

## Sermon Easter 2 PDS 2015

There have been many incidents over the millennia when believers have hidden behind locked doors fearing for their lives, so for many this Gospel reading would have felt very real.

But then Jesus appears “Peace be with you” he says, apparently with such love that the disciples are filled with joy rather than the bluster of self-defence and apologies for their actions of a few days before.

According to NT Wright the Jewish word ‘Shalom’ means more than an individual feeling of peace, or an agenda for peace for a warring world; it includes and transcends both into rich and fruitful living.

This need for rich and fruitful living is shown again when Jesus breathes on the disciples, reminding us of Genesis, the life he breathes on them though is to give them a new life, that of peace bringers, healers, forgivers of sins. And as if that wasn’t enough he says “As the Father sent me so I send you”. They are to be a power let loose on the world, not just cosy peace communicators.

Life will never be the same again after that first Easter Day, and the transforming power of the cross still has its power now. We can be transformed just as the disciples were transformed.

That disparate group that had shared much on and off over the years become a fellowship, committed to and inter-dependant on each other, not just temporarily being nice to each other, but working together, acknowledging strength and weaknesses, forgiving if not condoning mistakes. They went against their culture in so many ways, including the selling of land and houses. They went on to get arrested for their faith, beaten, killed, they didn’t remain hidden in that upper room. The Resurrection transformed their lives, those confused, frightened, guilty men and women went on in Christ’s name to fulfil their commission of bringing life, eternal life, to others. Their fellowship was marred from time to time in very human ways, but they tried and were transformed.

True fellowship is illustrated in the relationship of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are asked to mirror that fellowship to the world. We are sent to be fruitful examples of Christian living, to show Jesus’ light and life giving love to all. To bring the message of forgiveness, of transformation, to bring peace in all its meanings. May the risen Lord come into your life and say “Peace be with you.”