

Can I really have peace?

Readings: Luke 19:41-42, 24:36-49

*'Would that you, even you, had known this day the things that make for peace!
But now they are hidden from your eyes'*

1. The problem: you can't have peace if you don't know the way of peace (Lk 19:41-42).

- Jerusalem was called the city of peace ('shalom') but it didn't know the way of peace. In fact, it seemed to be the most unlikely city to receive God's mercy and peace because it had so consistently rejected God's messengers (Matt 23:37).
- The people of Jerusalem had tried everything to find peace: politics, religion, money, pleasure. Jesus condemned these things. He knew what people really needed was the peace of knowing the true God, not temporary distractions and pleasures.
- People didn't like that so they used their religious and political idols to condemn Jesus to death. People today are the same. We produce thousands of distractions and entertainments to give us peace and then use these things to reject the God who gives true peace.

2. God's answer to the problem: The death of Jesus, his Son (Lk 24:36-49)

'Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead...'

- Jesus rose from the dead on the third day and one of the first things he said to his disciples was 'Peace to you' (Lk 24:36). This was not just another way of saying hello but the good news that his work was complete and that he had made peace between God and man.
- It was always God's purpose that his Son would suffer death as a sacrifice for the sins of the world; 'It is written...' (24:46). The people and religious leaders of the time thought that they were getting rid of an inconvenient man who kept disturbing their (false) 'peace'. But actually, through his death Jesus was paying for their sins and the sins of the whole world.
- It was always God's purpose that his Son would 'rise on the third day' as the guarantee that his offering for sin was accepted. Now that he has paid for sin, he personally offers you peace.

3. God's message to you: Repent and be forgiven (Lk 24:36,47)

'...and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations...'

- So Jesus sends his followers out to preach 'repentance and forgiveness of sins'. Repentance is changing your mind. It is turning away from all the false ways of finding peace and satisfaction. It is realising that life without God is wrong and doesn't work.
- Forgiveness of sins is the wonderful news that God does not hold your sins against you. He receives you freely. You can turn to him with full confidence that he will welcome you home!
- This is God's wonderful good news of peace for the whole world: 'all nations'. That means you! Yes, you can really have peace: repent and believe the good news.