

John 14: 25-27 – Sermon for 10.30am

We live in a troubled world. We read about war daily in our papers. We hear about the threat of war on our radios. We watch footage of the aftermath of terrible atrocities by individuals or small groups of people on our TVs. We live in a world obviously torn apart. We live in a broken place where even the ties of family and community can be loosed and where no matter where we run to we cannot be 100% sure of our security.

On Remembrance Sunday, we remember those people who have paid the ultimate price, and continue to do so, to purchase the peace that we enjoy today. We owe such people a huge debt and pray that never again will we see the horrors of the two World Wars. We remember that even now we send fellow humans to fight and die for us, often in distant lands and we pray for peace.

But perhaps we need to rethink what it is that we pray for. What is peace? And where does it come from? Is it the result of a process of negotiation, a cessation of hostilities, or the stationing of peace-keepers in a buffer-zone? Is it the use of sanctions rather than military hardware? Is it a UN resolution?

To help us think about this, I've brought some pottery from home.

- Pretty and perfect – just like God's creation, just like our world should be
- But war and conflict and threat and worry do something to this world –
 - Volunteer
 - Hammer
 - Shatter
 - Pour out pieces
- Just like the pottery, war and conflict shatter our world – Shatter families, friendships, countries, communities
- We all want peace – to try to put our world back together – is this possible?
 - What can we use to stick our world together?
 - Sellotape?
 - Glue?
 - Blue-tack?
 - Plasters?
 - Does it work? Can it ever be the same?
- Are we stuck with a world which is broken and can't be fixed?
- What does it mean to pray for peace? – that God would provide sticking plasters? That God would give us oodles of glue?
- Jesus says he gives his peace – not as the world gives
 - Peace is a gift – a new way of living, a new society. It's a brand new creation from God
 - New crockery

Jesus's peace that he leaves relates to the Jewish word, "Shalom". And this word is much more than just an absence of violence. This word corresponds to a vision of a new way of being that genuinely

wishes for the peace and well-being of everyone. It is loving our enemies enough to want them to prosper, as desperately alien as that sounds to us when our enemy is threatening us.

This peace is not from us. It is not naïve. It doesn't mean we can't try to change our enemies and it isn't even an immediate requirement to become pacifists – that's a much more complicated issue. It is simply saying that from Jesus we have the gift of a new kingdom where remembrance is truly a thing of the past rather than a gathering where the list of those who have died in war gets longer and longer every year. It is simply saying that we can work and look for the day when Jesus' peace could be so infectious that we don't need other protection. But it also challenges us about whether Jesus' example of peace could be ours too – to stand up and take whatever the world throws at him whilst giving out God's love and peace. When we pray for peace, we ask God for his peace. Amen.