

The Sixth Sunday of Easter
22-05-2022
St Cuthbert's Anglican Church – Tweed Heads

Acts 16: 9-15 Paul was lead to Lydia, and her heart was opened

Psalm 67 Bless us that your way may be known in all the earth

Revelation 21:10-14, 21:22-22:5 The splendor of the New Jerusalem and the river of life.

John 14: 23-29 Jesus tells his disciples he is leaving
His peace is with those who love him.

Introduction

On this sixth Sunday of Easter, we hear in John's Gospel, Jesus having an intimate conversation with his closest disciples. Let us explore today:-

1. How Jesus promises Peace and the Holy Spirit to those who follow him.
2. What it means for us to know the promises of God, and follow Jesus.

Jesus promises Peace

Let us first look at the wonderful promise of Peace that Jesus offers those who would follow him, from this morning's Gospel reading.

In Verse 23 we hear,

“Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.

Jesus says those who love him will want to follow him, and he says that he and the Father will make their home with them. Jesus does not leave us alone if we chose to follow him. We can be assured that God loves us and is with us. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we can be assured that God is not out there somewhere, but rather intimately dwelling within us.

And in Verse 27 we hear,

²⁷Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

Here Jesus assures those who have chosen to follow him, that they will have peace and they do not need to be afraid. As human beings, I think we all crave peace, but we live in a world that never really has peace, so that is why

this promise from Jesus is so special. Jesus says he doesn't give how the world gives, Jesus gives so that we really can know God's Peace in our lives.

It doesn't mean we won't face challenges. It doesn't mean that bad things won't happen to us. But it does mean we can have hope and know God's peace, in the midst of life's difficulties.

No matter what is happening to us, we can be assured that God is with us, and we can know God's Peace.

Sometimes an analogy helps and I'd like to offer a small one here today:-

At High School we had a maths exam coming up, and the teacher offered sessions where we could come and do extra work and do practice exams. There were a few of us who took the opportunity to go along to these extra classes. When it finally came time to sit the exam, I looked through the paper and one of the questions on the exam was very similar to one that we had done in the extra sessions. A great peace came over me at that point as I knew that I was going to be ok with that question, because I knew the way to the answer.

Now this is a small example in the overall scheme of life, but those who know Jesus and know that he rose from the dead, can have a God's Peace, no matter what the challenges are. Jesus really is the way to Peace. I recall a sign I once saw, "No God No Peace, Know God Know Peace. With Jesus, we can know that ultimately, we are secure in God's love.

Jesus promises the Holy Spirit

Let us now look at the wonderful promise of the Holy Spirit that Jesus offers those who would follow him, from this morning's Gospel reading.

Verse 25 and 26

²⁵"I have said these things to you while I am still with you. ²⁶But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.

We can have Peace because we have first received the Holy Spirit in our lives. But what is the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is simply God's Spirit, that Jesus promised to all who would accept and follow him.

So as Christians, we can know that God's not out there somewhere, not a distant force or impersonal power anonymously controlling the universe. But rather, God is intimately concerned about us, and when we accept Jesus God comes to live within us through the power of the Holy Spirit.

How do we respond

So, how do we continue to know this wonderful peace that God has given us? It is about saying yes to Jesus and beginning a lifelong journey of following Jesus in our lives.

Jesus told the first disciples about God's Peace and the Holy Spirit prior to his death and resurrection. In verse 29 from John's gospel today we hear:-

"And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe."

The first thing we need to do to know God's Peace is to believe in Jesus.

To believe Jesus is the Son of God.

To believe Jesus died on the cross so that we might be forgiven, and be enabled to live in a right relationship with God.

To believe that Jesus rose from the dead, so that we too can live in the hope of eternal life.

In the reading from Acts today, we hear how Lydia said "Yes" to believing in Jesus. It led to her immediately offering hospitality to Paul.

Lydia was changed. She had received God's Peace and wanted dearly to take up her role in being a part of what it was to know God's Peace.

Lydia had the means at her disposal, to contribute to the ministry that had led Paul to share the Gospel with her, and she wanted to be a part of it.

May each one of us, here today, be reminded of our own decision to accept Jesus, and may we continue to work out with God how we are being called to contribute to the ministry of the Church in our time.

Conclusion

I believe that knowing the peace that Jesus offers is the most wonderful thing in the world we can know.

It leads to a relationship with the God who created us.

It's how God designed us to live.

It starts when we accept Jesus, and it continues as we continue to follow Jesus, and allow the Holy Spirit to be at work within our lives.

I pray that you may continue to know the peace God offers us in Jesus.

And that you may be diligent in living into the relationship God has offered us through Jesus.

Amen.