

Peace, and the Void Within

“Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever.”
Deut 23:1

This admonition was given to the children of Israel concerning their seeking of the kind of peace the heathen nations around them sought after.

What kind of peace is Moses referring to in this passage? He is referring to an external form of peace; a peace derived from the obtaining of something temporal or material.

The word itself is translated from the Hebrew shalom, which literally means: to be safe, happy, healthy or prosperous.

What happens to someone who derives their peace from these things when they are taken away? Their peace goes away with them. This is why the LORD, through Moses, commanded them to not seek this kind of peace.

This kind of peace that is dependent on external circumstances and events will never last. That is because one has very little, if any, control over any of these things. One can have his safety net, his health, his prosperity, his happiness, his very life jerked out from under him in a moments time, and without any warning. This produces insecurity and anxiety, the opposites of peace.

1

So what does one have to do to achieve lasting peace? One must fill the void within.

How does one do this? I'll answer that by recounting my own experience in seeking that inner peace.

I spent the first seventeen years of my adult life seeking after peace from external sources. I was blessed with good health, an opportunity to get a good education, a supportive family, and achieved a relatively fair amount of material success and prosperity during that time, but none of it brought me any real peace. I sought out the help of counselors and therapists, sought out religious remedies, but still I remained without peace. This condition took a toll on my relationships with other people, especially two marriages that both ended in divorce.

Then a couple of months before my 38th birthday, and not too long after my second divorce had been finalized, a friend invited me to attend a Christian meeting with him. I told him thanks, but no thanks, as I had grown up in a Christian denomination, had joined another as an adult, and I couldn't see where another one would be of any benefit to me. But he persisted, and so I reluctantly went with him. Little did I know that would turn out to be the most important night of my life.

2

The meeting was not in a “church,” but rather in a public auditorium, and there were a lot of people there—perhaps 1500 or so—which made me think that there must be something going on here to attract all these folks. Indeed there was.

There was a lectern on the stage, with a large screen above and behind it, upon which an overhead projector sat. A man in a suit came out on the stage and began write on the projector, Scripture verses, which were projected onto the screen. Those verses were from 1 Corinthians 15:1-4:

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

He then stepped away from the lectern and said these words, words which penetrated me like no others had ever done in my life:

3

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