

# +WEEKLY SERMON

communicate@blackburn.anglican.org



## Peace for us all, please ...

*16:33. "I've said these things to you so that you will have peace in me. In the world you have distress. But be encouraged! I have conquered the world ..."*

I'm getting tired. Not just because of my age (69!! - how did I get here??) but I am despairing at the endless conveyor belt of horrors that comprise the 'news' I read, see and listen to every day. Just when you think it can't get worse, it does ...

Is there an answer to the chaos? Is there hope for peace and for the guns and drones to fall silent? At the heart of our faith is, to my mind, the single most significant and important truth. Believe in me, says Christ, lay all these burdens on me, and I will bring you peace.

God knew what the implications of our freedom to choose would be. He could have simply never let that tree grow in Eden. He could have never created the serpent. But God never wanted slaves, human beings who had no choice but to love and worship Him.

The redemption he offers us is just that: an offer. The pivot, the key moment in human history, the answer comes in that moment of sacrifice. Jesus himself was given a choice by his Father and made that choice that gave us all the chance to experience true, everlasting peace.

It doesn't come through peace conferences, armistices, cease fires, it comes directly from Christ. When we turn our face to God in the person of his Son, we know that peace rests in him, that our fluttering hearts can be still, that the pain and suffering do not define our eternal future: "There is no sickness, no toil, or danger, in that bright land to which I go."

We can retreat into the safe haven of scripture, knowing with certainty that Jesus stands astride creation, his arms wide and welcoming: "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*).

Suddenly, the future is framed with God's promise, and we can face it with confidence, unafraid.

**Mark Ashley, Vision Champion, Appley Bridge**

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