

“Panic or Peace...Your Pick!”

1. **Intro:**

- 1.1. Ever kick an **ant** mound/hill? What do the ants immediately do? W/o a moments hesitation, they start rebuilding. You’d think there’d be a minute they’d all get upset (hey!) – They seem to be at **perfect peace** going back to their menial task.
 - 1.1.1. It’s difficult when someone kicks our mound; when life comes crashing in; our home is destroyed; when we have to fix something we just fixed...that’s irritating!
- 1.2. We live in a time of unrest, anxiety, uneasiness: **eating raw tomatoes** (Salmonella; now raw Jalapeños & Serrano peppers); **water ration** most likely this summer; **fires** this summer in So Cal?(1000 up north); **foreclosures**; **measles** on the rise(parents not vaccinating); **rice ration** at Costco & Sam’s Club because of panic; **Gas prices**; financial woes of the **Stock Market**; **marriage** being redefined; threats of attacks against Iran/Israel.
 - 1.2.1. How do we handle al these things? Panic or Peace...Your Pick!

2. **PANIC OR PEACE...YOUR PICK! (21-41)**

- 2.1. **Shalom** type **peace** = quietness, confidence, security, & rest.
 - 2.1.1. It’s the steadiness of **Daniel** waiting in the **lions den**;
It’s the serenity of **Jesus** asleep in the storm-tossed **boat**;
It’s the joyful singing of **Paul & Silas** chained together in their **jail**.
It’s the stability of **Paul** wanting to go into the **theater** & help his friends
- 2.2. How do we unlock this kind of **peace** in our lives?
 - 2.2.1. **Isaiah** gives us **the key** - Read **Is.26:3,4**
- 2.3. (1) **This song** – The prophet wrote a **song** that will be sung by the redeemed when the messiah will establish the millennial kingdom.
 - 2.3.1. It’ll be the #1 song on Air One in the Millennium!
- 2.4. (3) **You will** - God gives peace to His people. (also see 12)
- 2.5. **Perfect, peace!** - In the original “*Peace, peace!*” “*Shalom, Shalom!*”
 - 2.5.1. A **duplicating** peace! - A peace that **really is peace**.
- 2.6. **Trust** – The redeemed will readily testify of the everlasting faithfulness of Jehovah.
 - 2.6.1. Let us **rest upon Him** with **all** our weight!
 - 2.6.2. Let us **drive out all unbelief!**
 - 2.6.3. Let us **rid ourselves of doubts & fears!**
- 2.7. Spurg, “A loving parent would be sorely grieved if his child could not **trust** him!”

- 2.8. This sounds wonderful, but does it really work?
 2.8.1. Can this fit into our contemporary lives?
- 2.9. Mind is stayed – or, *steadfast of mind* (NIV).
 2.9.1. Stayed/steadfast = “lean upon”; mind = state of mind.
- 2.10. Keep means to watch over, or protect; & that with which God does the keeping is peace (repeated for emphasis) *shalom, shalom*, or “*unending security*”.
 2.10.1. Put these together & the line reads, “The frame of mind that is leaning on & receiving support from You, O Lord, You will protect with infinite calm.”
 2.10.2. The next line tells us the impetus for this peace: our trust in God.
 2.10.3. The Hebrew word for trust has an Arabic cousin that provides us a picture as well as a meaning: “to throw one down upon his face.”
- 2.11. The point! – *Those who throw themselves on God, who remove all other crutches, who abandon their anxieties & fears, will experience God’s shalom.*
- 2.12. How long should we trust Him? Until the clouds disappear? Until we can handle things on ourselves? No...forever!
 2.12.1. And as long as we trust Him, He will be there like a timeless, immovable rock!
- 2.13. He invites each of us to cling to it as children cling to their father’s neck.
- 2.14. One person whom we find constantly in its embrace is the apostle Paul.
 2.14.1. Let’s read it.
- 2.15. *Let’s See 3 Ways Paul Displays Peace: Through Unfulfilled Dreams; Through Uncontrollable & Unpleasant Circumstances; Through Uncertainties.
- 2.16. [1] Remain Faithful in Spite of Panic of Unfulfilled Dreams! (21,22)
- 2.17. (21,22) Paul’s soul always burned to one day be in Rome.
 2.17.1. Why? Rome, the Oval Office of the world, the place of ultimate clout. Maybe to gain audience with the Emperor? Maybe to meet & speak with the most influential Christians of the known world (some right there in Caesars household)
- 2.18. (22) The next verse shows his ability to be content & wait for God’s timing!
 2.18.1. How long did he wait in Asia? [Quick math: 3 months in the synagogue(8); 2 years in the school of Tyrannus(9); leaving us 9 months in Asia, while Rome was tugging at his heart!
 2.18.2. Paul’s natural response to his unfulfilled dreams would have been frustration, anxiety, & panic, but God’s peace was watching over him.
 2.18.2.1. Result: he was able to wait patiently & keep working at his present tasks.

- 2.19. **Lessons #1** – Lean on the Lord as an everlasting Rock, entrusting the future to Him. He will support us with His peace.
- 2.19.1. Then we can **stay our posts**, letting Him **unlock the doors of our dreams** at just the **right time**.
- 2.20. **[2] Stay Calm in Spite of the Panic of Uncontrollable & Unpleasant Circumstances! (23-31)**
- 2.21. (23) Just when you've stopped panicking & started trusting, **a dam breaks & trouble** comes **flooding** in.
- 2.21.1. **Trouble starts with an accusation.** {Demetrius, the CEO of the Silversmith's guild}
- 2.22. As a result of Paul's **preaching** & the spread of the **gospel**, thousands of people had begun worshipping the **authentic God** & had forsaken the odd-looking Artemis & her myriad of replicas & trinkets.
- 2.23. The Silversmith's could care less about **God's truth**; they cared only about the nose-diving line of their **profit charts**.
- 2.23.1. **Like** the 2 demoniacs that get healed, & are clothed & in their right mind...but all the townsfolk response was...*to ask Jesus to leave*, they only cared about their **pig profits**; their **hogs** & not **the Healer**; they preferred **swine** over the **Savior**.
- 2.24. **Was it really Paul's fault?** No, it was **God** that was changing lives. But they couldn't take a swipe at him, so they tried to make Paul their punching bag. And when they couldn't get him, someone had to pay.
- 2.24.1. **Note:** Paul never picketed the temple, he simply shared the word & lives were changed!
- 2.25. The group grows **angrier** with each exaggerated accusation (27,28).
- 2.25.1. **Not** the situation turns suddenly dangerous as thousands of people mob together & **pus** their way into the Theater.
- 2.25.1.1. **A powder keg of hostility was about to explode.**
- 2.26. **What a contrast** between those who *sacrificed everything for God*(19) & those who *sacrificed everything for Gain*!
- 2.27. **Theater** = *open-air* amphitheater, Holds 25,000 people. 495' in diameter.
- 2.28. **Diana** (Roman) **Artemis** (Gk) – Goddess of the moon; daughter of Zeus & Leto; A grotesque multi-breasted image.
- 2.28.1. **Her Temple was 1 of the 7 wonders of the ancient world.**
- 2.28.2. 93,500 square feet (4 times the Pantheon in Athens).127 columns, 60' high, each donated by a different king.
- 2.29. Of course Paul wanted to rush in, but he was held back. (30,31)

- 2.30. **Lessons #2** – Paul’s frame of mind exemplified the 2nd definition of peace. His ability to stay calm in spite of the panic of uncontrollable & unpleasant circumstances.
- 2.30.1. Being at peace is no problem when all is **serene**.
- 2.30.2. But being **calm** when **riot** is raging at your door that requires **true peace**; the kind that comes from **relying wholly upon God**.
- 2.30.3. “Circumstances that look like **obstacles** are really **opportunities** when you let God work.”
- 2.31. **[3] Wait Patiently in Spite of the Panic Brought on by Uncertainty! (32-41)**
- 2.32. (32) The situation just continues to **deteriorate** even more. The people don’t even know **what** they’re supposed to be angry about!
- 2.33. (33,34) **Great is Diana of the Ephesians**, for 2 hours!
- 2.34. Paul still hidden away, his life in more danger. They still want a pound of flesh. Pressure is rising...**but then** at the right moment, the God whom Paul **serves & trusts** sends in the cavalry! The town clerk. {i.e. The secretary of the city, the executive officer who publishes the decrees of the civic assembly} F.F.Bruce
- 2.35. The clerk, knowing his job was on the line, carefully selects a few facts about proper legal channels.
- 2.35.1. He saves his **own job**, the **city’s standing**, & the **disciples lives**.
- 2.36. If you’re **playing chess**, you can moved a pawn, or piece, right in front of your opponent, to squarely block them. That’s what God does here.
- 2.36.1. In our own lives He has a way of arranging **unexpected events & unlikely people** to defend us.
- 2.36.2. We just have to wait for Him to make His Move.
- 2.37. **Lessons #3** – Wait patiently in spite of the panic brought on by uncertainty.
- 2.37.1. In times of **fear**, remember God’s peaceful promise...**Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and he will make your paths straight.**
- 2.38. **End:**
- 2.39. Our *frame of mind* is **like the weather**...(a) it can be sunny & warm w/only a slight chance of rain; **or**, (b) overcast & cold w/storm clouds billowing on the horizon.
- 2.39.1. **Why such a variability?** A lot has to do with whether you are **trusting** in the Lord.
- 2.39.1.1. You cannot change the **weather**, **but** you can change your **frame of mind**.
- 2.39.2. **No matter** how great the storm **outside**, you can always kindle a warm fire of **inner peace**.
- 2.40. “Go to the **ant**,...Consider her ways and be wise,” Prov.6:6