



Jehovah Shalom – The Lord is Peace

SHALOM

Let me ask you this morning – how is your peace?

Jesus said in **John 14:27: Peace I leave**

with you, My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

Like many Hebrew words, the word **SHALOM** which we commonly translate as “peace” has a wider meaning than the English word.

We may just think it applies to the absence of conflict or a calmness of spirit.

But together with these, the Hebrew word *shalom* also carries a greater connotation of well-being, health, safety, prosperity, wholeness and completeness.

First song – Faithful One.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uxviwvjyg1w>

Peace is much more than the lack of struggle. Peace is the wholeness that comes when you pay off a debt or finish a project.

It is interesting to note that the Hebrew word for all, everything complete also uses the shepherds staff. God views shepherding as bringing about peace and wholeness.

The Hebrew word picture describes how shalom comes. When the root cause of chaos is destroyed, wholeness comes. We must do more than just mop up the water for a short time that may look like peace. Unless we fix the leak, there can be no real peace.

Peace does not run from problems but faces them.

In all areas of life, in marriage, friendship or with our walk with God, only when the root issue is resolved will peace come.

This is especially true when it comes to sin. Only God can destroy the power of sin; only the cross can bring us wholeness, completion and peace.

In modern Hebrew, a common greeting equivalent to “How are you?” is “***Mah shalomkah?*** This literally means “how is your shalom? How is your well-being?”

Scripture: Numbers 6:24-26

NIV it reads: *May the Lord bless you and protect you*

May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you

May the Lord show you His favour and give you peace.

This is an abbreviated version of the priestly benediction which is related to worship and purity in Chapters 5 and 6.

This is a prayer on behalf of the people as the priests sought God’s blessings for Israel.

It is interesting to note that this short version was found to be inscribed on a silver amulet excavated at Ketef Hinnom, southwest of Jerusalem’s Old City.

On a second, larger silver amulet from the same tomb the complete benediction was inscribed in words almost identical.

In the days of the 2nd temple priests pronounced a blessing at each day’s sacrifice or at the end of services. This blessing is still used in Jewish and Christian liturgy as a way of seeking divine blessing.

It is a much wider blessing that we may think. It is asking God to supply our physical as well as emotional needs.

The first half of this verse includes health, wealth and fertility, while the protection mentioned in the second half was needed for all manner of dangers.

This supplication is echoed in the language of **Psalm 121:3-8**

He will not let you stumble. The one who watches over you will not slumber. Indeed he who watches over Israel neither slumbers or sleeps.

The Lord Himself watches over you. The Lord stands beside you as your protective shade. The sun will not harm you by day nor the moon at night.

The Lord keeps you from all harm and watches over your life. The Lord keeps watch over you as you come and go, both now and forever.

These heartfelt appeals are still good models for prayer and for the blessings that God's people can seek for all humanity. The entire poem draws attention to the Lord as the source of all good things.

The desire for God's smile is often translated more literally *may He make His face shine upon you, be gracious to you.*

God's people need His grace and mercy in a dangerous world.

Psalm 31:16 Let your favour shine on your servant. In Your unfailing love, rescue me.

Psalm 67:1 May God be merciful and bless us. May His face smile with favour on us.

Psalm 80:3 Turn us again to Yourself, O God. Make Your face shine down upon us, only then will we be saved.

God's favour – the display of His face or countenance – refers to His approval and special attention.

Psalm 30:7 Your favour, O Lord, made me as secure as a mountain. Then you turned away from me and I was shattered.

Divine peace or shalom is not just the absence of conflict or violence; God's peace brings complete well-being, health and wholeness.

Knowing the broader meanings helps us to understand the Bible better. For instance, God says to Abraham in:

Genesis 15:15 You, however, will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age.

This doesn't just mean that Abraham will not be at war, or even that he will have a calm spirit, but really that his life will end in well-being and completeness.

Peace, in its traditional meaning, is also of great importance in the Scriptures. Sometimes we may believe that if our relationship is right with God, our relationships with others are not particularly important.

But God doesn't want our worship until we are at peace with others.

Jesus said in Matthew 5:23-24 If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother, then come and offer your gift.

In this saying, Jesus may have had a specific type of offering in mind, call the peace (*shelem*) or fellowship offering. Most sacrificial offerings were given entirely to God, but the peace offering was eaten in part by the worshipper and his family.

It was as if God had invited them to dinner at His table, symbolic of true friendship in that culture. It was a celebration of

the peace between all participants, between God and all of the family members.

I wonder if Jesus had been thinking of this at the time of the Lord's Supper?

Interestingly, as we move into partaking of Communion Jesus' sacrifice is in the form of a peace offering.

Second Youtube song

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4MUNywHsZPU>

Jesus held up the bread and wine and said that they represent His body and blood as the sacrifice; and then He invited His disciples (and us) to eat of it.

By doing so, we are partaking in a meal of peace with God, celebrating a new relationship with Him through Jesus' atonement.

Through Christ, God offers all of us *shalom* in all the many senses of that word.

שְׁלוֹמִים