloway's house. Further information from Anncris (anncris@gmail.com)



Men's Discipleship at Holyrood

There are a couple of options starting soon. Here are the details for your info and prayers -

Early Morning Option:

- Time: Thursdays at 7:30am
- Start Date: February 23rd
- Location: Starbucks at 123 Lothian Rd.
- We will start promptly at 7:30am and end at 8:15am

Mid Morning Option:

- Time: Thursdays at 10:30am
- Start Date: February 23rd
- Location: HEC

There may also be a Tuesday morning Zoom option for men not able to meet in-person. Chat with Joe for details.

Raising Kids for Christ in a Confusing World – Saturday 4th March

We're excited to have Mel Lacy (from Growing Young Disciples) speaking at our parenting conference on **Raising Kids for Christ in a Confusing World** on Saturday 4th March. The conference will run from 9.30am until 3.30pm and is free to attend.

Mel is one of the most helpful voices in the UK in terms of helping parents navigate the difficult waters of identity, technology, sexuality, and the basics of raising children for Christ. It promises to be a great day!

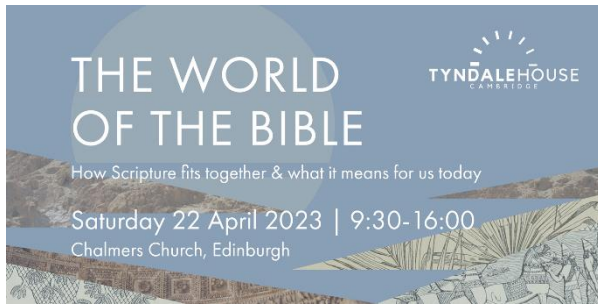
Please contact Liz (Liz@holyroodevangelical.org) to book and anyone is welcome to attend so please pass on the details to family or friends who may be interested.



Church Barbecue – Save the date!

We've booked the Newlands Centre on **Saturday 17th June** for our annual church barbecue. Save the date and start training for the tug of war...

The World of the Bible – Tyndale House



Tyndale House are having their Edinburgh Day Conference on 22 April 2023 looking at **'The World of the Bible – how Scripture fits together & what it means for us today'** It promises to be a great day of teaching from Tyndale House researchers. Take a look at the talks they have lined up [here](#). Tickets (Full price £15; Live stream £5) are limited and can be booked [here](#). Location: Chalmers Church, EH10 4AZ

Church Calendar

For your prayers and info –

- Monday: Warm Space from 12.30 – 4pm
- Wednesday: Prayer Meeting at 7pm on Zoom
- Saturday: Mission Prayer Meeting at 9am on Zoom
- Sunday:
 - Worship Service at 10.30am (and live streamed). Joe Barnard preaching.
 - Equip at 6pm



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