

ALTON BAPTIST CHURCH

e-Service

Sunday 23 August 2020

Do not be afraid

PEACE through the Holy Spirit

Welcome to another of our e-Services, and we hope you will be greatly blessed as I have been during the preparation in the way our Lord leads and guides us all. Well, not exactly as you were expecting, for Graham should have been preparing this week's service. Unfortunately, he is presently recovering from an illness (not covid19). The outline is based on his thoughts.

To-day's topic under the banner of "Do not be afraid" -- we look at

"PEACE through the Holy Spirit".

Why should we be afraid of peace?!!!

Opening Prayer

O Lord we ask that you give us open minds and hearts as we come to this time of worship with you. That there are collectively around the world a common unknown as to where covid19 takes us next. That you will give us that peace of mind, soul, and body that we can trust you to guide and lead us as we go forward. Peace be unto you now.

Our first hymn is acknowledging that it is You Jesus who gives us peace. So, let us lay that marker down at the beginning.

1st hymn 477

My Peace I give unto you,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ls01XGV7oA0>

Reading for today

John 14 : 25 - 27

²⁵ 'All this I (Jesus) have spoken while still with you.

²⁶ But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I (Jesus) have said to you.

²⁷ 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.

Our second hymn is saying that **peace** flows like a river. It defines, flows with energy, moves where it will, brings refreshment. Rivers of course flow between peoples and even enemies; so, Jesus' Peace does the same.

2nd hymn 554

Peace is flowing like a river,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VSO4V5egkGw>

Intercessory Prayers

- ✚ Graham's full recovery.
- ✚ A local GB leader, Marian, needs our prayer for her recovery after falling in the street, to being diagnosed with cancerous brain lesions and breast cancer! Also, for her husband and family.
- ✚ Our return to meeting together on Sundays.
- ✚ Guidance to our civil leaders as they navigate the best path during this covid19 pandemic.
- ✚ Guidance for our spiritual leaders to have boldness of action that covid19 will not overwhelm their thoughts and actions.
- ✚ Safety for those of our 'emergency services' *et al* that they are kept safe from covid19 and physical attacks by people.

Notices

Several of us (The church) met at the church (God's Sanctuary), on Thursday past for a meeting. We hopefully, will shortly be able to hold meetings on Sunday, but the format will have to be different. The new buzz phrase - "The new normal". [Surely that is an oxymoron - "new" and "normal" cannot exist together?!!! e.g. "a noisy silence".

Our third hymn is a reminder that not only do we want peace, we want perfect peace. Only Our Lord can bring that perfection.

3rd hymn 555

Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibqgZxWa6bM>

Let us look at His word. Peace is a 1. absence of war / conflict - 2. freedom from quarrels disagreements - 3. public security - 4. calm / serenity / silence.

1. When we talk about peace, in the same breath we talk about war. The 20th Century was dominated by war and our collective failure to maintain the peace. Whether on the international or national level. I make no apologies in mentioning this again, as an example this dominated our entry into the world. Jo and I were born at its height as 1942 dawned and there was only four weeks food in UK plc's warehouses. Peace arrived in the UK on 29 March 1945 when the last bomb dropped - an air launched V1. [Only two days earlier a V2 killed 127 in Stepney - worst attack.] So, for the first 3 ½ years we knew only war (well, we remember the last year.) Peace between nations has proved elusive and conflicts have continued for most of the time since. There are international and national organisations whose tenure is peace; yet for all their good works, lasting peace is beyond their grasp.

2, Peace between groups that operate across national boundaries. For example - we have the war and killings that is waged on Christians across much of the world. Barnabas Fund continues to report deaths, injury, and destruction of property of Christians, mainly by other religious groups. In many countries of course there is peace; but for those so afflicted, peace again is beyond human control.

3. Then there is peace between individuals. That brings peace onto our doorstep. We can have a great influence whether we are surrounded by peace or conflict. When I was a government Inspector, I was always saddened by the number of householders who did not speak to their neighbours and wanted us to resolve a dispute during building work by the neighbour. I have always thought it imperative to maintain a dialogue with our neighbours. With God's help we can do this. I am also saddened by the lack of peace between Christians including within the same fellowship.

4. At peace with ourselves? Of course, but not always. So, at war with ourselves? A strange question of how can we be at war within and against ourselves? It takes two to tango. Well, people can be at war within themselves. The 'angry young man' (person). They only ever see conflicts and blaming God for all that they perceive goes wrong in their lives. Peace requires to be worked at. God has given us marvellous brains and we need to use them so that our journey of life runs smoothly, for failure and problems and conflict brings no peace. Again, human failure.

4. So where can? and do we find peace? Finally, we have arrived. As most importantly there is the peace that Jesus gives us. That whatever our travails in life we know we have his protection, and our often-bumpy ride here will be perfect peace with Him forever. Our reading

²⁷ 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.

Peace be with you - a common Hebrew greeting mentioned in scriptures. Which Jesus uses here in an unusual way. The term speaks, in effect, of the Salvation that Jesus' redemptive work will achieve for his disciples (us) -

Total well-being and inner rest of spirit, in fellowship with God.

All true peace is His gift,

which the repetition emphasises. "I do not give... as the world gives". For as we have seen that can and often is failure.

In its greetings of peace, the world can only express a longing or wish.

(Compare that with The Barnabas Fund's book of martyrs that Jo and I are reading, which clearly states on many occasions the words and thoughts of the martyrs that they found at the moment of martyrdom - peace.)

Jesus' peace is real and present and perfect.

Do not be afraid.

to receive Jesus' peace

All is well.

That is good news.

Our final hymn is to remind us that it is Peace to you.

4th Hymn 55

Peace to you,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Suw9XBBzvDQ>

Closing Prayer

We thank you that we have been able to look and be encouraged on our walk with you and we now ask a blessing on us that you will keep and guide our path in the coming days. That we will have Jesus -- **Your PEACE.**