

Advent Devotional



Peace

Written by Rev. Carlton Johnson
Matthew 5:9

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

The second week of Advent is the week of Peace. At Jesus' birth, the angels declared peace on earth and goodwill to all people.

Though not typically associated with Advent, the verses for this devotion are familiar. They come from The Beatitudes. Often called the prelude to the Sermon on the Mount, the Beatitudes provide a succinct understanding of the ethos of the reign of God. Later, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus further articulates reign principles.

The name given to this series of proclamations is derived from its Latin Vulgate translation. *Beati* which translates to the Greek word *Makarios*. Though traditionally translated in English as "blessed", it can also be "fortunate".

We are fortunate when we find peace. How wonderful is it for our families and children when we find peaceful communities and schools. The utter bliss of a peaceful congregation cannot be put into words. Once found, we go to every extreme to maintain this peace.

But what about those who don't have peaceful schools, communities, cities, or even countries?

At the time of the writing of this text, leaders of the Roman Empire, and those who sought to be a

part of their ranks, glorified those who consider themselves conquerors. They did not value life, but death. Their goal was not peace, but war. They were warmakers.

The ministry of Jesus is often identified by his calling forth of "reversals of fortune". Jesus proclaimed an existence contrary to his audience's expectations. He shared a vision of a world far different from the one they understood.

Profoundly, Jesus did not ask for peacekeepers, but for peacemakers.

Peacemakers are quite the opposite of warmakers. More importantly, peacemakers take the issue of peace further than peacekeepers. Peacemakers are not content with keeping peace. Unlike peacekeepers, peacemakers are not comfortable sitting by quietly and maintaining the status quo. Peacemakers create peace by engaging systems that deny others resources and deny others peace.

Reflection

1. During this season of Advent, as we look at the massive loss of life in the Middle East and constantly brewing unrest in our own country, how can we become peacemakers?
2. Are there opportunities to "make peace" in your local community?

Prayer

Merciful God, endow us as peacemakers in our homes, in our churches, in our communities, and around the world.

