

Found By Peace

Isaiah 26:3-4

Shalom aleichem Shalom Shalom Peace Be upon you Peace Peace.

A common saying from the Jewish community. The same community from which today's scripture reading comes to us. It's interesting how two lines from such a large book has such depth and covers so much ground.

Those of steadfast mind **you** keep in **peace** | In **Peace** because they **trust** in **you**.

Trust in the **lord** forever. | For in the **Lord** God **you** have an everlasting rock.

The first line addressing God. A plea to God. It sounds like a reminder to God. Remember to keep us in peace God because we trust in you.

The second line is instructional. For you must trust in God forever because God does not waiver. God is unmovable and unchangeable.

We greet each other in peace. We pray for peace. We wish for peace. We even hope one day that we rest in peace.

During this season of advent we have four aspects of God that we celebrate each week. Peace hope love and Joy with the final candle being the Christ candle being at the centre of the advent wreath.

Advent is a time of waiting, of anticipation, of longing for a new world in which we, God's beloved are at peace. Where joy is abundant and we truly rest in God's peace. But why focus on peace during this time of waiting. Should we not be striving for peace? As people of God why are we waiting on peace rather than working for peace?

How many of you here have known a sense of peace. A time when blissful rest has come upon you and your very being relaxes and you know... It is well.

The trouble with a sense of peace is that you also know when you are not a peace. There is a restlessness, a sense of turmoil, many sleepless nights and weary days. You seem like you are trudging through thick snow and there is a cold wind that cuts right through the thickest of clothes.

Uncertainty of the future, sickness, the problems of our wallets, our relationships, the very people that are around us. Our peace melting away like that first snowfall leaving us cold and bare, the ground muddy and wet. So we seek peace but sometimes we tend to find peace.. or what we think is peace in places where peace is not permanent.

Where peace is a fickle as the weather.

There are those who are weary who find peace at the bottom of a bottle. Those who are in turmoil where peace comes from chemicals altering their brain. Peace in a relationship where one does not respect the other. Peace in manipulation of power. Peace a the cost of another person. Peace that wears a veil so that you do not see the truth behind that hazy covering.

Peace... The shalom that we seek should not be the peace that simply fills in a gap. The peace... the true peace that comes from God through Jesus Christ is a peace that covers completely. It is the kind of peace that sustains you through the storm. The peace that provides comfort without a cost. The peace that keeps you at rest even through a crisis or a disaster.

Those with a steadfast mind God keeps in peace because they trust in God.

To be steadfast here is to lean on God. How quickly do we lose peace of mind when the situation at hand goes beyond our control. When God is the source of our peace why is it that we seek other sources of so called peace. Some of this comes from us living in a world where we have come to expect quick results. Instant gratification. Expecting immediate answers to complex questions. Yes they may generate quick results but they are usually less than perfect and the results fade away quickly usually leaving more issues that a person started off with.

We know that God works on God's time and try as we may there is no rushing God. And when God delivers, God's peace. This is a peace that is everlasting. A peace that know no boundaries. A peace that brings comfort and joy. Peace that comes from trusting whole heartedly in God.

There is a great deal of wisdom in the scriptures when it comes to trusting. Trusting and leaning go hand in hand. Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding: in all your ways acknowledge God and God shall direct your paths."

But this is not easy... We live in a world where it easy to trust in those things and people which we can measure, which we can see and feel and touch. To believe in the tangible rather than the intangible. So it becomes easy to seek peace in another person. But the writers of the

psalms give us this wisdom “let him be an ordinary person – let him be a man as great as a prince. Still it is futile to place your trust in a man.” Psalm 118:8-9.

Why God? Why seek peace from God?

When we lose control, when life has essentially run away from us we lose peace. To place trust in God is to understand that God is in control. God is our everlasting rock. That perfect diamond.

Impervious, indestructible, flawless. God cannot be shaken or moved. God is a timeless monolith. A mountain on which we can build our fortress upon. God reveals God-self to us as the God of Abraham and Isaac. God of Moses and of Jacob. The same God of yesterday and tomorrow and forever. A God that is not limited by mortality and a God that is beyond our ages.

Thomas Aquinas used the analogy of a man walking down a road. No matter how far this man walks he can see only as far as the horizon and when he gets there the horizon is as far away as it was ten miles before him. God on the other hand has a bird’s eye view, able to see all around.

To see what lies ahead, what came before and what is on either side of us.

So when you seek peace. When you seek the calm and tranquility that your very soul desires the decision becomes your own. Seek what you think is the easiest way in which you can achieve peace but knowing that this peace is man-made and like all things man-made has no permanence, has an expiration date.

Or do we seek the peace that has no ending. Peace that is beyond all horizons. Peace that comes from a source that is eternal and unchanging. Peace that truly sets you free. Peace that

is the reward for anticipating and waiting and trusting that God alone commands our lives, God will set you free, and God alone passes the peace that exceeds our understanding.

My friends the peace you seek is the peace that we all seek. The peace that gives us rest. The peace that comes from trusting in God from which everything flows. It is his peace that we seek and it is his peace that we wait for and pray for.

Shalom.

Preached by Janik Livera at Brentwood Presbyterian Church on December 7, 2014 (2nd Sunday in Advent)