

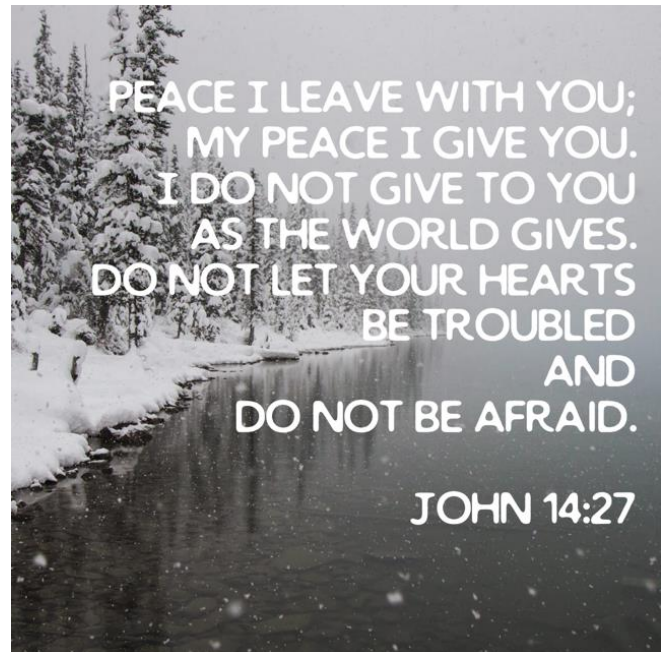
Devotions with Matt

May 7, 2020

PEACEMAKERS

A few years back my wife and I bought a Volkswagen Vanagon from my Aunt. We loved that thing. We would throw a few camping items in it, load up the dog and be on our way into the mountains in no time. As soon as we arrived, we would pop the top on it, set up chairs and hammocks in the camp sight and be relaxing within an hour of our arrival. We sold it a couple years back and sometimes kick ourselves for doing so.

One time we took the Vanagon up to Oregon to camp near our daughter who was working up there at the time. It was a long hot trip as the a/c did not work. We had a canoe on the top and our windows down all the way across the California-Oregon border. Something weird began to happen as we got closer to the border and even on the other side. People would see our van coming and they would roll down their windows, stick their arms out and give us the peace sign. Somehow that van was a symbol of peace. Jesus says, as He continues in the Beatitudes, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God." On that trip to Oregon we didn't feel like peacemakers, we just wanted to go camping.



So what is peace? Many think it is the absence of war or conflict. Others feel it is an inner state of being where all is calm. While those may be forms of peace, the bigger picture of peace the Bible paints is far greater than even those two combined. The Bible opens with peace in the Garden and it closes with peace in eternity. Peace resounds from beginning to end. Biblical peace means harmony. It means having a right relationship with God, with others and even with the created world around us. It means living in the way God created us to live. The psalmist picked up on this theme and said, "Righteousness and peace kiss each other" (Psalm 85). Righteousness is being in right standing before the Lord and in right relationship with the world around us. When that happens there is peace: they kiss. No vanagon, no symbol, no conflict resolution can ever obtain this true peace: only Jesus can. He made peace for us through His shed blood by restoring our relationship with God. Peace only comes through Jesus.

At Creation we were made perfect. But, we were made perfect in relationship with each other: God and man, man and creation. Perfection did not come by being apart from God, from others or creation. It came in relationship with all. This perfection was broken at The Fall when man rebelled against God. Ever since we have been out of harmony with the ways God created them. We fight, quarrel and war. We abuse people and resources. We destroy the planet and each other. Yes, there are glimpses of peace in the world. People helping and loving others. People reducing their carbon foot print, planting trees and picking up trash. People seeking ways of making peace on earth are all echoes of the way we were created. And just like in salvation, we can't get there on our own, it is also with peace: Only Jesus can bring true harmony back to the way we were created to live. Therefore, His Church, His Body, His Bride are the ones to be at the frontlines of the battle for peace. Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called sons (and daughters) of God.

Once we receive Jesus as Lord in our lives and He restores our relationship back to God, we then become true peace makers. The Apostle Paul says that we have been given the ministry of reconciliation. We have been given the ability and desire to bring about restoration in the world. We have been given the tools to reconcile and restore broken relationships. We have been given the ministry of peace. We do this in the Name of Jesus- The Prince of Peace.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. John 14:27

In Christ,
Matt