

Peace be with you

Notes on the Bible readings

- 'Peace be with you' is an exhortation shared on several occasions throughout the Gospels, usually when there is great news about to be shared. This is not the quiet peace of the status quo, of life as normal; this is the disruptive yet reassuring peace that comes because Jesus is risen from the dead. It is the beginning of something new.

- This also comes near the end of the Gospel where John shares the reasoning behind writing his account. The arc of this narrative then reaches from the first century right out to us: 'These are written so that you may come to believe...and that through believing you may have life in his name.' The purpose of this story pushes ever outwards, bringing life to the world through our response.

- This act of witness is seen in the disciples both in John and in Acts. They are bearing witness to the truth of Christ's resurrection, by sharing this truth through their lives and actions.

- Thomas was unable to take someone's word for the resurrection, but needed to touch and interact with Jesus in order to believe and declare, 'My Lord and my God!'

- In embracing Christ for themselves, the disciples were then able to go and share that invitation with others. We are invited to receive the embrace of Jesus for ourselves: what are we doing to help others receive and respond to that same invitation?

Questions for reflection

- ▶ How would you feel about sharing this moment with someone?
- ▶ What difference does it make having accepted Jesus into your life?
- ▶ What experiences make you feel most 'at peace'?



A prayer of confession

*Prince of peace, we are sorry
that we choose not to forgive but to hold grudges;
that we doubt you and do not trust;
that we choose to rely on our own resources and not on you;
that we believe only when we have proof.
Help us to forgive more readily, and to trust more willingly.
Amen.*

A prayer for others

Heavenly Father, we pray for all the places in the world that need your peace: places where wars continue to threaten the stability of the nations; and the lack of peace has caused so much destruction; places where people have to flee their homes, their families destroyed, lives lost.

Give wisdom to world leaders: to presidents, prime ministers, politicians of all governments, that they may strive for lasting peace and true justice, not putting personal ambitions before the needs of their people.

*We pray for those who need peace of mind: those weighed down by the stresses and strains of everyday life, or who suffer with anxiety, or are oppressed by worry and fear; for those who find it hard to let go of things and simply trust.
Amen.*

A personal prayer

*Let me feel the touch of peace, the touch of life,
the touch of the risen Lord,
beside me, behind me, and before me all the days of my life. Amen.*

Live your faith

Are there 'untouchables' – people no one touches – in your community? Or people you have 'lost touch' with? Seek to make a new connection with someone this week; say 'Peace be with you' or 'Shalom alechem'.

For reflection and comment linking this week's Bible reading to the news, current issues and events, go to www.rootsontheweb.com and click on PostScript.

