

Advent 2018 – Peace

Psalm 85

Lamenting

- Lament is the beginning of understanding peace
 - Lament over a lack of it and its cause – SIN
 - Lament over God’s response to it – even when it’s right
 - If God didn’t punish sin, we would wonder (rightly) how serious He is about it
 - He is NOT infinitely tolerant of our rebellions and idolatry
 - Genesis 15.16 – Daniel 8.23 – Matthew 23.32 – 1 Thes 2.16 – 1 John 5.16
- Lament is the appropriate posture of sinful people approaching God
 - Good news – it’s not just appropriate but met with acceptance (Ps 51.17)

Listening

- We stand before a righteous God more unworthy than we ever imagined, hoping for something we could never dream: SHALOM
- Shalom – God’s wholeness that makes us whole
 - What is the source of confidence? He has done it before and He will do it again
 - This is for His people – don’t make the mistake to apply this universally
 - Not perfect people – not sincere people – *His people*
 - He speaks SHALOM to those who are honest with Him and give God room to be honest with them
 - The danger of turning back is real because they didn’t listen in the first place!
- Don’t settle for the faux peace that comes from appearance
 - Dhalonega – how we need this kind of honesty borne from hearing “Peace”

Inviting

- Invitation to believe
 - In His love and commitment, God has come to His Creation and invited all of us to share that with Him
 - In His righteousness and wholeness, we come to see they are not at war (though maybe we assumed they were) – the fight was with the rebels, and that’s US!
 - For Christians, we see the cross as the place where faithfulness springs up from the ground and righteousness looks from the sky (Phil. 2)
- Invitation to rejoice
 - Because of who God is and what He has done, we will see goodness
 - We have a way to follow that is right, not just pleasurable

Questions for Discussion

1. What do you think was the saddest moment you've ever had? How did it express itself? What was the saddest moment before God you've ever had (confession of sin, barely holding on after grief set in, whatever it may be)? How did you express yourself to God then?
2. Can you think of a time in your life (or the life of someone close to you) where this principle came true: "God is *not* infinitely tolerant of our rebellions or idolatry." What happened? What was the outcome? What (if anything) changed?
3. Why is confession (particularly of sin, but of emotions, etc., too) such a vital part of our relationship with God? Read Psalm 51. What do you see in the Scripture that gives insight into how David confessed his sin and situation?
4. When is a time in your life that you've been tempted to "turn back to folly?" (v.8)
5. Do you find it difficult to be honest with God? With His people? What do you think most often holds you back from that kind of honesty with Him and His people? How would that change if God spoke (and you heard!), "PEACE to you?" If you want to listen to the song Trent mentioned in the sermon, you can find it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=asnCcssDewc> and lyrics here: <https://genius.com/Ashley-mcbryde-a-little-dive-bar-in-dahlongega-lyrics>
6. It's at the cross that faithfulness springs up and righteousness looks down, reconciling God's holiness and love (Ps. 85.10-11). It's because of the cross that He speaks Peace to His people. Read Philippians 2.5-11 to close the time together – believe and rejoice at what God has done for us in Christ.