



# MISSING PEACE

## Want To Go Deeper? - Week 1

### Historical Context

Isaiah 26 is part of a larger section in the Book of Isaiah often referred to as the "Isaiah Apocalypse" (chapters 24-27). This section is characterized by its apocalyptic themes, focusing on God's ultimate victory over evil and the establishment of His kingdom. Here are some important historical contexts to consider:

1. **Time of Writing:** Isaiah prophesied during a tumultuous period in the history of Israel and Judah, around the 8th century BC. This was a time of political instability, with the Assyrian Empire posing a significant threat to the region. The Northern Kingdom of Israel was eventually conquered by Assyria in 722 BC, and Judah was under constant threat.
2. **Audience:** Isaiah's primary audience was the people of Judah. He spoke to them during a time of fear and uncertainty, as they faced external threats from powerful empires and internal issues of idolatry and injustice.
3. **Prophetic Message:** Isaiah's message in this chapter is one of hope and assurance. Despite the chaos and instability surrounding them, God promises a future where He will establish peace and righteousness. The chapter is a song of trust in God's salvation and His ability to bring about perfect peace.
4. **Theological Themes:** The chapter emphasizes themes of trust in God, the promise of salvation, and the establishment of God's kingdom. It highlights the idea that true peace (shalom) comes from God and is available to those who remain steadfast in their faith.

5. **Symbolism of the City:** The "strong city" mentioned in Isaiah 26:1 symbolizes God's protection and salvation. It contrasts with the cities of the world that are subject to destruction and chaos. This imagery would have been particularly poignant for the people of Judah, who were surrounded by hostile nations.
6. **Promise of Peace:** The promise of "perfect peace" (shalom shalom) in Isaiah 26:3 is a central theme. It underscores the completeness and wholeness of the peace that God offers, which is not dependent on external circumstances but on a steadfast trust in Him.

Understanding these contexts helps to appreciate the message of hope and assurance that Isaiah 26 offers, especially in times of uncertainty and fear. The chapter encourages believers to trust in God's eternal strength and His promise of peace.

## Deeper Application

Integrate "Shalom Shalom" or perfect peace into your daily life despite the challenges you face. Here are some ways to apply this concept:

1. **Trust in God's Presence:** The sermon emphasizes that peace is not found in the absence of problems but in the presence of God. This means cultivating a daily awareness of God's presence in your life, especially during difficult times. Practically, this can involve setting aside time for prayer, meditation on Scripture, and practicing gratitude to remind yourself of God's faithfulness and nearness.
2. **Mindset Shift:** Isaiah 26:3 highlights the importance of a steadfast mind. This involves a conscious effort to focus your thoughts on God and His promises rather than on your circumstances. Philippians 4:8 provides a practical guide for this by encouraging believers to think about things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy. This mindset shift can help reduce anxiety and increase peace.
3. **Leaning on God:** The sermon uses the metaphor of leaning on a harness while ziplining to illustrate the idea of fully relying on God. In your life, identify areas where you might be leaning on things that cannot support you—such as financial security, relationships, or personal achievements—and consciously choose to lean on God instead. This involves trusting Him with your worries and allowing Him to carry your burdens.
4. **Community and Support:** Engage with a community of believers who can support you in your journey towards peace. Sharing your struggles and victories with others can provide encouragement and accountability. It also allows you to experience God's peace through the love and support of others.
5. **Active Faith:** The sermon encourages putting into practice what you have learned from Scripture. This means actively living out your faith by serving others, practicing forgiveness, and being a peacemaker in your relationships. As you do so, you align yourself with God's purposes and experience His peace more fully.

By focusing on these application points, you can begin to experience the "Shalom Shalom" that God promises, allowing His perfect peace to permeate every aspect of your life, regardless of the external circumstances you face.

# Challenge

What is one area of your life where you are desperately seeking peace but have been leaning on your own understanding or external solutions rather than fully trusting in God?

Here's the challenge: Identify that area—whether it's a relationship, a financial concern, a personal struggle, or a fear about the future—and consciously choose to lean on God instead. This week, make a deliberate effort to shift your focus from the problem to the presence of God. Spend time each day in prayer, specifically asking God to help you trust Him with this area of your life. Meditate on His promises, like those found in Isaiah 26:3 and Philippians 4:7-8, and allow His peace to guard your heart and mind.

Additionally, take a practical step to reinforce this trust. It could be writing down your worries and surrendering them to God, seeking counsel from a trusted friend or mentor, or serving someone else in need to shift your perspective.

Remember, peace is not the absence of problems but the presence of God. As you lean into Him, may you experience the unshakable, undivided, perfect peace that only He can provide. Let this be the beginning of a journey towards a deeper, more steadfast faith, where God's peace reigns in every aspect of your life.