

Forgiveness and Peace

For these last weeks we have talked, we have listened, we have prayed, we have spent time together in a supportive, safe, and kind place. We have talked about peace, but more importantly we have lived it. There are differences in this place there are people in this room with whom we disagree but for the past five weeks we have been peace.

Peace is a doing word – peace doesn't just happen - but what I have learned in these weeks and what I will take away from this more than anything else is that peace is a **being** word.

We talked about Christ being the way of peace Christ, Christ is our peace. The Prince of Peace, and by embodying peace we are being Christ like

Christ gave us clear instructions as Christians - we are commanded to love one another and if that isn't embodying peace I don't know what is.

Scripture

The passage of scripture on which we're going to focus for the next few minutes is

“If you hold anything against anyone, forgive them” (Mark 11.25)

But let me put it in context and in another translation. The context is the week leading to his Crucifixion – he knew what lay ahead. The fuller quote is:

[English Standard Version](#)

²⁴ Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received^[a] it, and it will be yours. ²⁵ And whenever you

stand praying, forgive if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”^[b]

The Lords Prayer

Now when we start talking about forgiving trespasses we will think of the Lord's prayer

In a strange God-incidence a few months ago I gave a talk on the Lord's prayer and since then there have been some interesting talks on social media and I've even heard a couple of sermons echoing the same thing.

The part on which I want us to focus is Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us

In this and in this passage from Mark it is clear that being forgiven is conditional

The deal is forgive us our trespasses *as we forgive those who trespass against us* so if we do not forgive do we not get forgiveness. If we do not strive for Peace do we deserve it?

John Davies said last week not only do we have to think of those who have hurt us but of those we have hurt and this is where forgiveness and peace coalesce in my mind. Peace comes from forgiveness and from being forgiven.

I recently came to terms with some difficult parts of my childhood and I was able to say I have forgiven my abuser - that does not make me some kind of saint because I still find it difficult to forgive those who knew about my abuse but did nothing.

But in forgiveness, peace grows. In seeing the God in your abuser. In their violence you can forgive.

I went to see a wise old monk for confession a while ago and I was struggling with a conflict in my life and I said I found it difficult to be reconciled with that person

That wise old monk said 'you're required to love them not like them - is up to you to forgive or not. Reconciliation may not mean forgiveness'.

And in coming to terms with a relationship that was over by forgiving them and myself I found a peace in which to move forward. That peace came with forgiveness, not reconciliation. Not absolution.

Absolution and forgiveness are not the same - whether my abuser went to his grave having sought reconciliation for his crimes I will never know but I am at peace because I was able to forgive.

Forgiveness is your gift never feel pressure to forgive if you're not ready but in forgiving you will find peace.

I am not going to tell anyone in this room to forgive, it is up to you, but remember what our Lord said - forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us

'and whenever you stand praying, forgive if you have anything against anyone so that your father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses'

Forgiveness, Reconciliation, are part of achieving peace.

Peace is a doing word but peace is not the destination, peace is the journey, peace is a being word

I have learned in our time together to look for the good in people who hurt. I hope I will find it.

So I encourage you to take away from this the deep peace we have talked about in all its manifestations and hold on to the peace we have lived

Deep peace of the running wave to you
Deep peace of the flowing air to you
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you
Deep peace of the shining stars to you
Deep peace of the gentle night to you
Moon and stars pour their healing light on you
Deep peace of Christ the light of the world to you