

A PEACE STRONGER THAN YOUR FEARS

VIDEO TWO

The night before Jesus' death, his disciples are afraid.

Jesus has just told them that he will be leaving. Now Jesus' friends fear for life without him. In choosing to identify with Jesus, his disciples had caught the attention of the authorities. In a situation in which fight and flight were both impossible, they feared what might happen next.

In the midst of their anxieties, Jesus comforts them:

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.

Jesus says his peace is different. He does not give as the world gives.

His peace is different in kind. When trouble comes, the world says: hold it together, stay strong. But the pressure of that so often leaves us feeling helpless, tired, and more troubled.

Not so with Jesus.

Jesus' desire is to lift his friends' burdens, offering them refuge in himself. He doesn't call them to tough it out themselves. He calls his disciples to look to him in their fears. Even when he is physically absent, Jesus will be with them. His peace will remain; they needn't be afraid.

Jesus' peace is also different in how we get it. The disciples don't need to look deeper inside themselves. This peace goes deeper than the peace we cultivate through positive thinking, controlled breathing or problem solving.

These things aren't wrong – in fact, they can be helpful. But Jesus' peace goes much deeper. How?

Because, at the peak of their anxiety, Jesus will give them *his* peace.

Jesus knows that the deepest root behind all our darkest fears is that we have turned away from the God who was always supposed to be our ultimate place of safety. Away from him, we inevitably experience disharmony and fear, facing things we were never supposed to face by ourselves.

Jesus came to bring us back into this relationship.

Having lived a life of harmony with God his Father, Jesus knows that only his death and resurrection can rewrite our history of disharmony and make a way for peace, bringing us back to God. Jesus crosses the divide to restore a way back to relationship with God.

Now, back in harmony with God, we can know safety. Whatever our circumstances, we can be reassured: we are unconditionally loved, welcomed and forgiven. As our anxieties rise, Jesus extends his hands like a parent with a child and invites us to place our future into his own.

Even in the midst of crippling anxiety, we can know that the living God is *for us*. We can take a deep breath, and know that we are not alone. Fear is natural as we face terrifying realities, but we have not been abandoned. And that means, knowing peace with God, we are invited not to be afraid. We have direct access to the source of peace.

Followers of Jesus are called to live as those who are connected to peace himself. We shouldn't pretend we have no fears; instead, in the midst of them we can be honest about how vulnerable we are yet point to where true peace can be found.

And all of this leaves us with a question: in a world full of fear, who might God want you to extend his peace to this week?