

Grace and peace to you from God the Father, Son and Spirit. Amen.

PRAY: Send forth Your peace dear Lord. Let us drink of Your Spirit and live.

His Peace Carries You Like a Baby

1. The believers mourn for Jerusalem and are comforted
2. The believers love Jerusalem and are content

In the name Jesus our Savior, dear fellow redeemed,

Jerusalem is besieged. At the time when Isaiah writes this, events are set into motion which will culminate in the invasion of the Babylonians who destroy the city, burn the Temple, and lead God's people into captivity. This is why the believers mourn.

But the object of concern for God and His people is not the visible splendor of Solomon's Temple or the geographical location of Jerusalem. It is not the loss of earthly peace or prosperity. Earlier in Isaiah, the Spirit describes Jerusalem as "the LORD of hosts dwells in Mt. Zion" (8:18). Yet later He also says, "Heaven is My throne and earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? ... But on this one will I look: on Him is poor and of a contrite spirit and who trembles at My Word." Jerusalem is not defined in this context as any visible thing; it is a disposition of the heart that concerns God. So Isaiah also writes: *Isaiah 2:3 Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the Torah, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*

Zion is the source and activity of God's Word. In the New Testament this is called "the Church." Whether back then or today, we're talking about essentially the same thing – God has chosen to visit His people and to reveal His name in no other way than through the proclaimed Gospel in the Church, within the walls of Zion.

So also, this spiritual Jerusalem is spoken of as God's source of salvation as God says in chapter 28, "I lay in Zion a stone, a tried and precious cornerstone." When Peter quotes this in his first epistle, he applies it to Jesus Christ – "the living stone, rejected by men, but chosen by God and precious." This spiritual Jerusalem is the place where God communes with His people, the heavenly dwelling place of the Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ.

We proceed with this understanding – the Jerusalem with which we are called to "rejoice" is the place of God's peace. Where the Word is going forth, where grace and forgiveness are proclaimed in Christ, there God communes with you. The Spirit speaks comfort and Jerusalem rejoices. Even today this Jerusalem surrounds us with God's

peace. Here we are carried as a baby. We mourn for her and are comforted. We love her and are content.

We consider our text which comes from

Isaiah 66:10–14 (NKJV)

10 *“Rejoice with Jerusalem, And be glad with her, all you who love her; Rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her;*

11 *That you may feed and be satisfied With the consolation of her bosom, That you may drink deeply and be delighted With the abundance of her glory.”*

12 *For thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, And the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream. Then you shall feed; On her sides shall you be carried, And be dandled on her knees.*

13 *As one whom his mother comforts, So I will comfort you; And you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.”*

14 *When you see this, your heart shall rejoice, And your bones shall flourish like grass; The hand of the Lord shall be known to His servants, And His indignation to His enemies.*

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

1. The believers mourn for Jerusalem and are comforted

Jerusalem is besieged. But this was not only a result of the foreign powers destroying the temple and taking the people hostage. The Babylonians were only the wake of the captivity that had already come upon the true Jerusalem. God’s Word was under attack and as a result the people were suffering spiritually. The truth of sin; the grace of God; the covenant promises were abandoned. Isaiah begins his book with these words:

Isaiah 1:8–9 8 So the daughter of Zion is left as a booth in a vineyard, As a hut in a garden of cucumbers, As a besieged city. 9 Unless the Lord of hosts Had left to us a very small remnant, We would have become like Sodom, We would have been made like Gomorrah.

A small group remains and mourns. They mourn because of the spiritual suffering that surrounds and invades the city. Wicked kings, superstitious mediums, and false teachers had laid siege to the place where God dwells. What happens when believers are constantly exposed to idolatry and sinful behavior.

I can remember working a warehouse job where if you didn’t use foul language, you were looked at funny, like, “what’s wrong with that guy.” It was hard not to join in. So also this proves true in any sinful setting. The type of physical sins that were taboo to even speak of one hundred years ago, are every day subject matter on the news today.

This is a time for us to mourn too. We mourn for the true Jerusalem which still suffers persecution and stands against the forces of Satan today. We too are being exposed to idolatry every day. Whether we like it or not, cultural influences affect your spiritual

way of thinking; your walk and your talk. We mourn because sin carries us away far too often. We mourn because we too often are afraid to speak up lest we be persecuted. We mourn because we too often go along or go nowhere in our defense of Christ.

We are like a child in distress. Jesus says in our Gospel text: "I send you out as lambs among wolves." What chance do we stand against the wolves that surround us? How many times can you count in just the last week where God has been shoved to the back burner? How many times can I count the times my flesh has thought it easier, if only this or that sin were ignored, if only this or that attitude were left to fester, if only I went the flow of the world ... But, by God's grace, we repent, we sorrow, we mourn –

... and the believers are comforted. ***13 As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; and you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.*** As this people are carried off into the hands of a foreign and pagan nation, surrounded by idolatry and sin, influenced by the weaknesses of their own sinful flesh, God speaks peace. Even though the Temple lay in ruins, Jerusalem would not truly be destroyed. Jerusalem goes with the believers where ever the Word is spoken and treasured.

As Isaiah says in chapter 1, *Isaiah 1:27 27 Zion shall be redeemed with justice, And her penitents with righteousness.*

From Jerusalem would come forth one to redeem God's people – from the oppression that the Babylonians would inflict ... from the oppression that you face – sickness, sadness, persecution ... and from the struggle against your own sinful thoughts and actions; Jerusalem is bought back, purchased with righteousness.

Righteousness goes forth from Jerusalem in the words and work of Jesus Christ.

11 That you may feed and be satisfied With the consolation of her bosom, That you may drink deeply and be delighted With the abundance of her glory."

The Church draws us into God's loving care. As a baby you are here fed with the milk of consolation. As a mother, God lifts you in His arms. This is known in the fellowship of believers, the body of Christ, where we are commissioned in our epistle for today "to bear one another burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." In Jerusalem, that is, in the midst of God's people where the gospel is being proclaimed and believed, you have comfort.

Righteousness goes forth, not from you or your works; this is an alien righteousness which comes from God gives you peace.

Romans 4:24–25 24 [Righteousness] shall be credited to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification. Romans 5:1–2 1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have

peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Peace with God is to know that neither life nor death, nor the worst of your sins can separate you from Him who died and rose. You stand in the waters of baptism, washed and forgiven and called His own dear child. Jerusalem is the place where the blood of Christ is poured out, the place where the cross stands, the place of eternal redemption. You who commune today are standing in the peace of God that cannot be taken from you. His body, His blood live and give.

John 10:28–29 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand.

2. The believers love Jerusalem and are content

This is the peace which surpasses all understanding. We who once mourned, now rejoice. We who were once lost are found. We who were once enemies of God, now love Him.

Could the people of Jerusalem speak of peace when hoards of foreign warriors, burning, pillaging, taking captive? Yes. Can you speak of peace when hoards of doubts, troubles, anxieties surround your life? Yes.

Christ commissioned His disciples to go forth speaking “peace to this house.” “If a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon it.” Peace rests upon this house, for the kingdom has not left us in judgment.

14 ... The hand of the Lord shall be known to His servants, And His indignation to His enemies.

The hand of the LORD is extended to take you up into His arms and His care. We begin each service in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. When you sing “Amen,” you are calling upon your own baptism for all the blessings God has given you. This is the hand of the LORD known only to His servants.

11 That you may feed and be satisfied with the consolation of her bosom.

If you’ve had any experience with babies, you know there are certain things only a mother can provide. Maybe you’re the relative that has been asked to watch the baby for a couple hours while mom is out shopping. Within an hour, the baby is screaming. So you try the obvious – food and diaper. It works for a while, then it starts all over again. The mother comes home and says, “Oh, I know what she needs.” As if magic, mom does her thing – nursing, pacifier, rocking chair, walking, bouncing, singing – whatever it might be, mom seems to know just what to do. She soon drifts off to sleep

and leaves her troubles behind. You lay that baby down and wonder what happened to the screaming, squirming baby that was with you just moments ago. All you see now is peace. The definition of contentment.

God has to give us just what we need, something only He could give. True consolation will never be found out there. Spiritual contentment will not be found in a satisfying job, a well behaved family, a life where everything fits into the place I want it to be; a spouse or employee, having the newest toys, the newest clothes – this too is vanity and grasping for the wind. If we place our trust in such things, we are left in bondage to serve them. These selfish shackles are broken only by the love of Christ.

Here in Jerusalem, in the presence of God through Word and Sacrament, the hand of the LORD give you what no one else could: Christ. Contentment is yours in knowing this eternal peace given right here, right now. The enemies of Christ will never know this, but will continue striving after a peace which does not exist.

12 On her sides shall you be carried, And be dandled on her knees. ...

Your life in Christ and in this fellowship is not to be a time of perpetual mourning. ***10 Rejoice for joy all you who mourn for her.***

It is time to rejoice. Eternal life is yours! There are no works demanded, there is no price left to be paid. He carries you in His arms, forgiving you freely for Christ's sake.

12 For thus says the Lord: "Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, And the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream."

The glory of the Gentiles flows to you. God is working all the world's vain pursuits together for your good. All the striving up the corporate ladder, all the oppression that you might receive because you are a Christian, all the so called wealth of the world God has taken as booty and is using in service to you. For we know that "all things work together for good to those who love God." Not even "the gates of hell" will prevail against the love of Christ. He "was delivered for your sins and raised again because you have been declared righteous."

The resurrection culminates in this hope. In worse distresses, when your health has turned bad, when you are struck with tragedy, when you age and chronic pain plagues you – see this peace flowing to you in Christ's resurrection. ***14 When you see this, your heart shall rejoice, And your bones shall flourish like grass.*** Your own bones, that sore back, that broken and grieving heart, that death looms over you will all be changed. When you see this – when you see the full culmination of God's redemption. Then your very bones will grow and prosper like the green grass did this spring. The fruits of this joy are eternal.

Again I will say, Rejoice! “For this mortal will put on immortality, then will be brought to pass the saying – O Death where is your sting, O Grave where is your victory? Thanks be to God who give us the victory through Christ Jesus our Lord. Stand fast therefore, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the LORD, knowing your labor is not in vain in the LORD.” (1 Corinthians 15).

Yes, His peace has, is and, will carry you like a baby unto the joys of eternity. You mourn for Jerusalem and are comforted. You love Jerusalem and are content. Amen.