



Call to Worship: - Psalm 67

Hymn StF 102, H&P 333, MP 152 – For the Beauty of the Earth.

Prayers of Praise and Confession

O Lord, how we adore you. How we marvel at the depth of your love. How we wonder at the waves of your grace. How we are astounded by the glorious balance of the earth. We are in awe of the vastness of the universe. We are so privileged to be called your children. We are accepted and forgiven and embraced. You are almighty, above and beyond everything. You are victorious. Darkness, sin and death are under your feet. You are holy, beautiful and full of love. How we adore you. Amen.

Dear God, I am sorry when I get so carried away with the busyness of each day, never stopping to dwell in your love. I am sorry when I allow the stresses and demands of work or family to erode and wear away my hope. I am sorry when I'm caught up in conflict and frustration, when I harbour resentment, instead of giving out forgiveness. I'm sorry when I seek to be fulfilled by food, drink or entertainment, Yet fail to feast on your truth. I'm sorry when I desire the wrong things, blinded by the media, and forget to engage with the real treasures of love and justice. You are all love, all hope, all forgiveness, all truth and all I really need. Amen.

From living-prayer.com

Testimony – Where have you seen God?

Take the time to sit for a moment in the quiet and think about where you have seen God his week, where have you felt loved, valued, blessed?

Even if it is just one thing that you can think of take a moment to thank God for the glimpses of his grace in your day.

Reading John 14:23-29

Reflection

What is Peace?

The dictionary states – 'Freedom from disturbance, tranquillity' and 'a state or period when there is no war or a war has ended'.

Anyone that has ever read or seen a film about the time after World War Two in Germany and other countries, will tell you that that time is not particularly peaceful, the war may have ended but there is still so much to do, there are still hostilities and so much rebuilding to do of infrastructures, towns, homes and lives. Some never recover mentally or physically from their experiences during conflicts.

It's been forty years since the War for the Falkland Islands, but there are still people today suffering from their injuries and struggling with PTSD. As a veteran myself I served in the Falklands twice once in 2005 and again in 2009. The scars of that conflict are still visible on the Islands and in the Psyche of the Islanders, there is still a fear of invasion, and occupation. I don't know if anyone who has experienced conflict of any sort can truly say that they now have peace and tranquillity.

It is believed that of all the homeless people on the streets of the UK over six thousand are ex service personnel, for many the peace documents may have been signed, the medals presented and the politicians have moved on to some other cause, but for those who are ex-servicemen and women and especially the six thousand who are homeless the war is not over, some will never know peace.

In our reading today Jesus talks of peace, Verse 27 says 'Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you.' Jesus then adds 'I do not give to you as the world gives'.

What is the peace that Jesus gives us? When we look at the Greek translation we see that the Greek word for Peace is 'Eirene' it is where we get the name 'Irene' from. So if you are called Irene, your name means 'Peace' in Greek.

The Greek word means to be at one, peace, quiet, at rest. But deeper than that it literally means 'wholeness, when all essential parts are joined together – God's gift of wholeness.

So to know peace is to be made fully whole by God through Jesus Christ, as Jesus says in verse 23 'Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. When we love and serve people as Jesus did and follow his teachings, then God and Jesus make their home in us, we are home together, fully whole with God through Jesus Christ, all the essential parts are joined together, and we will know true peace, the peace described as passing all understanding. The world cannot bring us true peace, because it cannot make us truly whole, only God can do that through Jesus our saviour.

That is why when the hostilities ease, and the bombs stop falling, when the accord has been signed and sanctions lifted, when rifles are cleaned and locked away, uniforms are packed and boots put back in their box. We still won't know true peace, because we still won't be whole. St Augustine says we have a God shaped hole in each of us and nothing else can fill it, 'We were made for you O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you'.

Peace, the whole peace that each of us needs, can only come from the indwelling of God through Jesus Christ. When all the essential parts are joined together we will truly know peace.

We give thanks to you Lord God for peace, and we pray that we may know true peace in our lifetimes, Amen.

Hymn StF 710, MP 555– Peace perfect Peace

Prayers of Intercession

To all those in need of love:

Let the love of God be known.

To a world in need of love:

Let the love of God be shown.

To those in need of food:

Let the love of God be shared.

By those in need of healing:

Let the love of God be experienced

By those in need of Peace:

Let the love of God be felt.

By those in need of hope:

Let the love of God be seen.

To those in need of joy:

Let the love of God be sung.

To those in need of Justice:

Let the love of God be heard.

By those in need of Love:

Let the love of God be known

Amen.

Lord's Prayer.

Hymn StF 465, H&P 437, MP 201 – Guide me O thou Great Jehovah

Grace