Shalom – Profound Peace
Philippians 4:4-7

Intro
Years before her death, Elizabeth Taylor was once quoted in a popular tabloid saying, “God knows I have tried. I have tried fame, food, men, drugs, and drink, but I have never found peace.” The article continued stating that as Taylor looked at her sleeping mother so very near death, she sadly said, “Maybe death is the only peace.”

Many people are looking for peace, inner peace, a true lasting peace that transcends life’s circumstances.

I want to begin with considering the most basic question of all about peace. How would you define peace? Some say it is the absence of conflict and trouble. We know that Jesus description of peace didn’t mean merely the absence of interpersonal conflict, because conflict is a part of life. In fact, in John 16:33 Jesus said, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Peace in the Bible
Peace is a major theme in the Bible. It appears more than 80 times and it occurs at least 1 time in every one of the 27 books of the New Testament.

We need the peace which comes from God because at some point in our lives we all struggle to maintain the peace we really need.
• For some it will be the death of a loved one– a child, parent, or spouse.
• For others it will be a heart attack, cancer, or another life threatening disease.
• Still others face divorce, financial ruin, or the loss of a significant dream.
• Sometimes the tragedies aren’t even personal– who’ll ever forget the senselessness of 9-11. OR, more recent the threat of ISIS and terrorism.
• Tragedy comes into every life. The details vary, but the experience does not.

So calamity will come. How do you face it? Do you become anxious? Or, do you face it with calm?

Peace is not based on Circumstance
Peace is not a state of mind, or a circumstance in nature. It is a condition of the heart. It is a fruit of the Spirit, a gift from God.

Illustration: Junior Seau was well-known as a passionate, fist-pumping, emotional leader and superstar for the NFL's San Diego Chargers. In his 13-year pro football career, Seau made the Pro Bowl 12 times. He was also selected to the NFL 1990s All-Decade Team. Sadly, on May 2, 2012, at the age of 43, Seau took his own life. His death in northern San Diego County stunned the community who adored him for his service and outgoing personality. In an interview with Sports Illustrated, his former teammate and friend, Rodney Harrison, explains that in Seau's last days he was desperately searching for peace.

Harrison said: “He would tell me that the only time he truly felt at peace was when he was with his children or in the surf. He would say, ‘When I'm on those waves, it's the greatest feeling. I have no worries, no stress, no problems. I just forget about everything.’ Junior was always searching for peace.” (Source: Jim Trotter, "Why?" Sports Illustrated, May 14, 2012).
Philippians 4:6-7

*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.* [NKJV]

The peace (Greek: εἰρήνη) spoken here is tranquility of mind based on a right relationship with God.

The verb form for peace in Greek means "to hold together." You experience peace when nothing frightens you because you know everything is under control. No matter what happens, you know that everything between you and God is right and that he is in control.

When you remember that everything God is doing in your life is for your good - that produces peace.

Peace has nothing to do with circumstances or feelings. Spiritual peace doesn't necessarily involve peaceful circumstances. However, if you carry a peaceful heart into turbulent circumstances, you'll still experience peace.

This Fruit of the Spirit, peace, is a freedom from the fear of what might happen in the future and a freedom in the midst of present troubles, evil, or pain.

Jesus says, “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.” (John 14:27).

A troubled heart is feeling fear over something that may or may not happen. We might name this fear “worry.”

Then He goes on to say, “and do not be afraid.” Here is a second kind of fear: anxiety felt in the presence of current trouble, evil, or pain that is real.

In other words Jesus is saying, “Trust Me! It’s useless to worry about something over which you at times have no control, don’t worry over something that may or may not happen, and don’t be anxious and fearful even in the presence of trouble, evil, or pain.”

Did you know that peace flows out of love? When we are truly loved we experience peace. The Apostle John shares a fantastic promise in 1 John 4:18, “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.”

I can have peace in times of real trouble, evil, or pain; I don’t have to be troubled about what may or may not happen tomorrow because God’s perfect love drives out the spirit of fear. This is the “peace that surpasses understanding”, the peace the world cannot give because it comes from Christ and His love for us.

**Jesus is our Peace**

Jesus is the Prince of Peace, both in the sense that he was supremely peaceful Himself and in the sense that he dispenses his peace to those who are his. Even when he confronted Satan in the wilderness, Jesus had perfect peace, knowing his Father was continually with him and would supply his every need.

It is his own peace that he gives to his followers: “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.” (John 14:27).
Humanity was made to worship their Creator, and if we are out of sync with God there will never be peace in the soul. True peace is not to be found outside of the human heart. It is to be found inside through a relationship with God. Real peace consists not in the absence of danger but in the presence of God.

**Shalom**
The Hebrew word Shalom is understood to mean peace. Shalom is used to greet people and to bid them farewell and it means much more. However peace is only one small part of the meaning. Shalom is a superlative word that has deep connotations. It is truly profound.

This is what it truly means. It means completeness, wholeness, health, tranquility, welfare, safety, soundness, prosperity, perfectness, fullness, rest, harmony, the absence of agitation or discord, a state of calm without anxiety or stress.

Let’s look at a Bible verse that uses Shalom twice.

**Isaiah 26:3** has a wonderful promise for all true believers: “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is steadfast on You, because he trusts in You.”
You can personalize this verse and substitute him for your name. Like the following: “You will keep Isaac in perfect peace, whose mind is steadfast on You, because Isaac trusts in You.”

The word “Perfect” is not in the Hebrew text! Rather the word for “peace,” shalom, is repeated twice: “shalom – shalom.” It’s like a super-superlative.

Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein suggests that the second use of the word shalom is not so much for emphasis as it is for definition and interpretation. That is why there is a line between the two words in the Hebrew text. “This idiom of duplication distinguishes pseudo-peace from God’s peace, which is total peace, encompassing all dimensions of our nature. It begins with our minds and reaching our emotions, wills, and bodies, relationships, sense of righteousness, and practice of justice.” We can understand why English translators have used the word, “perfect,” even though it is not in the text.

God keeps the believer in a state of peace—through sorrow, sickness, pain, danger, and evil, whatever one’s lot may be.

The secret to such keeping, sustaining peace is twofold—(1.) a steadfast mind and (2.) trust in Jesus.

The word steadfast is the key. It has two basic meanings: (1.) “to lean upon” and (2.) “to support.”

To keep our peace, we must “lean on Jesus for our support.”

**Peace and Sin**
Finally, unconfessed sin will rob you of your peace. The fruit of the Spirit is the Peace of Jesus and it comes by grace through faith in Him. His peace is incompatible with sin. Unconfessed sin and the Peace of Jesus cannot coexist in the same heart.

J. C. Ryle in *Foundations of Faith* makes this point: “Without justification it is impossible to have real peace. Conscience forbids it. Sin is a mountain between anyone and God, and must be taken away. The sense of guilt lies heavy on the heart and must be removed. Unpardoned sin will murder peace. True Christians know this well. Their peace arises from a consciousness of their sins being forgiven, and their guilt being put away. . . . They have peace with God, because they are justified”

Has some unconfessed sin robbed you of God’s peace that surpasses all understanding? When you repent, God forgives, and peace is restored. The fruit of the Spirit is peace.” The source of that peace is Jesus. True peace is spiritual, inward, and it is “The peace of God which transcends all understanding.”

**Conclusion**
The peace of God is wonderful; it is there for each of us if we desire it. Just as we miss the sound of a gentle breeze blowing through the trees during a busy day, so we miss and take for granted the peace of God that is all around us. Pray in silence, flee from sin, stay on the path that is according to God’s will, guard your heart and allow yourself to give up control and trust God. Truly then we can have the peace of God which surpasses all understanding and which will fill our minds and hearts.

Remember the wonderful promise in:
**Isaiah 26:3** “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is steadfast on You, because he trusts in You.”