

Peace, Conflict and the Glory of God

Introduction

At the end of the war, the peace that the British government was negotiating was the absence of conflict between the nations. A ceasing of hostilities. A downing and surrendering of weapons. The public across Europe (and further) wanted to go back to their old way of life, without living in the constant shadow of threat, without living in fear. They wanted peace!

On Sunday Jon invited us to think about what our ideal peaceful day looks like. Share with each other what your idea of a peaceful day looks like? What do you do? Where do you go?

Digging in

All mankind is able to live in the good of God's love. We are able to enjoy His grace exhibited in creation, regardless of whether one calls him Lord or not. This is called common grace, and it covers the physical, moral, intellectual, environmental and societal realms.

Read the following passages and discuss what they tell us about Common Grace? How does this help us live in peace?

i) Gen 3:18 ii) Matt 5:44-45 iii) Acts 14:19-17 iv) Gen 39:5 v) Psalm 145:9 vi) Luke 6:33

Read Psalm 23

Questions to discuss:

- 1) What do the green pastures and still waters in v2 mean? How do you find 'green pastures' and 'still waters' and are you eating and drinking deeply?
- 2) Note that the journey through the valley of death (v3) comes after time with God in the green pastures and by the still waters. What is it about spending time with God that helps us when we are in our own times of conflict?
- 3) How are we to get used to a healthy level of conflict in our lives, knowing that we are living in the 'now and not yet' of the kingdom of God?

Application

Matt 5:9 'Blessed is the peace maker for they will be called children of God'

To make peace is very different from keeping peace - one shirks people, contention and any sort of thought about change - one marches in and brings with them a spirit to resolve, to unify and to challenge wrong. Gentleness isn't weakness, it's strength under control. Peacemaking isn't a weakness either. To make peace is to bring healing solutions to conflict. The peace we bring with us is Jesus Christ - the Prince of Peace..

Spend some time in pairs or small groups discussing situations in each other's lives, workplaces, communities, the city of Southampton, our nation and beyond, where peace needs to be made. Pray for each other to be brave and step forward bringing Jesus with them into these situations.