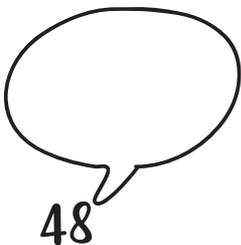


INSPIRATION

The Bible is filled with stories where relationships and expectations were dictated by a person's status in society. Kings and rulers were to be revered and obeyed and lepers were to be quarantined and ostracized. Everyone in between also knew their roles, and as long everyone stayed in those roles, conflict was avoided. It was how they "kept the peace". But when Jesus came, He interrupted the system where the person with the most might is always right. Jesus questioned and challenged those in authority while simultaneously befriending sinners and seeking out the sick. While the rest of society was only interested in, or at least accustomed to, keeping the peace, Christ came to offer real peace. However, the peace he brought did not come about by simply ignoring the wrongs of some, while punishing the wrongs of others. His peace only came to those who accepted their wrongs first being exposed, then forgiven, delivered, and restored. It's as if "peace" had to be disturbed in order to experience PEACE – inner peace and peace with God and man. This is true peace.



APPLICATION

Peace is both internal and external. It is possible to be in the middle of a war and still have peace. Likewise, you can experience major inner turmoil where no external struggle exists. In either case, peace can be very elusive. Making peace can be harder than waging war. Coming to a point of “mutual harmony”, as peace is defined, can be difficult even with someone who sees the world similarly to you, much less someone with opposing views. And there are many situations in our lives and in our world that disturb our inner peace. Christ offers an inner peace that exceeds our ability to comprehend it and it is made perfect for those whose minds are stayed on Him. The key here, not surprisingly, is Christ. Similarly, differences with others will grow dim when looking through the eyes of Jesus. Pride and ego can isolate us, shutting ourselves in and other out. But like He always has, Christ exposes and expels pride and ego. He chooses relationships over rights and rules and helps us to do the same. Allow Him to expose the wrongs that exist in you today. Accept the interruption to your “peace” so that you can experience His PEACE. Then pursue peace with others by looking at them and the situations through Christ’s eyes.



There will never be world peace.

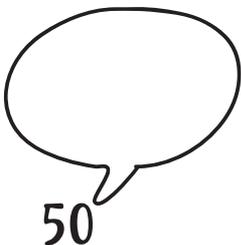
CONTEMPLATION

1. How does this affect your understanding of peace to this point? Peace with God, self, and others?

2. Are there areas in your life where your perceived peace may need to be interrupted to attain true peace?

3. Have you made peace with God?

4. Is there anyone in your life with whom you need to make peace?



ELABORATION

How does Jesus instruct us to deal with conflict? For starters he tells us to first seek Jesus and peace. He then tells us to be direct. In Matthew 18:15 Jesus says “If your brother sins against you, go and point out their fault just between the two of you.” This can be a difficult step in conflict resolution. There is something difficult about sitting with someone that you feel offended by. Why does Jesus tell us to start by going to someone one on one? How can this be difficult? What happens if we skip this step? Why is it human nature to go to others instead of the person who offended us? Romans 12:18 instructs us to live at peace with others. How can we go to someone that we feel offended us and still live at peace?

Further Reading - Matthew 18:15-20; James 4:1-6; Romans 12:17-19; I Corinthians 13:1-3; Philipians 2:1-7

PRAYERS & PRAISE



There will never be world peace.