



Scripture Reading

You keep him in perfect peace
whose mind is stayed on you,
because he trusts in you.
Trust in the Lord forever,
for the Lord God is an everlasting rock.
Isaiah 26:3-4

Devotional

I want some peace and quiet. Maybe you have thought this or even said it. Perhaps, a little peace and quiet is on your Christmas list. As school gets closer to being out for Christmas break and the kids will be home all day, Christmas parties begin to stack up, preparing your own house for Christmas, peace and quiet seem to be off in the distant future. The notion of 'peace and quiet' provides us with a snapshot of how many have come to understand the word peace. For many now and even during the time of the Roman Empire, peace was about an absence. Peace meant that there was an absence of conflict. For Rome, it was peace with foreign nations or rather, simply the lack of war between them. For our current context, peace is the absence of conflict with someone else, be it a friend or family member, or even the absence of noise.

For Jesus, however, peace was not about absence. Peace is about wholeness. The word often found for 'peace' in the Bible is the word 'shalom.' Shalom refers to something that is complex and has many parts, but is complete and whole. For you to have the peace given by God is to be a person who is complex, but still be complete in the midst of varying circumstances. As we go throughout our Christmas preparations and parties, we have the opportunity to be people of peace in the midst of an active season. As we prepare our hearts for the coming of our King Jesus, we ask just as Paul does in 2 Thessalonians 3:16, that "the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way."

Response

Take some time to think through these questions:
-What's causing you to have a lack of peace right now?
-What is your understanding of peace and how does it line up with the biblical notion of 'shalom?'
-Spend some time in prayer asking God to fill you with peace, not the world's peace, but the peace that comes from God (John 14:27).