

Perfect Peace

Isaiah 26:3-4

Perfect Peace

Introduction

Perfect Peace

Introduction

This is the time of year when peace is a much wished for, much longed for commodity.



Perfect Peace

Introduction

Sometimes it goes peacefully for some people – but not always for everyone.



Perfect Peace Introduction

Thirty-five years ago this past week, John Lennon was killed outside his home by a lone gunman who was simply unwilling to “give peace a chance.”



Perfect Peace Introduction

Christmas wishes aside,
thirty-five years later, peace
of any kind still seems
elusive.



Perfect Peace Introduction

- Some people say the solution is to ban all guns.
- Others think we should all carry them.

Perfect Peace Introduction

- Some people blame the police (pointing out that they are out of control).
- Others point out how dangerous it is to be a police officer.

Perfect Peace Introduction

- Gunmaker Smith & Wesson is laughing all the way to the bank. BusinessInsider.com reported on December 7,

Smith & Wesson's sales have been hot, and the company's investors have been rewarded generously.

Shares are up 7.5% on Monday, and they're up 115% since the beginning of the year.

Perfect Peace Introduction

- Our lack of peace is obvious and is compounded by constant rhetoric inciting us to fear and anger.
- If you want people to do something, point out all the reasons that they need to be fearful and angry.

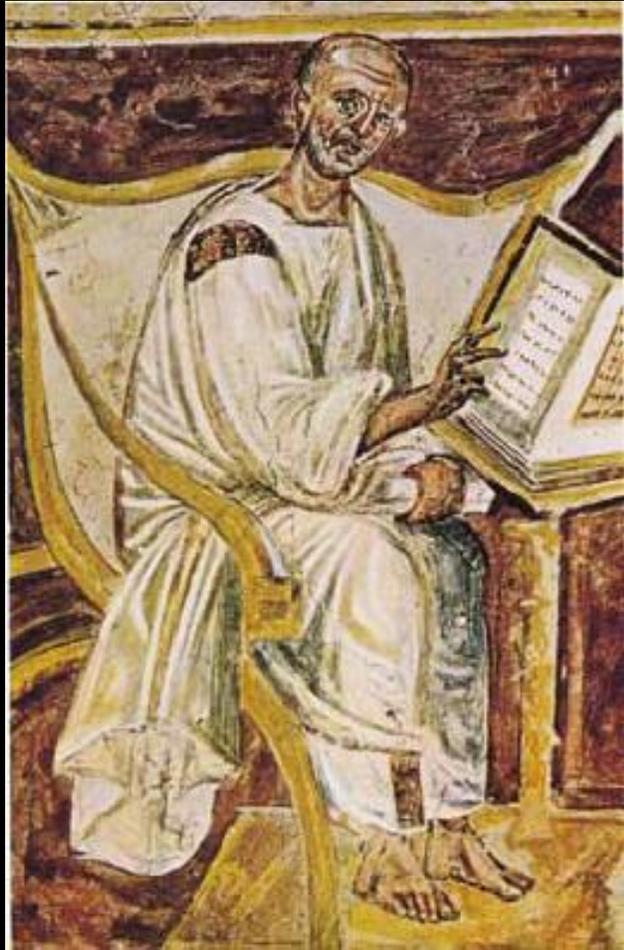
Perfect Peace Introduction

- Fear and anger motivate because they play into the default settings that we as humans share.
- Peace and calm are far less intuitive.



Perfect Peace

Introduction

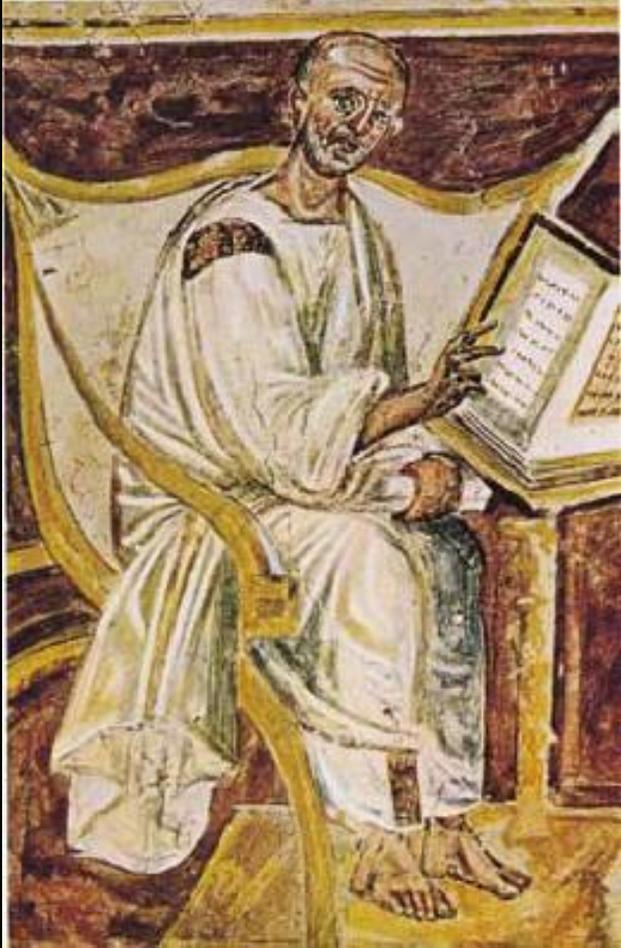


- Long ago, Augustine notice that our hearts are naturally restless.

*– Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430 A.D.),
North African Church Father*

Perfect Peace

Introduction



“Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee.”

*– Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430 A.D.),
North African Church Father,
Confessions, Book I, Chapter I*

Perfect Peace Introduction

- Where do we find perfect peace?
- How do we experience perfect peace?
- Let's read our verses together – **Isaiah 26:3-4**

True Peace vs. False Peace

True Peace vs. False Peace

- If we are going to find rest,
- If we are going to find peace,
- If we are going to find the calm that we so long for,
- We are going to have to find it in God alone.

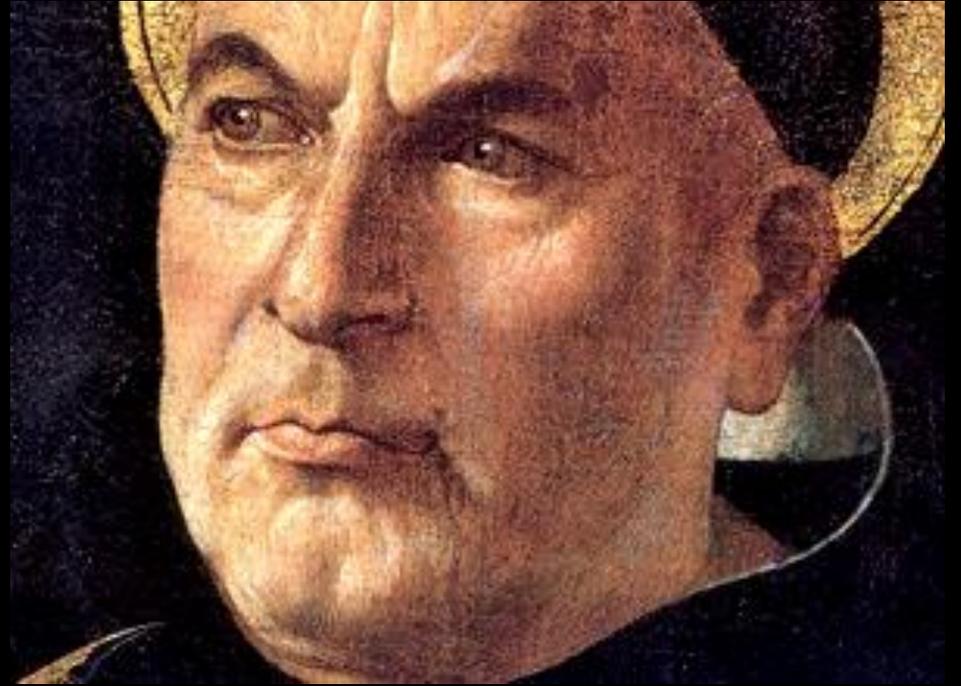
True Peace vs. False Peace

- There is also a false peace masquerading as the real thing.
- In the 13th Century, Thomas Aquinas wrote on it.

True Peace vs. False Peace

Peace ... may be either true or apparent. There can be no true peace except where the appetite is directed to what is truly good ...

– Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274)



True Peace vs. False Peace

... since every evil, though it may appear good in a way, so as to calm the appetite in some respect, has, nevertheless many defects, which cause the appetite to remain restless and disturbed. ...

– Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274)



True Peace vs. False Peace

... Hence true peace is only in good men and about good things. The peace of the wicked is not a true peace but a semblance thereof.

– Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274)



True Peace vs. False Peace

- Thomas saw the tendency we have to desire peace even when that peace is self-deceptive.
- Isaiah also observed this tendency in Israel.
- It involved a desire for a peaceful falsehood that stemmed from a rejection of God.

True Peace vs. False Peace

Isaiah 30:-9-11 (ESV) ⁹ For they are a rebellious people, lying children, children unwilling to hear the instruction of the LORD;

¹⁰ who say to the seers, “Do not see,” and to the prophets, “Do not prophesy to us what is right;

 speak to us smooth things, prophesy illusions,

¹¹ leave the way, turn aside from the path,

 let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel.”

False Peace and False Prophets

False Peace and False Prophets

- Where the true prophets of God were rejected, false prophets rose up to fill in the gaps.
- And the false prophets knew how to proclaim peace.

False Peace and False Prophets

Jeremiah 6:13-14 (ESV) ¹³ For from the least to the greatest of them, everyone is greedy for unjust gain; and from prophet to priest, everyone deals falsely.

¹⁴ They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace.

False Peace and False Prophets

Jeremiah 8:10-12 (ESV) ¹⁰ Therefore I will give their wives to others and their fields to conquerors, because from the least to the greatest everyone is greedy for unjust gain; from prophet to priest, everyone deals falsely.

¹¹ They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace.

False Peace and False Prophets

Ezekiel 13:9-10 (ESV) ⁹ My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and who give lying divinations. They shall not be in the council of my people, nor be enrolled in the register of the house of Israel, nor shall they enter the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord God. ¹⁰ Precisely because they have misled my people, saying, 'Peace,' when there is no peace ...

False Peace and False Prophets

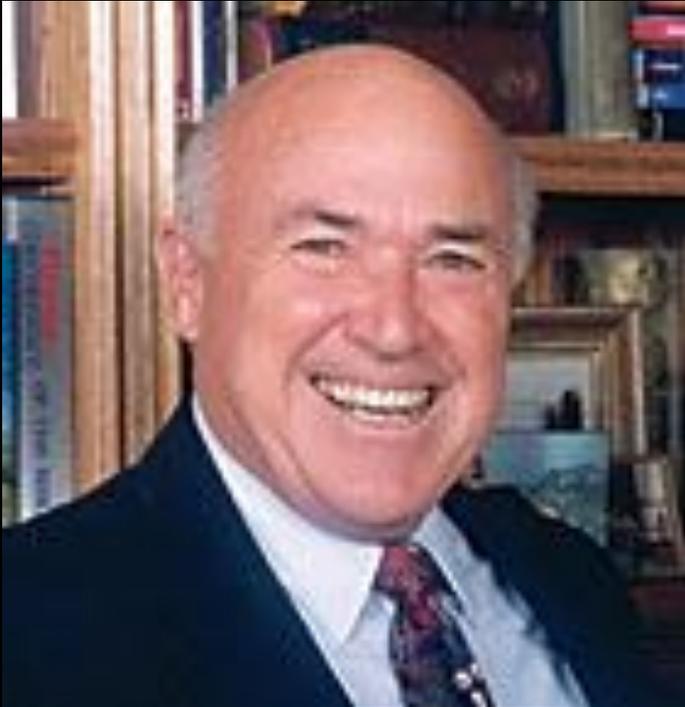
Ezekiel 13:15-16 (ESV) ¹⁵ Thus will I spend my wrath upon ...
¹⁶ the prophets of Israel who prophesied concerning Jerusalem
and saw visions of peace for her, when there was no peace,
declares the Lord GOD.

Peace with God

Peace with God

- The true peace we long for begins when we make our peace with God.

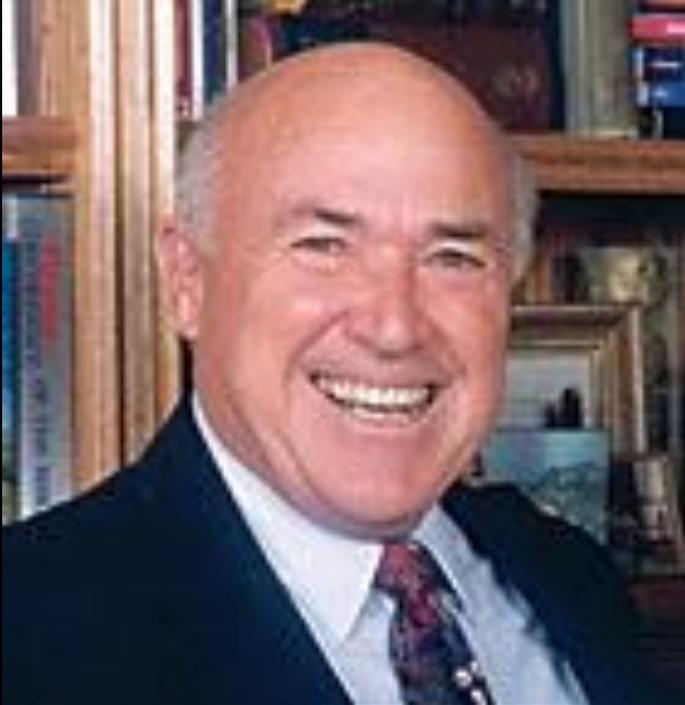
Peace with God



There is a perfect peace that is available to us as children of God. First, there is peace with God. That is accomplished the moment we surrender our lives to Jesus Christ ...

– Chuck Smith (1927 – 1913)

Peace with God



As long as you are fighting with God, there will be no peace with God. But when you surrender, you are at peace with God. And it feels great to know that I'm no longer running from God and fighting with God.

– Chuck Smith (1927 – 1913)

Peace with God

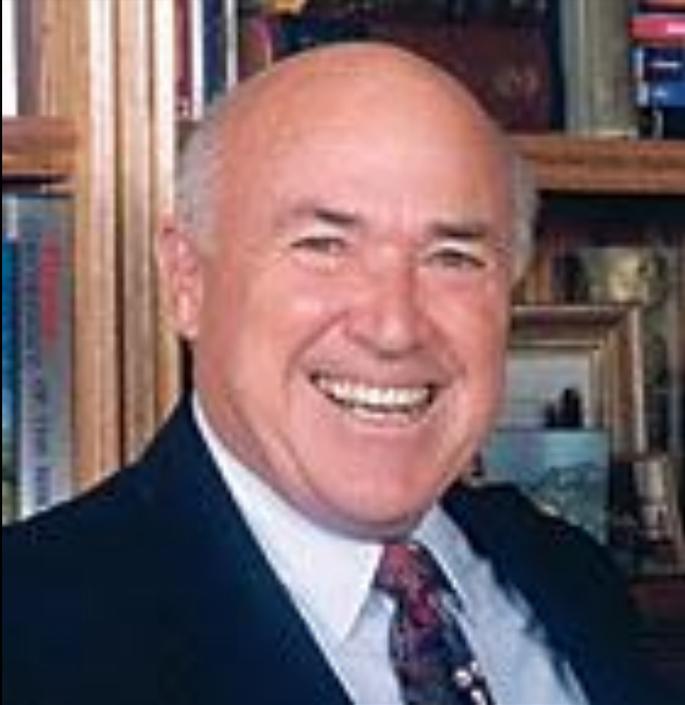
- When we surrender our lives to Christ, peace with God is one of the outcomes.
- He no longer sees us as guilty, but declares us justified by faith – that is, Christ's righteousness is credited to our account.

Peace with God

Romans 5:1 (ESV) Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Peace of God

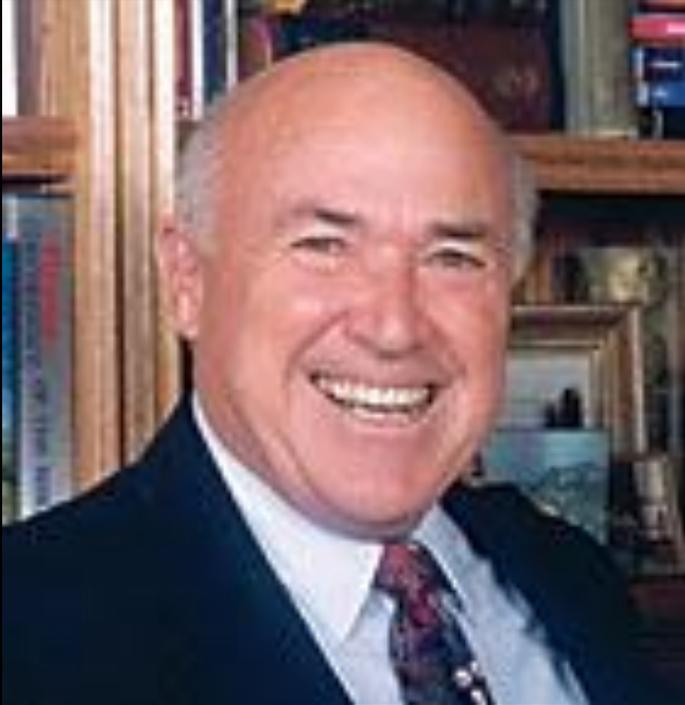
The Peace of God



There is also such a thing as the peace of God. There are many people who have made their peace with God, but they aren't experiencing the peace of God. Their life is still in turmoil. ...

– Chuck Smith (1927 – 1913)

The Peace of God



The peace of God comes when you take each situation in your life and rest it fully in His hands. You stop looking at the problems and start looking at the Lord.

– Chuck Smith (1927 – 1913)

The Peace of God

- So there is the peace we have with God – the byproduct of our surrendering to him.
- There is also the peace of God – a true (not false or deceptive) peace that only he can give.

The Peace of God

Philippians 4:4-7 (ESV) ⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. ⁵ Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The Peace of God

- Prayer is an expression of our trust in the Lord.
- Therefore, the peace of God is to some degree an intentional peace on our part.
- It's part of an overall mindset that we need to adopt as members of God's family.

The Peace of God

Colossians 3:14-16 (ESV) ¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

The Peace of God

- This peace of God can be cultivated.
- As our lives come more and more under the influence of God's Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit – of which peace is one part – will (super)naturally begin to grow.

The Peace of God

Galatians 5:22-24 (ESV) ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

The Peace of God

- The fruit of the Spirit is the opposite of a restless, fearful existence.
- Once this fruit is evident in our lives, we can begin to peacefully influence others.
- Jesus included peacemakers among the Beatitudes.

Peacemakers

Peacemakers

Matthew 5:2-9 (ESV) ² And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

⁵ “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Peacemakers

- Matthew 5:2-9 (ESV)** ⁶ “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
- ⁷ “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.
- ⁸ “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
- ⁹ “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

Peace as a Byproduct of Trust

Peace as a Byproduct of Trust

- Read **Isaiah 26:3-4** again.
- The initial act of our will is an act of trust.
- God's perfect peace is an outcome or a byproduct.
- Consequently, trusting in God should be our focus.

Peace as a Byproduct of Trust

Proverbs 3:5-6 (ESV) Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not lean on your own understanding.

⁶ In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.

Peace as a Byproduct of Trust

Psalm 20:7-8 (ESV) ⁷ Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.
⁸ They collapse and fall,
but we rise and stand upright.

Peace as a Byproduct of Trust

Psalm 118:8-9 (ESV) ⁸ It is better to take refuge in the LORD
than to trust in man.

⁹ It is better to take refuge in the LORD
than to trust in princes

Peace as a Byproduct of Trust

Psalm 125:1 (ESV) Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion,
which cannot be moved, but abides forever.

Peace as a Byproduct of Trust

There is therefore infinite room to trust Him even—especially—when we are shocked, surprised, and scandalized by some evil whose good result we simply do not see. We do not have divine eyes. But there is One Who does. Those are the two most salient facts of our existence.

*— Peter Kreeft, Professor of Philosophy,
Boston College*



Peace as a Byproduct of Trust

- Trust is necessary in a world where we cannot control all possible outcomes.
- It's God's world, not ours.
- If we trust him he promises us his peace.

Perfect Peace

Conclusions

Perfect Peace Conclusions

- Peace and trust are powerfully linked by Isaiah.
- Read **Isaiah 26:3-4** one last time.

Perfect Peace Conclusions

- We desire peace, we long for it, we pray for it.
- In response, God asks us to trust him.

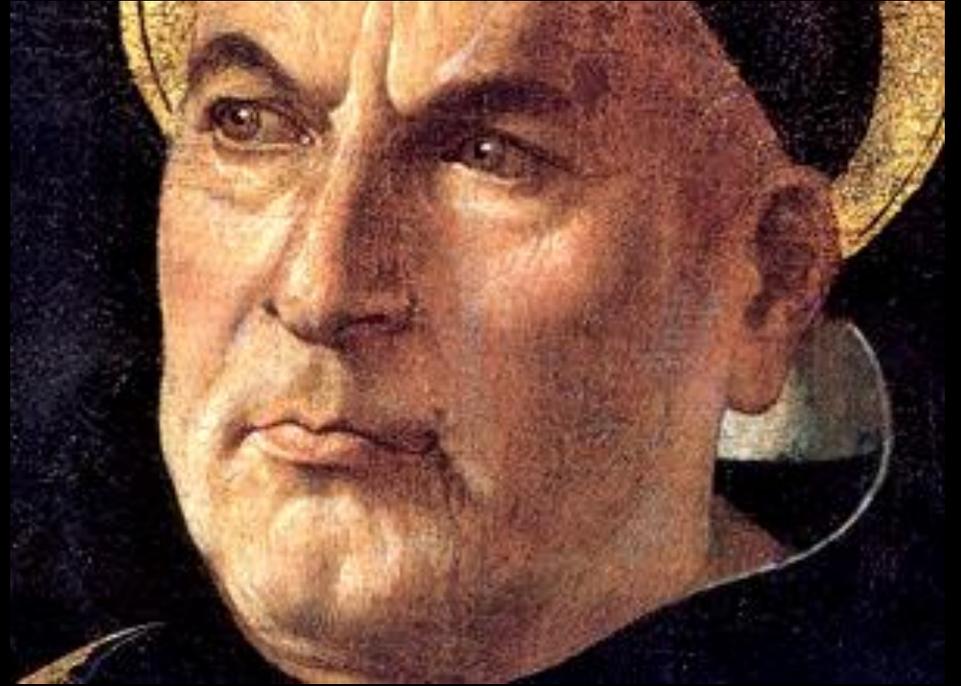
Perfect Peace Conclusions

- We may think peace would come if we had more information – more explanations.
- Going back to Thomas Aquinas, he noticed that explanations do not normally matter anyway.

Perfect Peace Conclusions

To one who has faith, no explanation is necessary. To one without faith, no explanation is possible.

– Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274)



Perfect Peace Conclusions

- Therefore, let's start by keeping our minds stayed on Jesus.
- Let greater trust be our goal, making ourselves receptive to the peace that God genuinely desires to give.

Perfect Peace Conclusions

- Let's give peace a chance – but remember that peace is a byproduct of trust in the Lord.



Perfect Peace

Conclusions



+
KEEP
CALM
AND
TRUST
JESUS

- During this season, when peace is that much wished for, much longed for commodity,
- Let's remember that Jesus is the source of the peace we so earnestly desire.

Perfect Peace Conclusions

Isaiah 9:6 (ESV) For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Perfect Peace

Introduction

Luke 2:14 (NIV)

Glory to God in the
highest heaven,
and on earth
peace to those on
whom his favor
rests.

