

Sermon Starter – God Fills Our Cup to Overflowing

Psalm 23:1-6, Genesis 1, Matthew 6:9-13, 2 Corinthians 5:18

One of the opposites of war (destruction) is art (construction). Invite an artist who works on the theme of peace to speak. Or an artist who works with different materials to talk about how they work with different materials to make one piece of art. Is there an art project that your whole congregation can do together? The theme of peace begins with the reminder from Genesis 1 that God created all things, including our neighbor and our enemy. When we believe that, we will grow in our respect and love for all. How can we help our communities respect the other?

Communities have generally worked at peace in two ways: increase our military presence (response of fear); uncover the underlying causes. A third option, suggested by Tobias Roberts, living and working in Central America, invites us to see all that God made as sacred (response of trust). That which is sacred cannot live with or tolerate violence.

The theme of peace begins with the reminder from Genesis 1 that God created all things, including land, neighbor and enemy. How can the church help our communities move from fear to trust? Peace comes through in Psalm 23 at the end when God sets the table in the presence of our enemies. God invites us to sit at table with those we would count as enemies. We do not do this alone, but in God's presence. Who are the five people you would never sit down to dinner with?

What would have to happen in order for God to bring you to the table? After dinner God anoints our head with oil and our cup overflows. This is a picture of overflowing and abundant joy. God gives enough for our work, our life and much, much more. Realistically, it is usually the stuff inside the cup which is enough for my life. It is from the excess that overflows out of the cup where we find what we need to continue joyfully in God's work. The trouble lies in our desire to use the excess for ourselves.

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