

Isaiah 52.7-10

Is there hope for peace?



Christ Church Selly Park


Sunday 13 November 2022


Remembrance Sunday


What is 'peace'?

When you think of 'peace' what comes to mind?

Maybe something like this  famous picture of Churchill, Truman and Stalin shaking hands in Germany at the end of the Second World War. Or perhaps  Churchill giving his V for Victory sign.

Maybe you remember  John Lennon and Yoko Ono recording a song in bed, asking us to give peace a chance.

Or maybe you know  this book – *Peace at Last!* by Jill Murphy. Poor old Daddy Bear is tired but he can't get to sleep because of all the noises round his house. Eventually he finds peace and falls to sleep... next to Mummy Bear.

For me, peace probably looks like  this – a crystal clear mountain lake, miles from anywhere and anyone, peaceful and quiet.

Some days life feels so busy, I can't imagine what 'peace' might be like, it seems so far away.

And then when we see all these flags and how much fighting and war there is round the world today, it's easy to think peace isn't 'far away' – it's *impossible*.

Peace in the Bible

Monday 11 November 1918 – I suspect (I hope!) it is a date that will never be forgotten – it has a special name, can anyone tell me what it is?

Armistice Day.

Does anyone actually know what an 'armistice' is?

An 'armistice' is an agreement to stop fighting. It's an important *first step* towards peace.

When Daddy Bear was looking for peace, he was trying to find somewhere quiet, without any annoying noises.

When I sit looking out at a mountain lake, it's wonderful because there are no distractions, no mobile phone signal, no road noise, no work, no demands – all that is gone, it's somewhere else.

But *real* peace is so much more than that.

In the Bible ‘peace’ doesn’t mean all the bad or annoying things have gone away – the word means something that is ‘complete’ or ‘whole’ – like a **J** jigsaw puzzle that’s been finished, or a **J** full set of Harry Potter books. It also applies to relationships – in the Bible when we say sorry to someone we’ve hurt or forgive someone who has hurt us, we ‘make peace’ with them – we make the relationship whole again. Instead of ‘not fighting’ peace means **J** working together, helping each other out – it’s harder, but much better!

That’s why the prophet Isaiah called the coming of God’s peace **good news** (7), a time when people would **shout for joy** (8) and sing **songs of joy** (9). It’s not only that one day war will end, but that God – the best king (sorry, King Charles) – will **reign** (7).

When Jesus **returns to Zion** (8) – to his people – to **reign**, we won’t need to make flags like these because there won’t be any more death or pain or fighting or sadness. Everything will be as God intended: there will be perfect ‘peace at last’, to **the ends of the earth** (10), across the whole world.

For Christians there *is* hope for peace – and it’s more than a vague wish, it’s a confidence and trust that God will do this.

Jesus: God saves

But what about now?

If I'm honest, looking at all these flags, reading the news, seeing the difficulty people are in now and the problems coming this winter – the world feels like a **J** big old mess. Things are uncertain, unsettled, everything is all over the place. There's no shape, no pattern. Things feel broken. You may feel like this picture.

But there *is* more than this mess. God doesn't ignore us or leave us in the mess – there *is* hope today.

There is hope today because God sent his only Son Jesus *into* the mess, so he could start **J** straightening things out. There is hope today because God sent his only Son Jesus *into* the mess, so he could lift us out of it. There is hope today because God sent his only Son Jesus *into* the mess to bring life and light, so we can see things as God sees them and start to make sense of it all.

The mess of this world, the mess in our lives – it is not the end. There is hope, there is hope in Jesus who brings peace, who brings wholeness and completeness even to the messiest mess.

So I invite you today – don't take my word for it, come and see Jesus for yourself. Come and know the peace that only he brings.