

A piece of puzzle or peace in the puzzle

This evening we are thinking about peace. So I could not resist the twist between the two words we use that mean completely different things!

A piece of something! Or Peace

So checking out the dictionary:

Piece: Portion that is separated or seen separately from the whole

So what might we have a piece of?

Pizza, cake.....

Oh no their stomachs will be rumbling with this talk of food so I have a piece of something for you! = Shortbread!

Pass out shortbread!

Then this made me think about different sorts of pieces of things! Like pieces of a jigsaw!

Who likes doing jigsaws.

In our family we like doing jigsaw puzzles it is a good relaxing holiday activity, in fact I find they can be quite addictive!

My kids used to like those wooden ones that fit in a frame, then as they got bigger there was another favourite one of a swimming pool with lots of funny things to spot like an octopus in the pool or a person kitted out for deep sea diving = Show Puzzles.

All this talk is of pieces but what I really need to be talking about is something completely different it is Peace.

When I say the word peace what do you think of?

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Small Group Activity:

In small groups I want you to write a definition of peace and list as many symbols of peace that you can think of.

Share the definitions:

The dictionary definition is: Freedom from disturbance, noise of anxiety. Freedom from war or the ending of war

Share Symbols of peace:

My kids also used to like a story book called "Peace at Last" about an adult bear wanting a moment of peace and quiet.

There are many verses about peace in the Bible and I have selected a few to help us this evening.

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1st Piece = P

The Bible talks about God giving us peace:

2Thessalonians 3:16 Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.

God gives us peace. At all times and in very way. That is a great promise! So this evening I hope we are going to discover more about this peace that comes from God and is available for us all.

Firstly Peace is a Gift:

God gives us peace. God's peace is something we can experience and ask for. Maybe when you are in a situation where you feel out of your depth God will come alongside you and give you His peace, an overwhelming sense of God with you supporting and loving you. He may not necessarily take you out of that particular situation but He will give you His peace.

Testimony:

I can remember when I was told that my father had died. I was 17 at the time and I went up to my tiny box room sat on my bed and asked the big question "Why". No blinding answer came but I was given an overwhelming sense that God was with me, and a real tangible sense of peace.

Does anyone else have an experience of God's peace?

Now days when there is a tragic death you will often see people lighting candles.

= Candle

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People do this in their desire to demonstrate and bring peace into what is a dark and terrible situation.

For Christians lighting a candle demonstrates more than a hope for peace but it expresses our certainty that God's light will come into a situation.

Jesus said, in John Ch8v12 - "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life".

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2nd Piece = E

Secondly, the Bible tells us that God is our peace and it is his desire for us to live in a peaceful world:

Ephesians 2:14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility

Does any one know what Jelly Babies have to do with peace?

Jelly babies are a type of soft confectionery that are shaped as babies in a variety of colours. Jelly babies were launched by Bassett's in 1918 in Sheffield as "Peace Babies" to mark the end of World War I. Production was suspended during World War II due to wartime shortages. In 1953 the product was relaunched as "Jelly Babies".

Also:

In Doctor Who, jelly babies were often mentioned in the early series. Although they became most associated with the fourth Doctor (played by Tom Baker), who often randomly offered them to unsuspecting people he encountered in order to defuse tense situations, the second, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth and eleventh Doctors also offered them up in different episodes.

This made me wonder if it would be good for Street Pastors to give out Jelly Babies to calm the revelers at the end of an evening in Canterbury?

Give out Jelly Babies divide into the Jelly Baby colour groups.

In groups talk about situations of conflict. Fill in the prayer to make a pray for situations of conflict:

Light Candle and pray these prayers: -

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Prayer:

Father God, thank you that it is your desire to bring peace into our lives and situations.

We ask that you would bring peace to:

For He himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility. Amen

Maximise This Day

This is the day the Lord has made. [Psalm 118:24](#)

God determines the number of your days, but you determine how they are spent. The Psalmist said, 'This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.' Yesterday is a cancelled cheque, tomorrow is a promissory note, today is all you've got. And you can begin your life over today, if you live by these words: 'Today I will delete from my diary two days-yesterday and tomorrow. Yesterday was for learning; tomorrow will be a consequence of what I do today. Today I will face life with the conviction that this day will never return, that it may be the last opportunity I'll have to contribute because there's no guarantee I'll see tomorrow. Today I will be courageous enough not to let opportunity pass me by; my only alternative will be to succeed. Today I will invest my most valuable resource, my time, into my most important possession, the life God has given me. I'll spend each minute purposefully, making today a unique opportunity. I'll tackle each obstacle knowing that with God's help I can overcome it. Today I will resist doubt and pessimism and warm my world with a smile. I'll maintain a strong faith, expect nothing but the best, take time to be happy, see every task as an opportunity to honour the Lord, and endeavour to leave His footprints on the hearts of those I meet.' John Boykin wrote, 'Time is your life-nothing more, nothing less. The way you spend your hours and your days, is the way you spend your life.' So pray, 'Lord, help me to maximise this day.'

3rd Piece = A

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Now what about personal peace?

So how can we experience personal peace?

The Bible tells us that God gives it to us:

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

God does not want us to live with troubled hearts or to be afraid. What is it in your life that troubles you? Maybe it is fear of something, lack of self-esteem, issues with a family member or loved one.

The good news is that God wants to step right into that situation with you, stilling your troubled heart and giving you peace.

What is it that is troubling you?

Give it to the Lord right now.

Picture God being there with you.

Experience God's peace with these words:

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you"

Prayer:

Father God, you know all about me.

You know the things that trouble me,

the things that discourage me or make me afraid.

Lord, I give these things over to you,

asking that you breathe your peace into my life.

In Jesus Name I pray. Amen

4th Piece = C

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Psalm 29 verse 11 says:

4) Psalm 29:11 The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace

So peace is a gift from God and God is peace. This verse also talks about God giving us strength too.

So just think!

God will give us strength and peace so we can face what ever it is that we encounter, be it joy or sadness.

God's peace is available to you and to me.

There is a song that talks of peace flowing like a river. As we listen to this I want you to rest in God's peace and allow the words of the song to speak to you as you rest in God's peace.

Songs of Fellowship 458 Peace is flowing Like a River

Peace is flowing like a river,

Flowing out to you and me,

spreading out into the desert,

setting all the captives free.

Let it flow through me, let it flow through me,

Let the mighty peace of God flow – out through me.

Let it flow through me, let it flow through me,

Let the mighty peace of God flow out through me.

So we can experience God's peace, His peace flows through us, and we can be peacemakers for God.

Bringing God's peace into otherwise hopeless situations. How can we do this?

By introducing to people to the Prince of Peace – Jesus.

5th Piece = E

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Romans Ch5v1-2 says:

Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ

We can know God's peace because of Jesus. Not by anything we might do or have done, it is through our faith in Jesus that God will pour His peace.

In Isaiah there is a fantastic verse about the promise of peace if we put our trust in God:

6) Isaiah 26:3 You will keep in peace him whose mind is steadfast because he trusts in you

What a promise for us!

You will keep in peace – That is God will keep in peace (definite)

him - That's you and me

whose mind is steadfast – That's my mind is not changing

because he trusts in you - That is you and me trusting God

It is a common practice in the Christian Church to share "The Peace". When Christians share The Peace they use these words.

"The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you"

and the response is

"And also with you"

It is a greeting to encourage each other as peace is given, received and returned.

So let's finish this evening by sharing the peace.