

Advent 4 Peace & Shalom John 14:27-31 18/12/2022 DJK

I give you peace, the kind of peace that only I can give. It isn't like the peace that this world can give. So don't be worried or afraid.

The former PM was under the pump during the week – all these questions about Robo Dept and the secret port polio's he held.

When he was asked certain questions he went into political mode and started talking around the questions.

The commissioner was very blunt; “Mr Morison you are not in Parliament, you are in court, we do not want political rhetoric please, answer the questions.

Rhetoric are the words that surround a person or party -

Jesus had Rhetoric – “peace be with you” – these are the words that surrounded Jesus.

“Peace be with you” are the backbone to everything Jesus said or did.

Jesus says his peace is different our peace: **I give you peace, the kind of peace that only I can give. It isn't like the peace that this world can give.**

Is there a difference between Jesus' peace and our peace?

For us I'm sure peace means the absence of war – or the absence of trouble.

If the Russians backed off, and there was a Christmas ceasefire in the Ukraine we would say that's peace.

In God's world Peace is not a ceasefire, it's not just the absence of war, or trouble – it is also the presence of something better, it's the presence of complete restoration.

God's Hebrew word for peace is *Shalom*.

His Greek word for peace is *Irene*. You know: *Good night, Irene, good night, Irene*

Shalom is more than a cease fire – it is a complete restoration – each and every one of those smashed Ukraine buildings rebuilt, every one of those smashed lives restored back to safety and happiness – that's God's peace.

No Russian could ever do it – no nation could ever mend those lives – we could manage a Band-Aid at best.

That's why Shalom is a God thing: **I give you peace, the kind of peace that only I can give. It isn't like the peace that this world can give.**

Shalom is completeness – wholeness.

We don't get the fullness of Shalom in our English bibles because it is lost in translation.

For example: God said to Joshua; *“make an altar of whole stones, stones which no one has ever cut or chiselled.*

And there offer burnt offerings and peace offerings.”

Make an altar of “whole” stones – that word “whole” is Shalom.

Make the Altar of complete, round, Shalom stones.

When David was a boy with “ruddy cheeks” he was sent out into the paddocks to see how his brothers were going. He went and asked in Hebrew, “how is your “shalom”? In other words, “are you all here, are you whole, is the family complete, I have to report back to dad”?

Job went out and counted his cattle. He said, “My farm is in “Shalom” because all my cows are present and accounted for”. My farm is in Shalom??

When Solomon finished building the temple in Jerusalem – he didn't say it is finished – he said it is “shalom” – complete.

When your whippet eats the neighbours chooks – you “shalom” them by replacing all their chooks and some more - Exodus 22.

Shalom is to restore the relationship you had with the neighbour before the whippet ate the chook.

In proverbs 16 it says when you're marriage is a broken mess – you don't look for a marriage counsellor – you look for a Shalom maker.

God steps into our highly mobile, broken and misaligned world – he wants to realign, he wants to restore, he wants to Shalom this world.

Can you see Shalom is more than a ceasefire?

A ceasefire is only half peace – God's way is to stop the, bullets, and bombs, and accusations, and work to make things whole again.

That is the true meaning of Shalom – to make complete, to restore.

Israel's kings were meant to keep shalom – it was there main job – they weren't the best at this.

The prophet Isaiah announced a future king who would keep Shalom for ever. Isaiah said this king will be called prince of Shalom – (the prince of peace.)

This prince would bring Shalom without end. This prince of peace was God's promise.

This prince would heal all that was broken. Jesus birth was described as the coming of "Shalom" - "Irene".

This prince of peace was crowned with thorns in Jeru- shalem = the city of peace.

As the Apostle's walked with Jesus and grew in faith they came to know that brokenness was sin – sin meant a completely broken relationship with God.

They also learned that Jesus was the final Lamb to give his life and make us completely right with God – at shalom with God: *Peace on earth and mercy mild God and sinners reconciled"*

We could never restore our relationship with God – try as we might - A ceasefire if we are lucky – but a complete restoration – Never!

Paul claims complete restoration for us in Ephesians (2:14-15), very simply: "Jesus Christ is our Shalom".

Jesus offers us his body, and his blood which was whole and at peace with God – so making us whole and at peace with God.

Take and eat this is my body – take and drink this is my blood –he pure and holy body and blood makes us pure and holy.

It doesn't end there – the New Testament now calls us, fellow workers, ambassadors – now we are called to make peace with others. God calls us to keep the church fully at peace.

Some say you have to pick up a gun to make others put guns down??

Is that peace and shalom and wholeness?

This time last year we sent an Aussie "peace keeping force" to the Solomon's.

They carried their new automatic F88 Styers.

It's OK they're Nato rifles – they're approved for "peace keeping" – they can shoot 700 rounds a minute – that's a lot of peace.

We are privileged to be peacemakers. F88 Styers might work in the Solomon's – but not here.

We are fighting against greed and jealousy, false doctrine, and ways of the world entering the church.

He calls us to make shalom complete wholeness – a ceasefire doesn't cut it.

And here it is - our instruments of peace: the things the world sees as absolutely, pathetically, weak – he says are the power of salvation.

Make shalom with Humility, Patience, and love.

Francis of Assisi – was on to it: *“Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love”*.

It's a promise of Jesus, a promise of God that Love concurs evil, love makes thing whole again.

As Desmond Tutu says in his song in our altogether book

Goodness is stronger than evil;

Love is stronger than hate;

Light is stronger than darkness;

Life is stronger than death;

Victory is ours through Him who loves us.

How privileged are we to be his peacemakers – his Shalom in the world.

A lot of people will settle for a ceasefire. God asks us to offer – complete Shalom.

Don't think for a moment you're not a peacemaker.

It's a promise of Baptism – the Holy Spirit dwells in you – I pray you offer the Holy Spirit a loving home within you – not some shack out the back.

The promises is that if you are a child of God through baptism that the Holy Spirit lives in you and blesses you with the instruments of peace: humility, patience, and love - it's in there somewhere – it's a promise.

Lord Bless us with the strength to see the gifts you have given us – gifts able to extend Jesus hand of peace to all people. Amen.