

All Souls Sermon 2020. Revd David Treharne, Vicar.

I asked two people what they would want to hear from me in a little All Souls talk this year. One person, namely my wife, said "I want to hear that thing you say David, where ***if we get close to God we can be close to our loved ones.***" There we go, I've said it!

One of the big and amazing promises of the Christian faith is that death is not the end. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead shows us that. For the Christian we are united with the Lord in life and we remain united with him in and through death. Our physical bodies, the clay jars that house the precious cargo of our souls, our essence, may perish and turn to dust; but our souls, our spirits, remain alive in God. They are not lost. We do not disappear into nothingness when we physically die!

And if our lives are hidden with God in Christ (Colossians 3:1-4) when we are alive ***and*** when we physically die, it is natural to conclude that we can be close to our loved ones in life and in death through Christ. So, if I want to be near my dad, I just need to be close to God, because that's where my dad is! If you want to be near your loved one, be close to God, because that's where you'll find them!

The second thing someone said they wanted is, "Peace. I would like peace." One of the hardest things with grief is not being at peace in our hearts. The pain and hurt of loss, the emotional roller coaster, the mind games of it all! Even if those who have died are at peace, peace can sometimes be absent from ***our*** hearts and minds!

There's so much that could be said about this, but for now I just want to quote Jesus, ***"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."*** (John 14:27) Jesus promises peace. His Spirit is peace. As we dare to pray to God, as we dare to put our hope in God, peace can flood the disturbed soul.

The Psalmist asks himself 42:5 Why are you so downcast O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? ... Put your hope in God.

Looking to God is the key. Jesus says his peace is a peace the world won't give! How true is that at this time!!!! The world wants to steal your peace. Even your mind may steal your peace. Look to God for peace, breath deeply of his Spirit of peace.

Peace is a precious treasure that God wants to give us, wants to give ***you***.

So if you want to be near your loved one, be close to God, look to him. If you want peace, be close to God, look to him!

A Prayer for Peace

Dear God, I need your peace now.

Silence thoughts and feelings of anxiety.

Silence thoughts and feelings of despair.

When there is chaos and turmoil surrounding me, shelter and protect me with your peace and loving, powerful presence.

As I take this time to stop, remember and pray, fill me with your peaceful presence.

With each breath I take, I breathe in your peace that surpasses all understanding.

Help me to focus on peace instead of unrest.

I surrender my unrest to you so that I may receive peace.

And help me to be a spark that ignites peace in others. Amen