

12/8/20: Melody Jones
Advent – Peace

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” (Matthew 5:9)

For most of my life when I read this verse I have felt like this is something I am pretty good at. I am someone who values peace above most things. I am easy going and easy to get along with. I go out of my way to avoid conflict. In recent years as I have worked towards personal growth, I have realized that simply avoiding conflict is a rather shallow form of peace. I am continuing to learn that my personal relationships are actually not very peaceful when I fail to set boundaries and speak up about how I feel, for the sake of avoiding conflict. And they are far more peaceful when I am willing to endure possible conflict for the sake of being more deeply known and understood.

Jesus came to bring peace, but he didn't just sit around in prayer and contemplation. His example to us is certainly not one of conflict avoidance. He actively questioned the religious leaders of the time and violated traditions. He spoke out for the sake of the vulnerable, oppressed, and poor, even when it brought ridicule and persecution. We are called to be peacemakers in the world, and often that will mean engaging situations that involve tension and conflict. I do not want to be someone who only seeks my own inner peace. I want to be a peacemaker. I believe that Jesus calls us to be active in bringing peace on earth through caring for those who are vulnerable, oppressed, and poor. We must learn to become uncomfortable for the sake of peace.

When I think of “peace on earth” at Christmas time the image that comes to mind has always been snuggling up by the fire, ignoring the problems of the world. But that is not how we are going to achieve peace on earth, or even in our own communities. To truly do the work Jesus calls us to of being peacemakers will be difficult. I pray God will prepare us and lead us to the complex, messy, and difficult work of peacemaking.

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” (Luke 2:14)