



## THE TWICE-OVER

*You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD himself, is the Rock eternal. (Isaiah 26:3-4, NIV)*

I LOVE THE DELIGHTFUL ADAGE ABOUT STREET SMARTS—“Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me.” It really begs the question of whether we are paying attention, learning from what drops itself right in front of us.

I’ve been given the twice-over this week. Not a tough lesson, where I was fooled to my sad detriment, but one of those moments where God repeats a key idea in rapid succession.

The first came in a keynote session at a church conference I attended, where the speaker, pastor Rob Willey of Harvest Bible Chapel in Davenport, Iowa, expounded on a favorite passage, Isaiah 26:3-4. Here, he said, we find our constant in life: the person and peace of Jesus Christ.

Just three days later, I was engaged in conversation with one of the Tour’s leading players, Webb Simpson. I asked him about the role of Scripture in his life and he went to a favorite passage for his meditation on the course. There it was again, Isaiah 26:3-4.

So let’s take a minute and review this passage. In Isaiah 26:3-4, God gave the prophet reason to look ahead to better days, for Isaiah (like so many of Israel’s prophets) was called to do his work in the midst of dark times. But in Isaiah 26, God released marvelous promises into and through Isaiah. A time is coming, God said, when all this sin, all this rebellion, all this punishment, will be replaced with a peace that comes perfectly—that is, this peace will take us from a place of great disturbance to a place of complete assurance *and keep us there*.

What we have in our lives now may be only glimpses of this, for we still reside in a place where sin’s ravages are fierce. But the more we place our steadfast trust in the Rock eternal, the more that peace enters our most trying days even now. It may take more than one—or two!—reinforcements for us to fully learn how this works, but the learning is always worth it when it leads us into deeper understanding of and relationship with the God who reigns.

### Opening questions: Tough lessons

What is a lesson you had to have dropped on you a number of times before you really learned from it? What changes did it eventually produce in you?

### The peace of Christ

*Read Colossians 1:15-20.* What roles are described as belonging to Jesus? How did he make peace between heaven and earth? What difference does it make that such a high price was paid for this peace?

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### The ‘sword’ of Christ

*Read Matthew 10:34-39.* How can we call Jesus “the Prince of Peace” when he said explicitly that he did not come to bring peace? Is there a difference between earthly peace and the peace God gives?

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*Now read Ephesians 2:11-22.* How does this passage return us to a fullness of understanding by showing the reconciling brand of peace that Jesus brings? Again, how was this peace enacted (v. 13)?

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**Prayer** What prayers for peace do you want to offer to God on a personal level and for those in the world around you?