

“Let the peace of Christ rule. . . ”

We are offering a series of reflections for individuals and churches who may be finding it difficult to provide midweek prayer and shared learning from Scripture. You can use these by watching the YouTube video, reading the relevant Bible passage and then reflecting on the questions below. To help make this a shared activity, you are encouraged to reflect on this together with friends using an online conference package, or simply arrange with a friend for them to watch it too. Then ring each other up, share your thoughts and responses and then pray for one another, and pray together for our world.

Read Colossians 3:12-15

If you can, watch the YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/FtpVe-BnlNo>

The Bible has a great deal to say to us about the peace of God; it transcends human understanding; it can “guard our hearts and our minds” – but in this context we are invited to let the peace of God **rule**. Circumstances are likely to present us with many decisions to make, challenges to face and priorities to set in the coming days. This is true for us as church communities and also as individuals. There may be times when we struggle to balance conflicting priorities and expectations. As we seem to make sense of it all, what might it mean to “let the peace of Christ rule” – to make those choices that are determined by a sense of God’s peace?

The verses that precede this invitation, could be seen as a “roadmap” for the journey ahead.

Remember who you are (v12): Recent events will have had their impact on us – none of us can claim to be completely unchanged. Take the opportunity to recognise again how Christian disciples are described: Chosen by God; holy; dearly loved. Spend some time with each of these statements, consider what they mean for you and let the truth of them sink deeply into your consciousness.

Clothe yourselves for the journey (v12): Whenever we take a journey, we tend to pause and think about the equipment and kit that we might need. In a similar way, we are invited here to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. We value these virtues in others and others will value them in us - so take time to determine to make this your priority in the journey forwards. Elsewhere, we find a very similar list described as the “fruits of the Spirit”. [Galatians 5:22-23] We might sense a note of contradiction in that they are described here as something requiring our initiative, but elsewhere as something granted by God. But this is the nature of a relationship – as we invest in it, so we receive its benefits more fully. It is through our participation with God and our partnership in the Spirit that we become more the people we are called to be.

Bear with one another (v13): We are called into community – and as we respond in different ways to the road ahead, we need to give each other space and understanding. Take time to recognise this and to hear the words “forgive as the Lord forgave you”. In every aspect of our lives, we are likely to need to extend an attitude of grace as we begin to find ourselves again. As individuals and church communities might God also be inviting us to be examples and agents of grace, as we help others to bear with one another? How can we be people of peace in our communities?

Put on love (v14): For all the worth and value of the virtues, summarised in the previous verse, we are invited to recognise something that is over and above even them – love. Love has the ability to overcome a great deal. God invites us to remember that we are called to be communities of love, so we can determine to act in loving ways in the face of the challenges, the frustrations, the misunderstandings the disappointments that come our way in every sphere of life.

PRAYER

Loving God, amidst all the challenges and decisions I will face in the days ahead, grant me the courage to allow your peace to rule over them all. Remind me again that I am dearly loved by you, equip me with the virtues of goodness I need, and so help me to be loving and kind to all who share this journey with me. May your peace rule in my heart. AMEN