

November 6, 2022 The Peace Promise John 14:15-27

Peace. Our fathers and grandfathers fought for it. To some extent we are fortunate enough to be able to say we live in a peaceful time. And yet we are very aware that peace is not a world wide commodity. Russia continues to brutalize the Ukraine. China almost weekly reminds Taiwan of the possibility of hostilities. North Korea continues to test rockets that will enable them to create devastation and disorder in other nations. There are real wars, hot wars, and there are rumors of wars. And thanks to our freedoms and modern technology, truth has become harder and harder to get at, and discern. Misinformation abounds. It is hard to have peace of mind. Even harder to have peace in my soul.

In this season of Remembrance Day, it is difficult to think of ourselves as living in a time of peace. Our nation does not easily present a unified profile. Our politicians are not of a mind to easily recognize the validity of the position of other parties. The images on television continually suggest that we are country of pieces rather than a country of peace. Food is more expensive than ever. Fuel to warm our homes and run our cars is expensive too. There seems to be so many things to worry about. We live in troubled times.

I turn to Jesus words in John 14 for solace. He says in verse 27 of John 14, "My peace I leave with you, my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid." And this year, with

the world in turmoil, and the war in Ukraine affecting the whole world, it seems to me that the words of Jesus are more important than ever, if we are to find the peace we so desire, and find the peace we so easily lack.

Jesus makes one request of us. HE asks us to follow HIM. HE calls us to be HIS disciples. A disciple of Jesus is a follower. During the three years of HIS ministry, Jesus was continually walking. HE walked on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. HE walked on the roads that took HIM to Cana and Tiberius, Capernaum and Nazareth. HE walked to people's homes where he met with people who wanted to hear HIM preach and teach. And Jesus continually asked the disciples, invited the disciples to walk with HIM.

John Ortberg is an American Presbyterian minister. He writes books and creates very interesting Bible Study materials for his own congregation and he shares them with others. In his book, *Eternity Is Now In Session*, he points out that Jesus never said you need to accept a system of doctrine to be HIS disciple. What Jesus did say, and HE said it to the 12, and the crowds of people who gathered to hear HIM teach and preach, was "Follow me." In so many texts of the Gospel accounts what that means is "Let's go for a walk. And let's talk."

Jesus says, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give as the world gives." There is no question that Jesus had peace. Peace of mind. A peace filled heart. Peace in HIS soul. HE was and is content to do HIS Father's business.

And as much as he loved and was loved by Joseph, that's not who HE is talking about when HE says, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and come to him and make our home with him." Jesus is talking about God the Father, the creator of everyone and everything. Jesus promises we can have peace if we trust HIM enough to follow HIM and obey HIS teaching. And what is more, HE promises that HE does not give peace the way the world does. The fact is that the world tends to give peace with one hand and take it away with the other. There may not be an open war going on in our town, or our province or our nation....but there are lots of real things that we worry about. Paying the bills. Being able to cope with today. The uncertainty that invades our minds when we think about tomorrow.

It becomes easy to see that the key to the peace of Jesus, the peace HE gives and leaves with us, and wants us to enjoy involves two things. "Do not let your hearts be troubled. And do not be afraid." I tell you I am guilty of letting my heart be troubled all the time. I am a worrier. And I am often afraid. The truth is, one thing leads to those conditions. Worry and fear enter into my mind and my soul, when I labour to control what is happening around me.

You have heard me say that "control" is an illusion. Most days we think we have it together. We stick to routines that we are used to because it feeds the illusion that we can control our lives. And then something happens that makes it very apparent we are not in control. We become troubled. We

become fearful. My friends who visited with us last week from Thunder Bay caught the train out of Belleville to go to Toronto to catch their plane home. It was all arranged. They had their tickets. They boarded the train 4 hours before they were to fly.

As you know, we have had a lot of fog this past week. Their flight was cancelled. They had to arrange to stay in a hotel overnight when they expected to be home. The next day the fog resulted in cancelling their flight again. Another day/night in the hotel. Their plans having been disrupted by weather, they worried, we worried. How long would this go on? Would they every get home? It was obvious they had no control over their circumstances. The cost of their trip south went through the roof.

My point is that following Jesus to some extent means letting go of our hunger for control over the details of our lives. Worry and fear do not add to the length our days, or the number of them we may live to enjoy. Jesus promises us peace. HE urges us to walk with HIM. HE urges us to listen to HIS voice. He instructs us to not give in to the rising trouble that sets our hearts beating as though we were running. HE wants us to walk with HIM. To breathe normally. To not be afraid. To do what we can. And take one step at a time. To walk with HIM. And not give in to the urge to run.

I know this. The news on the radio, the television, in the papers causes me to focus on the world. And the peace of God slips through my fingers like beach sand or water. I am

trying very hard to spend more time working at following Jesus. Walking with HIM and letting HIM set the pace. I do know that when I work at that, my breathing becomes regular. I sleep better. I can almost taste the peace.

It is important that we remember at this time of year what warfare does to the world. And the truth it affects us where we live. So I try to remember the fallen, and the fact that we are as secure as we can be. But I also cling to the promise of peace that Jesus continues to give voice to. "My peace (and that means the peace of God) I leave with you. My peace (the peace of God) I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Let not your heart be troubled, and do not be afraid." Thank you Jesus. Thank you Jesus. Thank you Lord.

Let us pray;

Lord, we live in interesting times. There are moments when our problems seem to us to be bigger than we can handle. Help us to place ourselves in YOUR loving, saving, redeeming hands. Grant us the peace to abide in YOU as YOU abide in us. Bathe us in the joy of YOUR Spirit. Amen