

Substantial Peace

Huge flames leaped out from the entrance into the Babylonian brick kiln. Searing heat radiated from the walls of this furnace the Babylonians used in manufacturing bricks. As roaring flames deafened everyone, Nebuchadnezzar “commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace.”⁽¹⁾

In spite of the sight of the red hot furnace and the consuming fire that awaited them, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego remained peaceful. Where did these men obtain such peace of mind when everything before them and around them bespoke terrible danger?

About six hundred years after these men lived, Jesus made a promise that explains the peaceful thoughts and emotions that controlled Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”⁽²⁾ Notice that Jesus specifically pointed out that the peace of mind he bestows is substantial and nothing like the calmness this world claims to offer. “I do not give to you as the world gives.” Even though violent incineration loomed before Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego they enjoyed God’s substantial peace that is totally unrelated to this world’s insubstantial peace.

Contrasting Substantial and Insubstantial Peace

Origin—Jesus specifically pointed out the origin of the peace of mind he offers. “My peace I give you.” The pronoun “my” directs our attention to Jesus’ peace, the peace that is in him. Actually, it’s more than in him; peace is Jesus. It’s his nature, his essence and his being. An ancient Hebrew scripture declares, “The Lord is peace.”⁽³⁾ Jesus doesn’t manufacture peace because peace is him.

In saying “my peace I give you” Jesus makes available to us a peace of mind that doesn’t waiver. How can we say that? Because “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.”⁽⁴⁾

Insubstantial peace is all the world can hold out to us. It is as fragile as a spider’s web and as elusive as fog. Worldly peace is here today and gone tomorrow; with us one moment but fleeing from us the next.

Pursue Jesus, the only Origin of substantial peace. Do everything in your power to lay hold of a sense of his presence. He is always with us, but when we don’t read his Word or spend private time with him we lose our conviction that he’s in us. Pursue Jesus with all your heart, soul and mind, and his peace will calm your thoughts and quiet your emotions.

Effect—Daniel chapter 3 shows three Hebrews unaffected by a raging King Nebuchadnezzar and the roaring flames of a giant furnace. Substantial peace, the

peace that originates in Jesus' person, permanently controlled their thoughts and feelings. They experienced the super human life of God's Spirit. The Holy Spirit dwelt in their human spirits creating a human/divine partnership that fortified them with peace of mind from heaven. Empowered by the Spirit of God who lived in them, these children of God remained firm in their purpose to put God first even if it cost their lives.

The world's insubstantial peace only places exceedingly impermanent peace in us. Everything on earth is subject to the law of decay. Therefore, peace built on money, possessions, achievements, relationships and ourselves is in the process of disappearing.

Submerge yourself in the Spirit of Jesus. Start your day in God's Word and not the news media. Begin each morning with a session of praise and worship of Jesus. This time with him gives his love an opportunity to bathe your mind and emotions in a fresh consciousness of his reality. Then his presence will quiet you with his love. ⁽⁵⁾

Choice—Jesus ended his promise of peace with these words: “Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” Yes, he offers heavenly peace of mind to people who live on earth. Nevertheless, we must choose to retain the peace he places in us. The word “let” means to allow or permit. So he commanded us to not permit or allow our hearts to be troubled. In other words, firmly grasp the peace that's in you. It's there—don't let it go!

Christians lose peace of mind by relying on their senses instead of trusting God's promises. Striving to explain life's difficulties always indicates we are living by what we see, hear and feel instead of standing firm on God's promises.

Terror inspiring surroundings assailed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. In spite of these menacing sights and sounds, they trusted in the Lord with all their hearts. They chose peace!

When fear attempts to rob you of peace, quote Psalm 56:3 to yourself: “When I am afraid, I will trust in you.” Then reinforce your power to choose peace with Isaiah 12:2: “I will trust and not be afraid.”

Jesus, the Prince of peace, is one with your spirit. “But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit.” ⁽⁶⁾ You don't always feel him near; you aren't continually aware of his presence. But as we saw earlier, he doesn't change, so the peace of God that is Jesus doesn't appear and disappear. When you don't feel peace, choose it! You can, because God declared, “The Lord blesses his people with peace.” ⁽⁷⁾

As we look to Jesus, the origin of substantial peace, we will enjoy freedom from this world's unreliable, flimsy peace that disappears like a mirage.

Let's say “no” to this world's insubstantial peace.

Footnotes:

1. Daniel 3:20

2. John 14:27
3. Judges 6:24
4. Hebrews 13:8
5. Zephaniah 3:17
6. 1 Corinthians 6:17
7. Psalm 29:11