

**CALVARY PANDAN
BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 26

ISAIAH

CHAPTER 26

Theme: "Praising the LORD for Confidence!"

THEME VERSE

Isaiah 26:3-4 (KJV) "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength."

INTRODUCTION

Trust and confidence go hand in hand. Most people have both ingredients to live by. The main difference is in the object of our trust and confidence. Some put their trust in and have gained much confidence in their money. As long as they have money, they walk confidently and dare to look everyone in the eye without apology. They believe that they have made it in life. They see others as the ones who are outside trying to get in whereas they are already inside looking out at the world.

Others find their trust and confidence in education. Their goal is to get a university education followed by post-graduate degrees believing

that these paper qualifications will open doors for them and keep these doors open indefinitely, or so they believe. Come what may, they will strive their utmost to pursue distinction in education because education is the master that unlocks the secret to a successful life. Once they have obtained their doctoral degrees, they walk tall brimming with confidence because few have their educational success.

Some are a little more philanthropic and view life as one of good works. As long as good works are done liberally and sacrificially without expecting anything in return especially from the ones they help, they find confidence in their own good philanthropic self. They spend their life disdaining the luxurious lifestyle and scathingly despise those who pursue wealth. While they spend their lifetime pursuing one good cause after another, they take pride in their good works in the same manner as the abovementioned take pride in their respective accomplishments.

The common denominator in all the three groups of people is that they all have subjective notions of what makes life meaningful. Based upon this definition, they pursue it with gusto and when they find it, they sincerely believe that they have arrived and that is their confidence. Based upon this confidence they put their trust. They truly feel good about themselves as they go through life.

However, Isaiah's perspective of confidence and trust is not in himself or anything that his mind has

concocted. His entire confidence is based upon God who has revealed Himself to Isaiah. This is the heartbeat of Isaiah 26. It was not a confidence in man or even in nation or the works of God but the God who worked in the lives of His people. Wherein is your confidence in life? Is the confidence of Isaiah your confidence too?

OUTLINE

1. Trust in God and Not in Walls (vv.1-4);
2. The Way of the LORD is Righteous! (vv. 5-11);
3. The LORD will Ordain Peace! (vv. 12-19);
4. Patiently Wait (vv. 20-21).

COMMENTARY

Trust in God and Not in Walls!

“In that day” immediately ties the preceding chapter to Isaiah 26. The phrase refers to the day when the LORD will reign in Jerusalem during the millennium and God’s people are promoted, and the enemies of God punished. In that day, the people of God will sing the song described in Isaiah 26. The place where this song is sung is the land of Judah. It is called the land of Judah rather than the land of Israel probably due to the present state of the divided kingdom where soon the Northern Kingdom, Israel would be destroyed by the Assyrians. The true representation of the visible manifestation of God’s grace and mercies was Judah and not Israel because Israel worshipped the golden

calves whereas the Jews still had the right place of worship which was Jerusalem. Also Judah had the priesthood as well as Davidic dynasty through which the Messiah ultimately came. These are the probable reasons for the LORD to name it Judah rather than Israel. This would be the Land of Judah during the time of the millennium when Christ will be reigning on earth.

The strength of the city is praised. The city here refers to Jerusalem, the capital city of Christ’s kingdom on earth. It is a strong city not because of the walls and bulwarks i.e. ramparts that were built around it. These were manmade protections that would not be the basis of Jerusalem’s strength. The strength of the city lies in one word, “salvation.” This is the salvation that Christ obtained for all believers. This salvation overcomes sin for eternity in the lives of all the saints! This is the strength of the city of Jerusalem! The finished work of Christ on the cross of Calvary is the strength of the city! How wonderful is our salvation in Christ Jesus.

The commanding cry is an imperative, to open the gates of the city! This means to welcome the people of God into the city! The people of God are described here as “the righteous nation which keepeth the truth.” The word for “keepeth” means “to put a hedge around for protection.” The emphasis is on the people who consider the Truth of God very highly explaining why they put a hedge around it. Of course they would obey and practise God’s Word in their lives.

But that is not the emphasis here but rather one of highest regard for God's Word. The attitude to the Word of God is very important to God. Those who have a low view of God's Word better beware. Those who believe that God did not preserve His perfect Word perfectly better beware. Open the gates of this glorious city so that God's people may enter in.

God in turn will keep His people in perfect peace. The word for keep here is a different Hebrew word. It means "to protect by keeping one close." The intimacy in the act of protection is emphasised here rather than the mere act of protection as in verse 2. The LORD will keep His people close to Him in perfect peace. Nothing will take this peace away from them. They will no longer fret over anything. The mind of God's people will stay on the LORD. The word for "stay" means "to lean on" or "to take hold of." The mind of God's people will no longer lean on his own wisdom or knowledge but that they will lean only on God and take hold of him all their days. Therefore the perfect peace of God mentioned here will be his forever. The people of God will do this because they trust God. Trust is a very precious commodity in the believer's relations with God. If he cannot trust God, he will never walk by faith and have any peace let alone perfect peace! The people of God trust Him and therefore they lean on Him. God will grant to them this perfect peace.

This trust is emphatically stated again in verse 4. The duration of this trust is forever. The people of God

must never for one moment stop trusting God. This perpetual trust is good for the believer. This is the way of faith and life. There is no other way that he can please his God other than to trust Him forever. For in his trust in the LORD, he must realize that in the LORD Jehovah is everlasting strength. The believers will never fall or lack strength to go through all circumstances of life. Surely the believers of God have experienced this while they were on earth! This is a song from the heart rather than from the head that they will gladly sing!

The Way of the LORD is Righteous!

The focus switched from the believers to the unbelievers. It is the destruction of the kingdom of the unbelievers that is mentioned. The LORD has brought down the ones who dwelt on high. The word for bring down literally means to press or to sink or to make them prostrate. It is to sink a person holding onto a toy boat pressing it down beneath the water until it is below the surface. These enemies of God thought that they were invincible because of the height of their earthly power. But the LORD has brought them down. They hide in their lofty city. The lofty city i.e. the high and inaccessible city will the LORD also bring low. The word for bring low is repeated for emphasis. It literally means "to humiliate." How low will the LORD bring down the lofty city of the enemies of God? He will reduce it to the ground even to the dust. There is nothing lower than dust as it is usually found beneath one's sandals. (v.5)

The foot shall tread down the lofty city. It will not be the feet of the strong and mighty. The LORD declares that the so-called inaccessible city will be trampled upon by the feet of the poor and the steps of the needy. The word for poor refers to those who are depressed in the mind or circumstances. They need not be military geniuses to plan and plot the destruction of the high city! The needy refer to those who are lean and weak like one who is dangling on a thread before snapping. They are the weak in body and mind that will trample the lofty city into the dust of the ground. (v. 6)

The way of the just is uprightness. This contrast is for the purpose of justice. The just is similar to the LORD in their disposition and pathway. The LORD who is called "the most upright" will weigh the path of the upright. The LORD is not biased toward His people because they were His people. The LORD is for His people as they walk uprightly like their LORD whereas the enemies of God walk in sin and pride. The LORD weighed the just and the unjust using the same scale and that scale is His own righteousness which the believer has via the imputed righteousness that they received from God when they believed in Christ. (v. 7)

The people of God continued to walk in this pathway of the LORD's judgement as they waited patiently for the LORD to return and usher in His brand of justice. The people of God did not expect the LORD to do anything less than to evaluate or weigh

everyone based upon the same yardstick of His justice. The people of God wanted Him to. The desire of their soul or heart is for the Name of the LORD. This means that it was for the glory of God i.e. the promotion of God's Name that His people sought. The focus of the desire is on the "object" of one's desire. The people of God can be forgotten but not the Name of the LORD. What a wonderful song to sing from our hearts when the people of God on earth promote the Name of the LORD instead of their own. The LORD must increase always and His people's names decrease. What is truly experienced on earth will be sung in heaven from the hearts! (v. 8)

The nature of this desire is described in verse 9. This word is similar to the desire in verse 8 with a difference. The one in verse 8 emphasizes the object of the desire whereas the desire in verse 9 emphasizes the strength of the desire. The word has the idea of wail longingly for something. In this instance, it describes the longing is done at night while people are sleeping. The soul of God's people wail longingly for the LORD. With their spirit within them they seek the LORD early. They would not allow sleep to hinder their desire for the LORD. They know that when the LORD returns onto the earth, His judgements will be in the earth. The inhabitants of the world as opposed to God's people will learn righteousness. This is not a reference to their conversion but rather to their experience of the righteousness of the

LORD which they despised today but no more after the LORD returns. (v. 9)

The song that focused on the cry of the people of God to the LORD was to show favour i.e. grace to the inhabitants on the earth who are called wicked here, when He returns. But it is to no avail. The wicked will not learn righteousness. The word for “not” means “not at all” i.e. not even a little bit. In the land of uprightness, the wicked continues to deal unjustly. “The land of uprightness” means “the land characterised by uprightness.” How stubborn and hardened are the hearts of the wicked. They will not behold the majesty of the LORD! The same word “not” is used here. Not even a little bit of the majesty of the LORD will the wicked behold even though they dwell in the land of the upright. This has to be a description of the time during the millennium where the believers and the unbelievers live together with Christ ruling on earth in the new heaven and new earth. (v. 10)

When the hand of the LORD is lifted up, they will not see. The word for not again is the same the two used in verse 9 which means not even a little bit. The lifting of the hand of the LORD could mean many things but here it means judgement against the wicked that continue to do unjustly even though they are surrounded by uprightness with Christ reigning on earth. Even in the midst of impending judgement, the wicked refused to acknowledge God. However, they will soon see and be ashamed for their envy at the people. The people here refers to God’s people whom the

LORD will deal graciously and gloriously. When that happens, the fire of the LORD will devour the wicked ones. By then it will be too late. When they could have seen and believed and be saved, they refused and were justly devoured by the fire of the LORD. (v. 11)

The LORD will Ordain Peace!

The LORD is the next focus in this song of the people of God. The LORD will ordain i.e. establish peace for His people even as the wicked rejected the peace offered to them by the LORD and were devoured for it. The peace that the Bible speaks of is not between men but between man and his God. This peace can only be established when the sins of the sinner has been purged. There is only the blood of Christ that can wash away the sins of man. There is no other way! Accepting by faith the finished work of Christ on the cross is the only way to save a sinner from the punishment of sin in his life for he is an enemy of God at this juncture until his sins are washed by Christ’s blood. The people of God are all who have accepted Christ and thereof the peace of God is theirs to claim and enjoy. This is not the work of man but the work of God. God has done all this work in the hearts and lives of His people for that is how they became God’s people. (v. 12)

God’s people had suffered enough under many other lords who had dominion over them in the past. But the loyalty and devotion of God’s people is for their LORD God only and no one else. God’s people will mention

only His Name and no other. The mention of God's Name is the acknowledgement of remembrance and acceptance. Other lords might have ruled and dominated over God's people in the past but they never rule and dominate the hearts. Only the bodies yielded. The real devotion is always a domination of the heart. The other lords were not able to take that away from God's people. God's people acknowledged this in their song unto the LORD their God. (v. 13)

These other lords who dominated God's people in the past are now dead. They shall not live anymore. They are perished forever. They shall not rise from the dead to rule and dominate God's people ever again! The LORD has visited i.e. to charge and destroy them. He has also removed the memories of these lords. The sovereignty of God is demonstrated here. The enemies of God's people who might rule today will be forgotten forever in the near future. Regardless of how they might try to ensure perpetuity of their deeds and names on this earth by way of monuments and great engineering works, the LORD will erase every tiny bit of their existence as if they never existed. (v 14)

The people of God, he has increased in contrast to the removal of the enemies of God. This is mentioned twice by God's people in their song of praise to the LORD. The LORD is truly to be glorified. The LORD has removed i.e. widen or spread the nation of God's people far and wide even unto the ends of the earth! This

happens only during the millennium. The enemies are erased and the people of God reign over the whole earth. (Verse 15)

Whenever the people of God were in trouble in times past, they visited the LORD i.e. they turned to the LORD for solace and help. They poured out a prayer when the chastening of the LORD was upon them. They likened their chastisement from the LORD to a woman with child whose time of birth was near. In pain like the pain of the woman in labour, they cry to the LORD for help. The pain of child birth is one of the most painful experiences on earth. This was the kind of pain that the people of God endured when the LORD chastised them. They turned to the LORD for intervention. They had been such in the sight of the LORD as they recalled before the LORD in song. (vv. 16-17)

The people of God acknowledged their experiences of sorrow. They had been with child. They had been in pain. They had as it were brought forth wind. This means that whatever they tried to do to deliver themselves from the enemies of God it was like giving birth to wind. Wind is invisible and is without substance. This describes the futility of their effort to help themselves without God. They were not able to bring about any deliverance in the earth. The inhabitants of the earth who lorded over God's people remain powerful and strong. None of them fell. Man's strength and ways in fighting God's battle is useless as God's people had

experienced and now remember in their song to the LORD. (v. 18)

The phrase “thy dead men shall live” is the statement from Isaiah to his people reminding them that they will be resurrected. He will be resurrected together with them too. Awake and sing ye that dwell in dust. Hope in God does not die with death. There is life after death forever more for all of God’s people. Just as the dew refreshes and keeps the herbs alive so will God’s people be kept alive all their days! They do not die but only sleep. The earth shall cast out the dead in due time. This is the guaranteed resurrection that the Bible speaks of that the OT saints were aware of. (v. 19)

Patiently Wait

The song ends in verse 19. Isaiah now calls God’s people and in this instance to the people of Judah only to come and enter in their chambers. Chambers here refers to a room such as the inner most part of the house for safety. They are to shut the doors after entering and hide themselves from the evil that will soon befall Judah. This is more a figure of speech than to be understood literally. Remain safe and continue to trust in the LORD as the forces of evil continue to beset God’s people. They must patiently endure the adversities of life.

This will last as it were a little moment until the indignation is over. The indignation that comes from the LORD will soon pass. God’s sovereignty prevails. He is not the immediate cause but ultimately He is

the One who allows it. Endure and face the onslaught of the evil ones until it is over. (v. 20)

Behold the LORD will come out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. Their iniquities will surely include the evil they did to God’s people. The many sins of the inhabitants of the earth are also included here. The earth will become the evidence that the LORD will use against the inhabitants of the earth. Those who were killed by them will be revealed. (v. 21)

PRACTICAL VALUE

Praises Based Upon Obedience!

The beginning of the song was on obedience to God’s Word. The people of God rejoice because they know that those who obey God’s Word will be received by the LORD. They will never be cast away forever. The evidence of this truth is all around us. The history of mankind as recorded in Holy Scriptures attests to this wonderful truth. Those who obey the Word of God from Monday to Saturday will have much to praise God for.

Their praises are sincere and heartfelt. They do not drag their feet to worship. They jump out of their bed and prepare themselves with much enthusiasm and joy. They cannot wait to be in God’s House and be with God’s people. They look forward to begin their new week in the House of the LORD and His holy presence.

Praises Based Upon The Enemies Demise!

Some of us might be squeamish that our praises to God include the destruction of sinful men. This seems to be a little callous and hard hearted. Did the Bible not say that the LORD does not desire that any should perish but that all should come to believe in Christ? It is true that the LORD taught us to love our neighbour and not rejoice even when our enemies fall.

However, believers have been endowed with the best sense of justice because they have the Bible to guide them. Sentiments and justice do not contradict and one aspect of God's attribute must not be pitted against another. If we ever do that, we fall into the snare of the Devil. This is the believers' cry for justice to prevail on earth. When sinful man refuses to believe in Christ and accept Him as their Lord and Saviour, they will have to be judged. The people of God rejoice because the justice of God has now prevailed when once upon a time it was sin that prevailed. It was seeing the justice of God on earth instead of wickedness and sin like what we see today that was the basis for praise.

Praise Must Come From The Heart!

This whole song was based upon personal experiences with the LORD. It was a song sung from the heart. Many of us worship the LORD ritualistically. This far away kind of worship is unacceptable to God. Those who worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth. To worship God in spirit means to worship Him from our hearts. The feelings and emotions are

involved. When this happens, praises from the lips of God's people automatically originates from the heart. To worship God without the heart is to pay Him lip service, which He despises for such modern day worshippers are like the Pharisees of old.

There is no frivolity or the entertainment kind of worship. He despises such carnal centred manner of worship. He knows that the LORD of the Bible is an awesome God and not some kind of Santa Claus or happy-go-lucky benevolent old man who sits in the heavens twiddling His thumbs. His praise of God stems from a life of service and holiness throughout the past week. The believer enters into the house of LORD with clean hands and purity of heart. He reverences his Lord whom he loves more than life itself. Songs that are sung based upon a personal relationship with God is beyond price. This is the norm for all believers and not reserved for the super believers who do not exist! AMEN.

**DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS**

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Isaiah 26:1-11

TUESDAY: Isaiah 26:12-21

WEDNESDAY: Isaiah 26:1-21

THURSDAY: Isaiah 26:1-21

FRIDAY: Isaiah 26:1-21

3. Do you delight in the fall and punishment of your enemies? Do you think it is biblical to rejoice when your enemies fall and come under the wrath of God? Please explain your answer.

Discussion Questions

1. Whom do you trust in life? The test of your trust in this life is determined by what you fear the most. Which of the following are you most afraid of and will hurt you the most if you lose them – all your money; your health; your family; or God?

4. Do you have peace in your heart right now? Do you lose this peace easily? What are some of the things in life that can cause a believer to lose his peace? Please elaborate.

2. Do you have many enemies in your life? What kind of enemies are they? What kinds of enemies are good in the believer's life? Please explain your answers.

5. Do you know God intimately? How do you know that you know Him intimately? Please explain.

6. What comes to mind concerning your enemies if the LORD were to return tonight? Would you do anything in resolving any problem relationships in your life if the return of Christ is tonight? Please explain your answer.

7. What lessons can you learn from this chapter about God's Word and about yourself?
