

PEACE ON EARTH

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favour rests.” —LUKE 2:14

We love the Christmas story. Every year we revisit it, but what ever happened to the ‘peace on earth’ part? Two thousand years later we still live in a violent world, and it isn’t because we are not interested in peace. We are, and there have been many philosophies of peace and hope, but none of them seems to be working.

So what is this ‘peace on earth’ the heavenly hosts spoke of? In John 14:27, Jesus said to His disciples, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Let not your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” The difference between the peace Christ gives and the peace the world gives is that the peace the world gives is external. It’s about structures, organizations, peace treaties, armies, and whatever else might bring about peace. But the peace Jesus gives is internal. He said, “Do not let your hearts be troubled.” It isn’t about the structures of society, but about the heart, because the diagnosis in the Bible is that the biggest problem we have in our world is not out there, but within our own hearts.

Once we begin to understand this, we can look for a solution. The peace Jesus gives is derived from Himself by His indwelling Spirit. He spoke again about peace in John 16:33. “I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble.” History, again and again, has proven this true. The world is in constant conflict, but Jesus offers us an inner peace, regardless of conflicts and circumstances.

The world doesn't need more advisors, philosophers or new ideas. We have exhausted our minds, and still sit in the darkness of our own wisdom. What the world needs is a Saviour. The birth of Christ is a continual story which doesn't make sense unless we understand the cross of Christ. We need to be careful about setting a Christmas box, where we celebrate the birth of Jesus, and neglect to acknowledge why He was born.

The great news of Christmas – “To you a Saviour is born” – and the result is peace on earth because Christ came to reconcile men, women and children to God. The message of “Peace on earth among men” is a consequence of the birth, death and resurrection of our Saviour. It begins in our hearts by acknowledging that we need saving. Jesus Christ is the hope of ‘peace on earth’, and He, alone, is the source of attaining it.

PRAYER: Dear Lord Jesus, at this precious time, celebrating Your birth, I pray for Your peace to stretch far and wide around the globe. May Your Holy Spirit bring hundreds of thousands more souls to Your saving grace and peace.

TO REFLECT UPON: In what ways has the indwelling Spirit of Christ brought peace to my life?