

“He sent this message to all people:
peace by Jesus Christ, Lord of All.”

The Book of Acts records this statement about God
from the mouth of Peter.

A God who shows no partiality;
a God who had a message for **all people**:
peace by Jesus Christ, Lord of All.

That sounds pretty straightforward:
God wants us to have peace
and Jesus is the one who’s gonna bring it to us.

And it sounds pretty simple:
no complex laws about who peace belongs to
or who Jesus belongs to either.

It’s a message for **all people**
and Jesus is **Lord of All**.

That means me;
that means you.

It means everybody,
whether I like it or not.

Wait. All people?

Every nation, that's what the book says.

Every nation?

But Peter just watched the Romans hang him on a cross.

Every nation?

But Peter was there, hidden in the crowd,
and he heard them shout, "Crucify him!!!"

Every nation?

Peter was there.
He saw it all.
And he is clear...
every nation.

God's love belongs to all people.
God's peace passes all understanding,
and it passes to all people, of every kind.

What kind of peace is God bringing?

What kind of peace do you need?

Do you need peace
because your life is changing faster than you want it to?

Do you need peace
because your life won't seem to change at all?

A lot of us have looked for peace in the middle of terrible tragedies
And some of us feel fine;
we just don't feel any peace.

What are you looking for?

It's a new year.

No reason you can't start looking for something new

What kind of peace do you seek?

We walk through those doors,

we sit on these wooden pews,

we sit

and we stand

and we kneel

and we pray

and some of us even sing very very loudly.

And we do all of that because we're looking for something.

I know what I'm looking for;

I'm looking for peace.

I don't always find it,

but most times I do.

I come here

and I remember that there are people in the world who I barely know,

but who love me,

who care what happens to me.

I hug someone

that I didn't even know was struggling.

Or somebody gives me a smile

that they didn't even know I needed.

That's peace,
peace by Jesus Christ, Lord of All.

So we're all looking for peace.
We all come through those doors
seeking the peace of God which passes all understanding.

But what does that mean?
What does peace even look like
in our world
or in our lives?

Is peace supposed to make us feel better?
Is peace supposed to empower us?
What is peace?

My favorite religious author, Frederick Buechner
includes a short entry on Peace in his book, *Wishful Thinking*.

Peace has come to mean the time when there aren't any wars or even when there aren't any major wars. Beggars can't be choosers; we'd most of us settle for that. But in Hebrew peace, shalom, means fullness, means having everything you need to be wholly and happily yourself.

One of the titles by which Jesus is known is Prince of Peace, and he used the word himself in what seem at first to be two radically contradictory utterances. On one occasion he said to the disciples, "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword." And later on, the last time they ate together, he said to them, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you."

The contradiction is resolved when you realize that for Jesus peace seems to have meant not the absence of struggle, but the presence of love.

As usual,

I think that Beuchner's got it right.

Peace doesn't leave us feeling calm about everything;
peace doesn't make sure that we're all happy all the time.

Peace is remembering that you are loved.

Peace is the knowledge

that no matter what else happens

and no matter what else you forget,

and no matter how many times you forget,

God will keep reminding you

that you are loved.