

Call to Worship Numbers 6:22-26

The LORD spoke to Moses: Tell Aaron and his sons: You will bless the Israelites as follows. Say to them:

**The LORD bless you and protect you.**

**The LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.**

**The LORD lift up his face to you and grant you peace.**

Come and be blessed!

Prayer of Invocation Isaiah 26:3-4,7-8

**Loving God, those with sound thoughts you will keep in peace, because they trust in you. We trust in you LORD forever, for you are our rock for all ages. The path of right-living people is level. As the Leveler you even the road for the right-living. We're in no hurry, GOD. We're content to linger in the path, sign-posted with your decisions. Who you are and what you've done are all we'll ever want. Send your Spirit. Amen.**

The Word Luke 24; John 14, 16; Philippians 4

They were saying to each other, "The Lord really has risen!" **While they were saying these things, Jesus himself stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" They were terrified and afraid. They thought they were seeing a ghost.**

"I have spoken these things to you while I am with you. The Companion, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I told you. **"Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you. I give to you not as the world gives. Don't be troubled or afraid. In the same way, you have sorrow now; but I will see you again, and you will be overjoyed. No one takes away your joy.**

In that day, you won't ask me anything. I assure you that the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Up to now, you have asked nothing in my name. Ask and you will receive so that your joy will be complete. **Jesus replied, "Now you believe? I've said these things to you so that you will have peace in me. In the world you have distress. But be encouraged! I have conquered the world." Be glad in the Lord always! Again I say, be glad!**

Let your gentleness show in your treatment of all people. The Lord is near. Don't be anxious about anything; rather, bring up all of your requests to God in your prayers and petitions, along with giving thanks. **Then the peace of God that exceeds all understanding will keep your hearts and minds safe in Christ Jesus.**

From now on, brothers and sisters, if anything is excellent and if anything is admirable, focus your thoughts on these things: all that is true, all that is holy, all that is just, all that is pure, all that is lovely, and all that is worthy of praise. **Practice these things: whatever you learned, received, heard, or saw in us. The God of peace will be with you.**

Living the Word "What Makes Your Mind Peaceful?"

Luke 1:63-79 tells a story of Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist. He was married to Elizabeth, Mary's cousin. They had waited for years for a child, but none had come to them. Considered aged, they were losing hope in ever having a child. Zechariah was one of the temple priests and one day he was chosen to be the priest to go in the temple and burn incense.

While performing his duty alone in the inner sanctum of the temple, he was visited by an angel. He was frightened. *But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."*

*Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years." The angel said to him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time."*

It did happen as the angel foretold. The boy was born, and on his naming day, Zechariah spoke again with the words *"His name is John."* At that moment, Zechariah was able to speak again, and he began praising God. *Filled with the Holy Spirit, he prophesied, "Bless the Lord God of Israel because he has come to help and has delivered his people. You, child, will be called a prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way.*

*You will tell his people how to be saved, through the forgiveness of their sins. Because of our God's deep compassion, the dawn from heaven will break upon us, to give light to those who are sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide us on the path of peace."*

Another story happening shortly after the first: [Luke 2:25-32](#) *A man named Simeon was in Jerusalem. He was righteous and devout. He eagerly anticipated the restoration of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. The Holy Spirit revealed to him that he wouldn't die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Led by the Spirit, he went into the temple area.*

*Meanwhile, Jesus' parents brought the child to the temple so that they could do what was customary under the Law. Simeon took Jesus in his arms and praised God. He said, "Now, master, let your servant go in peace according to your word, because my eyes have seen your salvation. You prepared this salvation in the presence of all peoples. It's a light for revelation to the Gentiles and a glory for your people Israel."*

Both men waited most of their lifetimes for the coming of the Messiah, the one God would send to save the people. With the coming of John, the preparations would begin for the saving ministry of Christ. It took Zechariah time to trust what God told him, and he waited without voice until it was proven.

Even priests and pastors are human enough to question God's miracles. Simeon already had the trust before he encountered the word from the Holy Spirit. Both Zechariah and Simeon, when they could trust enough, were humbled and honored to see and know it would be the beginning of whatever was to come. Both men spoke of the peace of God, which they each yearned for.

This week many of you shared what makes your mind peaceful. If you're a person who struggles with getting to a peaceful mind, grab one of these suggestions for yourself. Take it as a gift for your life. I will read them in random order, as many of them are similar, even so by using a few different words it might connect with you more or less: "What makes your mind peaceful?"

Watching a Baby sleep

Looking out over a quiet body of water: lake, pond, stream

Sitting on the beach at sunset

Calm, quiet early mornings  
Waking from a restful night of sleep  
Bike rides and walks  
Listening to Gasisi Nana, by Claudia Martinez  
Hospice and nursing staff providing comfort measures as I wait for God's will to be accomplished in my aunt's life. -Matthew 5:9 "*Happy are people who make **peace**, because they will be called God's children.*"  
Being held in the arms of the one I love  
Sitting by a river enjoying nature  
Singing or playing Christian music  
Watching the sunset  
A sunset over the Gulf of Mexico  
Returning home  
Watering your garden  
Float fishing a river  
Watching a beautiful sunset  
Completing a difficult project or task successfully  
-Many of our responses are personal, yet we know that as we live in community, God's work has an effect on all of those around us.  
Walking in the flower garden – Memory Garden, a joy to all who come and take the time to reflect.  
Sitting on a rock beside a flowing stream  
Listening to Jan Erickson play Deep River  
Sewing -Creating, being productive can bring peace.  
Real buttered popcorn and an evening in a chair  
A daily devotion that speaks so directly to the 'peace' that Jesus promised  
Nature – seeing the world as something grander than just ourselves, often can shrink our issues.  
Gliding over a lake in the canoe – when the lake is like a sheet of glass, you can see nature totally at peace.  
Walking on a quiet country road  
The west wind moving over a field of barley (borrowed from a Sting song)  
Doing yoga  
Rocking in a rocker  
Consciously letting go  
Being with my grandchildren -Proverbs 29:17 Instruct your children; they will give you peace of mind and bring delight into your life.  
Baking  
A good night's sleep  
Praying  
Rhythm of the Ocean waves  
a manicured graveyard  
Walks – getting out to see God's wonder around you. How many of you grew up here? You are mightily blessed. How many of you moved here for work? You were vocationally blessed. How many of you moved up here for the trees or the lakes or the peace? You are wise! If you take time to look, God has created and is still creating all around you.  
Flute music  
Sitting on the front porch with the sun shining and the peaceful sound of silence and the feel of the gentle breeze  
water: lakes, streams, the ocean  
watching the one I love as they sleep in peaceful rest

calming words coming from nature

Coming to Worship! Like Zechariah and Simeon, we wait for whatever comes next, praying, as we do together, for God's Angels, Jesus and the Holy Spirit to intervene in the events of the day, changing our lives and humbling us. Living up here all of Creation sets the scene for us.

Even so, God never said to us that the road would be easy. In this world it is very difficult to live with peaceful minds. Genesis 15:13-15 " *Then the LORD said to Abram, "Have no doubt that your descendants will live as immigrants in a land that isn't their own, where they will be oppressed slaves for four hundred years. But after I punish the nation they serve, they will leave it with great wealth. As for you, you will join your ancestors in peace and be buried after a good long life."*

Many people in the world live in places much different than this great Northwoods. They are oppressed by others, at a loss for food and shelter. There are places where everything is gray and drab – no grass, no trees and very little life. Threats of bombs, and terror of unthinkable kinds...It must be much harder for them to know peaceful minds...To shout "Jesus saves!" may not be helpful, but when we work for peace; when we take a day to pray for Korea; when we send money to educate children that may not otherwise know how to find peace...in those ways we can truly help others find peace.

Leviticus 6 " *You must not make any idols, and do not set up any divine image or sacred pillar. You must not place any carved stone in your land, bowing down to it, because I am the LORD your God. You must keep my sabbaths and respect my sanctuary; I am the LORD. If you live according to my rules, keep my commands, and do them...I will grant peace in the land so that you can lie down without anyone frightening you."*

Matthew 10:12 *When you go into a house, say, 'Peace!'* We have the opportunity to give the best house gift to someone when we offer them the blessing of peace.

Luke 19:41-44 [It was his last trip to Jerusalem, riding on a donkey that some disciples had borrowed for him] As Jesus came to and observed the city, he wept over it. He said, " *If only you knew on this of all days the things that lead to peace. But now they are hidden from your eyes. The time will come when your enemies will build fortifications around you, encircle you, and attack you from all sides. They will crush you completely, you and the people within you. They won't leave one stone on top of another within you, because you didn't recognize the time of your gracious visit from God."*

If your mind isn't peaceful, I invite you to take your bulletin home and re-read the Call to Worship, Prayer and The Word: ***The LORD lift up his face to you and grant you peace.***

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***Jesus himself stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"***

***"Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you. I give to you not as the world gives.***

***But be encouraged! I have conquered the world."***

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