

*Becoming a Community of Shalom Series*  
Study Guide by Rev. Dr. Theresa Latini  
Second of Four Presentations ~ Spring 2023

### ***Equanimity for Turbulent Times***

One central meaning of *shalom* in the Bible is “peace.” It includes harmony, balance, and contentment in ourselves, in our relationships with others, and in our connection to all creation. In this session, we will explore this core dimension of *shalom* by placing numerous biblical texts in conversation with the mindfulness concept of equanimity. We will be invited to experience peace in the here-and-now by practicing equanimity or what the Apostle Paul called the “secret of contentment.” And we will rest prayerfully in God’s promise of harmony built into the very fabric of creation.

**Biblical Texts:** [Isaiah 65:17-25](#), [Philippians 4:4-13](#)

#### **Isaiah 65:17-25**

<sup>17</sup> For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth;  
the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind.

<sup>18</sup> But be glad and rejoice for ever in what I am creating;  
for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight.

<sup>19</sup> I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and delight in my people;  
no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it, or the cry of distress.

<sup>20</sup> No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days, or an old person who does not live out a lifetime; for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth, and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed.

<sup>21</sup> They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

<sup>22</sup> They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

<sup>23</sup> They shall not labour in vain, or bear children for calamity; \* for they shall be offspring blessed by the LORD—and their descendants as well.

<sup>24</sup> Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear.

<sup>25</sup> The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox; but the serpent—its food shall be dust! They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the LORD.

#### **Philippians 4:4-13**

4 Rejoice \* in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. \* <sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup> Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, beloved, \* whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about\* these things. <sup>9</sup>Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

10 I rejoice\* in the Lord greatly that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned for me, but had no opportunity to show it. \* <sup>11</sup>Not that I am referring to being in need; for I have learned to be content with whatever I have. <sup>12</sup>I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. <sup>13</sup>I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

### **Reflection Questions:**

1. How does the biblical concept of *shalom* deepen, broaden, and challenge common understandings of peace?
2. How do the Native American “Harmony Way” and the mindfulness concept of “equanimity” help you to better understand God’s promise of peace?
3. When, or in what circumstances, do you most need equanimity or what the Apostle Paul described as “contentment?”
4. What is one small step you could take to practice equanimity today?

### **Guided Prayer of Presence:**

1. Find a posture that allows you to be relaxed and alert. Close your eyes and breathe deeply several times. Consciously release any muscle tension you become aware of. Breathe in peace, breathe out tension.
2. Relax your mind. If worries or other thoughts keep returning, gather them up and give them to God to hold for you.
3. Turn your attention to God’s presence. Let yourself be fully aware of God’s love for you and God’s gift of peace for you.
4. Rest in God’s presence—just as you might with someone you love dearly and feel no need to speak to, just to be with.
5. Close your prayer by thanking God for any gifts received in this time. You can choose to return to this state of trusting and resting in God whenever you want.

