

July 3, 2022

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

This morning Jesus talks a lot about peace. He instructs the 72 to enter a house with a blessing of peace upon the house and those who live there. This was a common practice of the day. Jews and Muslims still do this today. Did you notice that Jesus does not give an explanation about this type of peace? We are not told about the type and depth of this peace. In John's Gospel, Jesus teases us about the peace that He offers. He pulls us in with wanting to know more. The peace that Jesus offers is a heavenly and Godly peace and not like the peace of the world.

Strangely it is Paul who gives us the deepest understanding of this peace. A lot happened to him on that road to Damascus. Paul actually lives this type of peace that Jesus talks about in Luke and John. Paul writes about it in his epistles. It is a very different peace than what we are expecting.

Here are some excerpts I remembered from a great talk on the peace that Jesus offered. The reason for peace will always be anchored in something. The peace that the world gives is momentary and unstable since it totally depends on other people and earthly things. This kind of peace is present when things are going well, when people speak well about you and you receive some praise and honour, when you are doing well and things are running smoothly in most areas. Most people have experienced that this peace is extremely fickle. Unfortunately most people aspire to this type of peace. One moment everything might seem so pleasant and praiseworthy and in the next breath it is the complete opposite.

Jesus was well aware of this in His ministry. He offered us a very different kind of peace. He came with God's peace. This is a very high quality peace. One that was sturdy and stable and not tied to people or to this world. This peace is filled with: faith, rest, certainty and power. Paul certainly possessed it. We see this in how he suffered greatly for the faith and how he kept his peace. Paul was persecuted, despised, dishonoured, reviled and mistreated. He endured many tribulations for his faith. Romans 8:38-39, " For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor heights nor depths , nor any other created things, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus Our Lord." Knowing and understanding this gave Paul the peace he needed in the times of his troubles.

It is in our trials and tribulations that we learn about ourselves and God. We discover the limits of our human strength and weaknesses. We also discover God's power. We often think that if I didn't have so many tribulations, I would have peace. Yet the ultimate goal is to have rest and peace in all situations. This also includes our tribulations. We need them to help us develop our peace. To test it under pressure.

Our human nature experiences many things that make us restless and not at peace. Mostly from within ourselves. The struggle is within us. To overcome our egos, arrogance, impatience, wrath and anger. When we face tribulations, these attributes can come out and assert themselves. When this occurs it now becomes very hard to participate in God's peace. When we become aware of this and struggle against it, then we have the opportunity for peace within and around ourselves. Romans 12:21, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." This is the struggle of every Christian and peace is the final result.

The peace that Jesus talks about this morning is a calming, focused, centering and grounded peace. That whatever happens in life one is unmoved from their peace. The work is developing this peaceful attitude and being able to stay in it. Some have argued that it is a state of mind or attitude. Which I think it certainly is. It may also be much more. Peace may also be a surrendering to the will of God. I am thinking of Jesus on the cross. In the middle of His pain and agony, He seemed to have a peaceful attitude. This is a topic that I have spent

many years thinking about, practicing and researching. Mostly my entire career. I always come back to the fact that God is the root of this peace. Be humble enough to ask God to help you develop this peace within yourself and be able to remain there. Pastor D.