

Advent Peace – Growth Group Study - 13/12/20 – John Malcolm

Why is maintaining peace often difficult in relationships between family members, in communities or between nations?

The Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Abiy Ahmed, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019 has in 2020 taken his country to civil war. What might this reveal about the fragility of peace?

Read Romans 12:17–18 & 14.17-19

What do these verses tell us about our responsibility to live at peace?

Why is peace such a prominent theme in the Bible?

Can you think of any bible stories or characters who are good examples of peace?

Read Isaiah 2:4

How does Isaiah picture the effects of peace?

What is the basis for the peace Isaiah speaks of?

Can you think of grievances that have festered rather than being dealt with justly, which rob people of peace? (Slavery ...)

Read Isaiah 9:4–7

What significance might there be to Isaiah writing about breaking the rod and burning boots as an introduction to the verses about the coming messiah?

What does this reveal about God's intention to deal with oppression and warfare?

How are peace and justice connected in God's kingdom?

Read Luke 2.8-14

How does the birth of Jesus connect with the promises of Isaiah?

Read Matthew 5.9, Ephesians 6:15 & James 3.18

... we remember too that the weighty title he bears, and the peace he brings, is not just some grand victory 'out there'. It's peace brought about by Jesus, who became a small baby in a small family in a small home in a small town in a small nation on the fringe of a huge empire. Our Prince of Peace does not struggle to make time for our small in the midst of his big. Our great king delights to work out his big peace in and through our small.

Joe Warton

How might Jesus be working *out his big peace in and through our small*?

How can we prepare ourselves to share the gospel of peace?

For reflection

Do you, through your words and actions, tend to make ploughs into swords or swords into ploughs.

What could you do to be more prepared to accept and to share peace with others?