

## Prophets of Peace

"The prophets who proceeded you and me from ancient times prophesied war, famine, and pestilence against many countries and great kingdoms. As for the prophet who prophesies peace, when the word of that prophet comes true, then it will be known that the Lord has truly sent the prophet." In other words you don't have to be a very good or clever prophet to know that war, famine and pestilence is coming. Arguably all you would need is a degree of knowledge of current affairs, some rudimentary history, and a dark and honest capacity for self awareness and you could accurately enough predict war, famine and pestilence. But to prophesy peace – that takes courage, faith and true vision.

It would be good if we could remember Jeremiah's words when we hear current day prophets of gloom. It is not so much that they are wrong but that it is not much of a gift. Neither is Jeremiah suggesting that we just blindly hope for the best to come true – he does say that we need to see the word of prophesy for peace actually come true.

So in a contemporary sense we need to get past the doomsday sayers and we are not to be seduced by the sceptics and deniers who simply say nothing bad is really happening or that nothing can be done. Rather we are challenged, I think, to listen for – maybe even to become – the prophet who speaks of peace with the ring of truth to it. And I believe that how we respond to the challenge of Jesus and St Paul will be much of the how and the why any prophesy for peace comes to pass. So how can it be that the prophets of doom are not wrong and yet we are to listen for the prophets of hope and believe them? A story that I love from the Cherokee nation says it beautifully I think.

*A Grandfather from the Cherokee Nation was talking with his grandson. "A fight is going on inside me," he said to the boy. "It is a terrible fight between two wolves." The young grandson listened intently.*

*"One wolf is evil, unhappy, and ugly: He is anger, envy, war, greed, selfishness, sorrow, regret, guilt, resentment, inferiority/ superiority, false pride, coarseness, and arrogance. He spreads lies, deceit, fear, hatred, blame, scarcity, poverty, and divisiveness."*

*"The other wolf is beautiful and good: He is friendly, joyful, loving, worthy, serene, humble, kind, benevolent, just, fair, empathetic, generous, honest, compassionate, grateful, brave, and inspiring resting wholeheartedly in deep vision beyond ordinary wisdom."*

*The grandson paused in deep reflection of what his grandfather had just said. Then he exclaimed; "Oyee! (in recognition). Grandfather continued; "This same fight is going on inside you, and inside all human beings as well."*

*The grandson paused in deep reflection and recognition of what his grandfather had just said. Then he finally cried out deeply; "Oyee! Grandfather, which wolf will win this horrific war?"*

*The elder Cherokee replied, "The wolf that you feed. That wolf will surely win!"*  
[[www.rainbowbody.net/Ongwehewhe/Cherokee.htm](http://www.rainbowbody.net/Ongwehewhe/Cherokee.htm) ]

The wolf that you feed, that wolf will surely win. Not unlike the wisdom of St Paul this morning. "No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness."

Give your energy, your intention, your hope to God and God's good purposes for the world. Feed the wolf that is friendly, joyful, loving, worthy, serene, humble, kind, benevolent, just, fair, empathetic, generous, honest, compassionate, grateful, brave, and inspiring resting wholeheartedly in deep vision beyond ordinary wisdom.

And the decision as to which wolf we feed is actually a thousand small decisions – to be grateful for a new day, to see and hear beyond the snap of a loved one or stranger to their fear and hurt and respond to that, to choose to leave home earlier and walk through autumn leaves on the way to the shop or to our neighbour, to listen to music we love rather than allowing ourselves to become agitated by talk back radio, to look up that psalm or poem we half remember and share it with someone, to pause in front of a photograph of a loved one and say a prayer for them, to strike a cutting of plant for a friend, and so on. A thousand small decisions that feed the wolf we want as our companion. A thousand small opportunities for our members to give God glory and to make the prophesy of peace a truth filled one.

And it is not just which wolf within us that we feed that will win in our hearts. We have the capacity to help feed or starve the wolf within another. Or as Jesus said " ... whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple – truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward." When we treat others with respect, compassion, hopefulness, tenderness, forgiveness, humour we feed the good wolf within them, we fan the flame of the divine within them, we call the fully alive human within them to come out to play and work with us so that peace may indeed come about.

We cannot determine how another will behave but we can deeply influence and encourage others for good - for their good and for our good and for the good of all.

So let us not give up on feeding the good wolf within ourselves or within others. Let us not give up on seeing, acknowledging, and honouring the divine within ourselves and each other. Let us not give up on the risen Christ within and among us.

Instead let us be prophets of peace. Let us be workers for peace. Let us be at peace.

Even so, come Lord Jesus Christ.