

Whose Mind is Stayed on Thee

Isa. 26:3-4 – “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust in the LORD for ever; for in the LORD JEHOVAH [Yahweh] is everlasting strength.”

The text is interesting because though the KJV says “the LORD JEHOVAH”, and most other translations simply say the LORD GOD, or GOD the LORD, the original says “Trust in Yahweh even to forever, for in Yah Yahweh is everlasting strength”. The term “Yah Yahweh” is relatively rare.

The phrase “even to forever” also seems a bit stronger than the KJV, or almost all translations. One says “even to eternity”, but most just say “forever”. One could ask if there is a difference, but to me it implies not just that we should trust him in all circumstances of life, but that our trust should be even to (until, as far as) the end of the age, right into the eternal state. Ps. 48:14 says God will be our guide, even unto death. But even beyond death, we are trusting him with our everlasting souls. We believe for the resurrection of our bodies, and then to enjoy God’s presence for all eternity.

But Isa. 26:3 gives us a promise for the life that now is – that God will keep us in perfect peace, if our minds are stayed on him. People generally seem to be agreed that they want peace, but they often have a very weak view of peace, seeing it merely as freedom from war, strife, contention, and worry. True peace in the heart is peace with God, and this can exist even in the presence of wars, persecution, confusion, and turmoil. A wicked man may say he is at peace because the nation is not at war and he is not currently being threatened by legal action, physical violence, or poverty, but Isa. 48:22 says “There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.” Whatever peace the sinner enjoys is temporary and superficial. God’s peace is internal and secure.

Jn. 16:33 – “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

This peace is also a result of the awareness that God himself is keeping us (“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace”). Our faith and confidence is in a good and loving Father who is exercising providential care over his children, through Christ. We are resting in him.

Heb. 4 says that while Israel failed to enter into rest because of unbelief, there is still a rest to which we should aspire. It is the rest of faith, no longer trusting in our own good works to gain God’s approval, but purely in the atonement of Christ as our penal substitute (He bore the penalty that we deserved).

Heb. 4:1-3, 9-11 – “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said ... There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”

But the word in Isa. 26:3 that especially gets my attention is “stayed”. Literally it means to be sustained, supported, or upheld. Our minds are to be sustained by continual thoughts of God.

Another place where the word “stay” is used is:

Isa. 50:10 – “Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.”

In this case, to “stay” upon God means to lean on, or to be supported by him.

Another way of thinking on this is in the terminology of a “fixed heart”, meaning steadfast and unmoveable.

Ps. 57:7 – “My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise.”

Such a heart is not up and down with emotions and circumstances. It is not “double-minded” or wavering, like a ship tossed by the sea (Jas. 1:2-8).

So what does it mean to have a fixed heart, and a mind stayed on God?

1. To have our conscious thoughts and attention directed toward God.

Ps. 63:6 – “When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.”

Ps. 119:97 – “O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day.”

Ps. 139:17-18 – “How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I am awake, I am still with thee.”

1 Tim. 4:15 – “Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly unto them; that thy profiting may appear to all.”

The opposite is in Ps. 10:4 – “The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.” This can be taken two ways. First, in all his thinking he tells himself “There is no God” (the atheism of Ps. 53:1), or secondly, God does not really enter into any of his thoughts and plans. How can we be transformed and renewed in mind (Rom. 12:2) if we are not thinking about God?

2. **To have our minds so settled upon God that he becomes our support.** We lean upon him. A common reproach against us is “You are just using religion as a crutch.” This means, I suppose, that you are such a weak person that you need religion to tell you what to do, and how to live your life. It is not weakness though, to be able to stand against the world, to “swim against the current”. Rather, weakness is just to “go with the flow”, allowing our morality, religion, politics, sexuality, etc. to be molded by the world around us. A weak person cannot say “No, this is not right”, in the face of ridicule, loss of friendship, social media cancellation, and family pressures.

Is it wrong to use God as a “crutch”, when he offers to support and strengthen us, and to enable us to actually live the Christian life? The plain truth is that we do need him as our support and stay. We do need to “lean upon the everlasting arms”.

This idea of leaning on God is supported by the Bible’s speaking of God being our refuge and fortress (Ps. 91), our Rock, and Christ the cornerstone of our faith. He is said to be our rock and salvation, our fortress and strong habitation, our defense, high tower, deliverer, our shield and buckler.

Ps. 18:2 – “The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.”

3. **That the faith that he has given us has become such a stabilizing reality that we are no longer wavering, but steadfast.** We see him as the one who is upholding us by the mighty hand of his power, and enabling us to overcome through all temptation. We are fixed like a tree. While a loose shingle can be blown away, a tree is fixed by its roots. It may sway and bend, branches may be broken off, but it can abide a very strong wind. Our spiritual lives must be rooted and grounded in a knowledge and right understanding of the Word, but also, in a personal relationship with God, through Christ. “I call you not servants, but friends”, “him will I confess also before my Father”, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you”, etc.
4. **That we are living in a condition of trust in God** our Creator, our Provider, our Redeemer, our Preserver, and our King. Our mind is stayed on God because we trust in him, and because we stay our minds on him, we are inspired to greater trust. This trust is not just for the moment, or while things are going our way, but “unto forever”. According to Isa. 50:10 (above), it is when we are walking in darkness and cannot see the light, that our fear of God and obedience enables us to trust in the name of the LORD, and “to stay upon our God.”
5. This trust enables us **to experience God himself as our everlasting strength** (Isa. 26:4).

Isa. 40:29-31 – “He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

Summary: If we stay our minds upon God, if we trust in him so implicitly that our hearts are “fixed”, with a trust that is “until forever”, God himself will be our strength, and we will experience him as the Rock of our salvation and as our mighty fortress, and we will have real, genuine peace even in the midst of hardship and tribulation.