

+WEEKLY SERMON

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Stepping into Gods peace

John 14: 23-29

Peace is not the first word I would use when asked to describe my life. I have a hectic home with teenagers and two naughty dogs and a busy job – peaceful it isn't. Noisy, boisterous, argumentative and chaotic are probably better words.

So, when I read Jesus telling us that He is leaving His peace with us I tend to think that's lovely, but clearly not meant for me. The problem is that all too often we equate peace with quiet, and this is not what Jesus is talking about.

Jesus' teaching on peace in John's Gospel comes a few days prior to His crucifixion, He's preparing them for what is about to come. So, it's interesting to consider the one thing the disciples didn't have was peace. As soon as Jesus was arrested, they deserted and fled, they stayed hidden in a locked room scared they too would be crucified.

After the resurrection, once they gained boldness to go out and preach Christ's resurrection, they were rewarded by all sorts of hardships, imprisonment, flogging, and eventually were put to death.

This does not sound peaceful.

And yet, Jesus is clear that He is leaving His peace with them. The key to understanding the word peace is also in this passage, because He goes on to say that 'I do not give as the world gives.'

In this world we think of peace as being stillness, of nothing bad happening to us, a place of rest and quiet. The peace Jesus brings is radically different. Yes, on occasion He does provide quiet spaces for us, but the peace Jesus gives is to be found in the everyday noise of our lives.

Jesus' peace is an internal sense of calm despite what is happening in our lives. It is the peace of knowing that whatever happens to us physically, we are saved. It's the peace we get when we have made the right decision, even when to do so brings us opposition. It's the peace we have of knowing that whatever hardships we might face, we don't have to go through it alone.

Jesus brings us peace when we follow His commandments, and obey His teaching, despite the opposition and difficulties we might face for doing so.

Rev Canon Anne Beverley, Diocesan Director of Ministry

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