

PEACE DAY REFLECTION - 2018

We find ourselves living in difficult times. In Jamaica and throughout the world, there is a sense of unrest, disunity, even anger. We have become self-centred and selfish. We have lost respect for ourselves and for others. When taken to its extremes, these feelings often lead to hostilities, retaliation, and violence against one another. Many times, the recipients of this hostility and violence are innocent victims. In other cases, family members are injured or killed because of misunderstandings, hurt feelings, and jealousy. Violence is becoming too routine, too common, and too close for comfort.

The apostle Paul wrote:

*¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. ¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. ¹⁸ **If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.** ¹⁹ Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. ²⁰ Therefore if your enemy is hungry, feed him, if he is thirsty, give him a drink. For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." ²¹ **Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**" Romans 12:14-21.*

In the two Great Commandments given by Jesus in the New Covenant we find a recipe for peace. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." ³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." Matthew 22:37-39.

If I am to "love others as I love myself," then first I must love myself! Let's simplify this concept:

I love my neighbour as I love myself.

I will not want to do harm to my neighbour as it would be equal to harming myself.

When we hurt others, we are in fact *hurting ourselves*.

Living at peace with one another does not come automatically. We are not born with a peaceful spirit. We receive God's love and practise and develop an attitude and a lifestyle of peace.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the peace makers, for they shall be called the sons of God." (Matthew 5:9)

The world needs more love, more unity, more peace. This will only be possible if each one of us commits to love God, to love ourselves, and to love our neighbour as we love ourselves.

May we all live at peace and be peace makers!

Pastor David Goode
Worthington Friends Church, Kingston, Jamaica