



## **Colossians 3:15**

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

### **Reflection**

I'm not sure what images come running through your mind when you think of Jesus. Perhaps it's the cross; his body bleeding and broken, blood running down his face from the crown of thorns, and those

haunting words 'Father, forgive, them for they know not what they're doing.' Or perhaps it's the empty tomb, light streaming in and those resurrection appearances, like when Jesus appeared in the room with the locked doors, showing Thomas his scars. When you think of Jesus, you might see him surrounded by little children, his astonished disciples looking on; or peering up into a tree with a smile on his face calling Zacchaeus down. Or perhaps it's Jesus preaching in the Temple in Jerusalem, one man against an army of high priests and teachers of the law who have nowhere to hide against someone with authority like this. Or maybe you see Jesus on a hillside, a vast multitude sitting in hushed silence listening to words of wisdom the likes of which the world has never heard, not before or since, as

Jesus delivers his sermon on the mount. Maybe for you, Jesus is feeding the five thousand with a small boy's pack lunch – just a few small loaves of bread and fish; or touching a leper who hasn't felt a human touch in decades; or walking on water and calling Peter across the waves to himself, reaching down to save him when his faith fails; or waking up from near exhaustion on a boat only to command the wind and waves to be still.

I'm not sure what images come running through your mind when you think of Jesus. But for me, one of the most striking images is Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday riding a donkey, just five days before he is crucified. Huge crowds are pouring into Jerusalem for the Passover festival and others have come out to

meet Jesus. Matthew 21 tell us that a

... very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

In the ancient world this was the equivalent of rolling out the red carpet, only not for movie stars whom we treat like royalty, but for genuine royalty. And not a red carpet, but the cloaks off their very backs, most of them would have owned only one. Picture hundreds of cloaks set down in the mud and dust so that not even the feet of the donkey that Jesus was riding would get dirty. And they cut palm branches and spread them out as well. This is how you welcome an all-conquering king. Only, Jesus wasn't riding a warhorse bought with

funds from the royal treasury; this king arrives on a borrowed donkey. The king of kings and lord of lords enters Jerusalem not on stallion, but on a donkey, not warlike and proud, but gentle and lowly, as one who is truly great. In ancient times the donkey was a noble animal, ridden by kings in times of peace and victory. This is how the Prince of Peace arrives in Jerusalem. Not to take the fight up to the Romans or to the religious establishment but to peacefully lay down his own life so that he might make peace between God and humankind through his blood shed for us on the cross.

You might remember that this was the highpoint of Colossians chapter 1. Those five verses (1:15–20) that represent some of the most sublime teaching about Jesus

Christ in all of Scripture reached their summit and highest point with these words, Colossians 1:19–20,

19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Jesus Christ, the Passover lamb of God, the Prince of Peace has made peace between God and humankind through his blood shed on the cross for all who put their trust in his name. Today's passage from Colossians recalls the peace of Jesus Christ; just a single verse today, our response to the peace that is ours in Je-

us through the cross, Colossians 1:15,

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Paul is on a roll. After raising the young Colossian church's vision of Jesus to new heights, he's now encouraging them not to be distracted by different teachings or their old way of life but simply to be who they are in him. And it's like Paul is giving them memory verse after beautiful memory verse, as we began to see last week, and will continue to see over the coming days. Today's is so evocative, and yet beautiful in its simplicity.

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in

your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

Let the peace of the Prince of Peace rule in your hearts. Jesus came to earth to bring peace between God and man, he rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and lay down his life to reconcile all things to God through his blood. 'Blessed are the peacemakers' he taught, 'for they will be called children of God' (Matt 5:9). And today Jesus addresses the children of God through his word in Colossians 1:15, 'let my peace rule in your hearts, because as members of my body you were called to peace.' This message echoes throughout the New Testament,

Ephesians 2:14,



14 For he himself is our peace,

Ephesians 2:15,

His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace,

Ephesians 2:17,

17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.

Romans 12:18,

18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Galatians 5:22,

But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy,  
peace

Hebrews 12:14,

14 Make every effort to live in peace  
with everyone

Philippians 4:7,

7 And the peace of God, which tran-  
scends all understanding, will guard  
your hearts and your minds in Christ  
Jesus.

Jesus said,

27 Peace I leave with you; my peace

I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. John 14:27

And it is a very special kind of peace. It isn't just the peace we experience when there is no conflict. It is a sense of wholeness and well-being, completeness and totality. But it is even more than that – it is the presence of Jesus, the peace of God that floods into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, that transcends all understanding and is marvellous beyond all comprehension or English expression. Words fail us. It is this peace, this communion with God, this opening of ourselves to his riches, and the deep assurance of eternal-life-giving relationship with him that Paul is speaking about. Let this peace reign in your hearts and let it overflow out of you into your family, your friendships, your church commu-

nity, and your every relationship.

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## **Think & Pray**

Spend some time in contemplation of these words today and then pray for peace in your heart, in your home, and in your church. Pray that you might be a peacemaker. Pray that you might bring peace between God and your work colleagues, peace between God and your sister-in-law. If there is conflict at home, or anger in your heart, if you are prone to frustrate easily or have a quick temper, then pray that you would be filled to overflowing with

the peace that only Jesus can bring and that it would change your life from this day forth, and the lives of those around you.