

Week 3: Person of Peace

Passage: Luke 10:5-8

Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the labourer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you.

Introduction:

Here Jesus gives the 70/72 advice on how to greet people they meet in the context of their mission. As the 70/72 encounter people in the towns and villages they are to enter people's houses as they are welcomed and are to begin building relationships. Jesus encourages those He sends to approach each household with an intention of bringing peace. If a 'person of peace' is found at this place then the peace will rest upon them. If this isn't the case they will move on to the next place.

Sermon Notes:

Announcing the shalom of God - peace

The messengers go with the message '*Peace to this house!*' Peace is a rich word in the Gospel of Luke. Some say the announcement of peace, seems to be a piece with the announcement of the Good News of the Gospel. You see this in the early part of Luke's Gospel when the announcement of the coming Messiah is associated with the coming of peace. You see this later in the Gospels as the '*shalom*' of God follows someone who has encountered the ministry of Jesus. (See Luke 1:79, 2:14 & 29; 7:50; 8:48; 19:38, 42; 24:36) To say, 'Peace to this house!' was much more than a simple greeting. In the Greco-Roman world peace was the absence of war, social discord and sedition but the Hebrew concept of shalom meant much more. Joel Green suggests that shalom pointed to a communal well-being, euphoria, security, plenty and the like. Bock goes on to say that the presence of the disciple announcing "Peace be with you!" represents the presence of God's gracious offer.

Central to any mission venture is the announcement of God's shalom available in the Lord Jesus Christ. The 'shalom' of God calls us to care about people holistically. Peace again and again in the NT is presented as one of the great gifts of being in relationship with God through Jesus, applied to our lives by the Holy Spirit. (See Rom 1:7, 5:18:6, 14:7, 15:13; 1 Corinthians 1:3, 7:15; 2 Corinthians 1:2, 13:11; Galatians 1:3, 5:22; Ephesians 1:2, 2:14-17; Philippians 1:2, 4:7; Colossians 1:20; 1 Thessalonians 1:1) One of Global Interaction's core beliefs is that **God's greatest gift is a life changing relationship experience of Jesus. The peace, the Shalom of God that Jesus Christ brings to both communities and individuals is one of the foundations of this belief.**

People of peace

Highlighted in this passage is the potential that a person of peace has in the message of the gospel being welcomed into a community. You see, the hoped for response to the message of peace as talked about above, is that the message would be welcomed by what Luke describes as a '*son of peace*', or '*child of peace*'.

A person of peace is someone who welcomes the worker and their message into their lives and home. Their welcoming of both the message and the messenger actually helps the message to find a home among a people. Jesus suggests that when the 72 find such a welcome **that they are to '*remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide*, for the labourer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you.'** The welcome and hospitality of the person of peace becomes a base through which whole communities potentially are reached and the Good News is shared.

It is important to note that we are not using this person to get to other people. It is rather recognition that God does not just have a plan for individuals but his passion is for whole households and communities. He has a plan for communities' movements toward Jesus. A person of peace can be the start of a movement such as this.

For those who welcome both the message and the messenger, it seems a beautiful transaction takes place. Mission is not about a giver and receiver, a one-way relationship. It becomes a two-way reciprocation of giving and receiving. The messenger brings the beautiful greeting of the gift of the presence of God in Jesus, and the person of peace empowers mission by providing hospitality, food, drink and a place to stay. But they are not just welcoming the message themselves; through their partnership with the messengers they become a potential doorway for the good news to impact whole communities.

During the progression of Luke-Acts this concept of the messenger of peace, being welcomed by a person of peace, who in turn empowers more ministries, is a surprisingly common phenomenon. There are many examples; Simon's mother-in-law's house becomes a base for Jesus' healing and preaching ministry (4:38). As Matthew welcomes Jesus into his house, his home becomes a place of ministry to disreputable people (5:27-31). Others examples include the home of Martha and Mary (10:38-42) the home of Zacchaeus (19:1-9) the home of Cornelius (Acts 10-11) Lydia's house (16:11-15) the household of the Philippian Jailer (Acts 16:33) the home of Aquila and Priscilla (18:1-5). **It seems God's plan is rarely to save just an individual from a household and extract them away from kith and kin, it seems that each new person of peace becomes an opening to reach a new household, a new community – to see people movements toward Jesus.**

Cultural flexibility

Finally it's worth noting one more thing from these verses. The phrase *'eating and drinking whatever is put before you'* is important. Leon Morris suggests that in the area of the Jordan to which the 72 were being sent, were many Gentiles. This meant that the food they might be offered might not always satisfy the rigorist for ceremonial purity. Jesus was advocating they were not to be side tracked into fussiness about food and food laws. The Good News of Jesus must go out even if it meant eating risky food. Risky and unorthodox table fellowship has been a theme of the Gospel and here in the ministry of the 72 that motif will continue (See Luke 5:27-32, 33-39; 7:36-50). Furthermore, it is again a beautiful anticipation of the wider Gentile mission that will be launch after Peter's vision (Acts 10 & 11) that helped him to realise *'how true it is that God does not show favouritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right.'*

Here the writer touches on the wonder that the Gospel will eventually include people of every culture, tribe, nation and tongue. As Luke anticipates, and Acts draws out explicitly; Gentiles would not have to become Jewish in cultural markers, or customs, or language or culture to become part of the people of God. Accepted through the Gospel, they could worship God in their own heart language and their own cultural forms. **This means at times that the onus was on those in mission was to adapt culturally to enter the lounge rooms, share at the tables and worldviews of those they were ministering to.** We see here a forerunner to Paul's flexible missionary mindset found in 1 Corinthians 9 where Paul says in summary, *'I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the Gospel that I may share in its blessings.'*

This is where things get really exciting. **This is not about culturally adapting for a time so that we can get people in that we become a homogenous Christian culture as kind of bait and switch. Cultural flexibility in our sharing of the Gospel flows from the belief that there will one day be people from 'every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne of God and the Lamb.'** (Revelation 7) The new creation will be a culturally diverse place where in fact the kings of the nations will bring the treasures from their cultures. As Revelation describes of the new creation; *"I did not see a temple in the city, because The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light and the Kings of the earth will bring their splendour into it. On no day will gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honour of the nations will be brought into it."*

At this point missiologist Chris Wright says, “Think of the prospect! All of human culture and language, literature, art, music, science, business, sport, technological achievement – actual and potential – all available to us. All of it with the poison of evil and sin sucked out of it forever. All of it, glorifying God. All under his loving and approving smile. All of it for us to enjoy with God and indeed, being enjoyed by God.”

Global Interaction’s tag line, *‘empowering communities to develop their own distinctive ways of following Jesus’*, is not just a fancy marketing line or a new fangle trendy way of talking about mission; what they are doing is getting people from every culture ready for life in the New Creation! And as we all know the only way to new creation is Jesus.

Insider Story:

When was the last time you were blown away by the hospitality shown toward you? Take some time to reflect why this hospitality resonated so strongly and what you could do to provide hospitality toward others.

Watch DVD clip - Global Interaction cross-cultural worker Mark provides insight from his setting.

Conclusion:

- It is important for labourers of the harvest to approach their mission with grace and peace. When you are involved in ministry to your neighbours or through your church do you have this attitude? How can you develop it?
- Relationships with certain people take time and require discernment. Are you building deep relationships with people in your community? Are there some relationships that you need to ‘move on’ from?
- As God’s workers we are to contribute to the community, both church and wider community. How are you serving the communities you are part of? In what ways can you build relationships through serving and helping others?

Take Home:

1. In the next three weeks resolve to invite someone to your home for a meal. Could you consider someone you don’t know well?
2. As you think about the different communities you are involved in, pray for discernment as to what relationships should be a priority for you.
3. As you meet someone new in the next little while make an effort to be a person of peace.
4. Look for a person of peace and prayerfully take opportunities to share the Good News.