

# “Peace I leave with you ...

*... My peace I give you”*

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*A sermon given on the Sixth Sunday of Easter, 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2022 by the Associate Vicar the Revd Wendy Wale in Beverley Minster*

*John 14:23-29*

Well, as many of you will know, next Sunday is our Curate Tim's last Sunday here and he is preparing to say 'goodbye'. He's currently up at Woodmansey on one of his tours around all our churches and all our services to say his last words and to perhaps reflect on the past three years - and what a three years they have been! Being a curate during a pandemic is quite the experience, and those who have been through it with us will know how grateful we are to him. But more of that next week. Suffice to say, while he's not here, if you haven't signed his card, it's just at the back there and there's envelopes for gifts too. Tim is trying to leave everything in order, and I think part of that means trying to teach Jonathan and me how to manage some of the technology - you'll see how that goes after he's left!

But in our readings this morning, Jesus, like Tim, is aware that he will be departing imminently. The passages we've been exploring in the past few weeks are known as the Farewell Discourses - Jesus is preparing for his departure; he's trying to leave everything in order. This Thursday at 7:30pm, we will be celebrating Ascension Day, where we recall the moment Jesus departed into the clouds, unlike Tim who will be departing across the Westwood - not quite as dramatic, but achieves the same effect. Jesus will be returning to his Father in heaven, however we imagine that.

Last week the Farewell Discourse was Jesus commanding us to love one another, to abide in his love, to show the world what it means to be part of his Kingdom by the radical way we love and include all people. Today is the reminder that the author and source of that love is God the Father, and that the one who will remind us of that love, who will enable us to love others, is God the Holy Spirit, who the Father will send in Jesus's name once he's completed his earthly Ministry. We're being pointed not only to Ascension Day but to Pentecost. Jesus is wanting to assure his followers that there will be peace, to know that this is not the end - in fact, it's just the beginning of all that is to follow. *"Peace I leave with you my peace I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."*

Now these are some of my favourite words in the Bible. Jesus leaves us his peace. But sometimes I think they can be oversimplified. They can be interpreted as if we trust God, we should always be peaceful and unanxious. Now, wouldn't that be great if we could simply worship and pray and know that we would never be troubled again? I reckon the choir would all be floating around in the Zenlike state permanently.

But I omitted a little phrase, "*I do not give to you as the world gives.*" Now God made the world and everything in it; God so loved the world that he sent Jesus, who died as a demonstration of that love. God's Vision for the world, God's Kingdom, is one of peace, where there is no war or famine, no crying or pain, no division or hurt, nothing but joy and peace.

But this vision hasn't happened yet, as we are only too aware. Jesus is recognising that there is still so much in the world that is in opposition to his Kingdom values. If you watched the news just this week, you would have been confronted with the continuing atrocities of the war in Ukraine; the impact of global warming in India with a soaring heat wave of over 50 degrees, destroying lives and livelihoods; as exams approach, the continuing impact of the pandemic on students' mental health; and story after story of people being tipped into poverty by the rising cost of living; and of refugees continuing to risk their lives seeking places of safety. I've spent time this week speaking to three different people in three different places, all in the midst of a mental health crisis, all struggling to function day by day, one under the care of the psychiatric team, all people of deep faith.

The world is a wonderful place, full of wonderful people made in God's image. But it is not as God intended. There is much that makes people frightened, anxious and lacking peace. Mental health struggles are very real and mental illness, like physical illness, can happen to anyone, regardless of their faith or their lack of. And so I am delighted that in a short while we will be commissioning Ali Doolan this morning to represent the army of people here at the Minster and beyond who continue to seek to carry on the work of Jesus in bringing the peace that he intended for all people. We celebrate the work and skill of doctors and psychiatrists. We pray continuously for the peace of the nations and the wholeness of communities and the needs of those in distress. We stand against decisions that keep people trapped in poverty.

But day to day, we still have a huge part to play in bringing peace and demonstrating God's love: creating safe spaces for those with dementia, those bereaved, those who live in care homes, those in any kind of crisis, and anyone who just needs a listening ear; all the musicians here in the Minster allow us week by week to sit and receive, to encounter the peace of God through the beauty of the building and the beauty of the playing and singing; the welcomers' smile can transform someone's day; the bacon sandwich or the cup of tea and the conversations around the tables can transform a difficult day or soothe a troubled soul. The number of times I see a great big grin in a bacon sandwich and somebody saying, "I needed this."

Every encounter in every situation we find ourselves in has the potential to make the world a bit more as Jesus intended: each time we forgive, or listen; reach out in love or stand up for truth; put the kettle on or pick up the phone - let us hear the words of Jesus whispering in our ears, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you."

## Reading Texts

### John 14:23-29

<sup>23</sup> Jesus answered him, '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. <sup>24</sup> Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me. <sup>25</sup> 'I have said these things to you while I am still with you. <sup>26</sup> But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. <sup>27</sup> Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. <sup>28</sup> You heard me say to you, "I am going away, and I am coming to you." If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. <sup>29</sup> And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe.