

Peace

By Ian Menzies



When Jesus said, ‘Peace be with you’ I don’t think he was meaning just a literal absence of war, although that would be good, obviously. Other dictionary definitions may be more apt. ‘A calm and quiet state, free from disturbances or noise,’ perhaps? But that would eliminate any excitement or celebration, so perhaps that wasn’t the full intention either. ‘Freedom from conflict or disagreement among people or groups of people’? ‘The absence of violence or other disturbance within a state’? Just what is this peace that is being blessed upon us? The closest dictionary definition

that fits best, I think, is ‘A state of mental calm and serenity, with no anxiety’. Lucas Damoff notes that ‘the Hebrew Scriptures are full of an aching desire for peace being answered by God’s unrelenting promise to bring them into the Sabbath rest they so desperately crave. In the Jewish understanding, this notion of peace (in Hebrew: *shalôm*) has the nuance of wholeness, completion and rest. It is not merely the absence of conflict, or the cessation of hostilities. It is a life that is full of goodness and completely free from anxiety.’ That sounds pretty good to me. May the Peace of the Lord be with you

Reflection:

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:7