

Read: Micah 4:3-4

"I have a dream!" Instantly, most everyone thinks, "Martin Luther King Jr." Words that truly changed a nation. Read...slowly and prayerfully...part of King's speech: "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today!"

It's the dream of *shalom*. Biblical *shalom*. And because of the One who has come, because of the One who has said, "Behold I AM making all things new!", and because this One is coming again, we know that on that day we can say, "the dream is over (pinch), yes, I *am* awake, it's a new Day!" *Maranatha!*

PRAY: Sing: "O Lord, haste the day when our faith shall be sight. The clouds be rolled back as a scroll. The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend, even so, it is well with my soul. It is well..."

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 18

Read: Philippians 4:7

Many people will go to great lengths to find the peace that is referred to in our text. They will try to buy into it, exercise into it, pilgrim into it, decorate into it, dress into it, or entertain into it. Sometimes they think they've found it at the top of Whistler, or behind the wheel of a new car, sometimes they feel it with a new outfit on, or while relaxing in a hot-tub. It's true these things can and do satisfy. Perhaps they bring a kind of peace, a God-given goodness that brings spark and contentment.

But it's not the peace of Philippians 4:7. That peace cannot be bought, or earned. It's a Gift. "The Lord is near." Paul writes earlier in v.5. Yes, the Prince of *Shalom* is near. Call on Him. Pray that His Spirit will fill you with Peace.

PRAY: Pray peace over loved ones and friends, that their hearts and minds will be guarded in Christ Jesus.

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 19

Read: Luke 12: 13-23 and Luke 18:18-30 for tomorrow's sermon.
Consider coming to morning prayer today in the sanctuary at 6:00AM.

WEEKLY DEVOTIONS GUIDE

FEBRUARY 13-19, 2011

BY: PASTOR ANDREW BEUNK

NEW WEST CRC

"GLOBAL HOSPITALITY"

SERMON NOTES: "BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF SHALOM"

ISAIAH 11: 6-9; 65: 17-23; MICAH 4: 3-4; PHILIPPIANS 4: 7

REV. FRED WITTEVEEN

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 13

KEY THEME OR TAKE-AWAY:

MONDAY FEBRUARY 14

Read: 1 Corinthians 13

Happy Valentine's Day!

The commercialized, Hallmark-happiness, romanticized understanding of love that Valentine's Day has come to represent is a far cry from the kind of love Paul describes in our text. Chocolates and flowers, though thoughtful gestures, do not carry the day when it comes to love, especially love within a marriage. Love according to Paul, is hard work.

Consider this story from Jean Vanier, founder of the L'Arche communities. "I know a man who lives in Paris. His wife has Alzheimer's. He was an important businessman—his life filled with busyness. But he said that when his wife fell sick, "I just couldn't put her into an institution, so I kept her. I fed her. I bathed her." I went to Paris to visit them, and this businessman who had been very busy all his life said, "I have changed. I have become more human." I got a letter from him recently. He said that in the middle of the night his wife woke him up. She came out of the fog for a moment, and she said, "Darling, I just want to say thank you for all you've been doing for me." Then she fell back into the fog. He told me, "I wept and I wept." (cf. Hauerwas & Vanier, *Living Gently in a Violent World*). Now listen to the commentary the authors share: "Sometimes Christ calls us to love people who cannot love us in return. They live in the fog of mental illness, disabilities, poverty, or spiritual blindness. As we serve them, we may only receive fleeting glimpses of gratitude. But just as Jesus has loved us in the midst of our spiritual confusion, so we continue to love others as they walk through a deep fog."

This is the kind of love that Paul writes about. How might God be calling you to express that kind of love, and not just on Valentine's Day?

PRAY: Thank the Lord for His love towards us in spite of our spiritual "fog". Ask the Lord to show you a concrete way in which you can express this love to another.

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 15

Read: Isaiah 11: 6-9

One of the gifts that our family received at Christmas time was the DVD collection called *Planet Earth* produced by the BBC. If you haven't seen it, you should... and tell my wife Kim that it would look so much better on a new flat screen TV!...but I digress ☺.

Remarkable! Exceptional! Dazzling! Awe-inspiring!... Are just a few of the words that capture the beauty of these videos. If the magnificence of Creation that these videos portray does not make many wonder in their hearts "who made all this??" then I can't imagine much will.

But it's not only beauty that is captured on these films. It's also cruelty, violence, death, and decay. Within the animal and plant kingdoms alone, the cycles of violence and death, especially when displayed in the midst of majestic beauty, suggest that surely, this world is not the way it's supposed be. Cobras have a certain elegance and bears another, but their power to maim and to kill is truly frightening.

What shalom it will be when bears play with cows, and children with cobras, when men swim among great white sharks, without cages. All living creatures, great and small will be released from the instincts of hunting, fretting, competing, scheming, and death. Then all will have *enough*. For the Lord, and His omnipotent provision, will fill the earth.

And filmmakers will be scrambling to make *Planet Earth II* (rated 'G' for 'God's renewed it all.')

PRAY: Take 3 min. to name the beauties of creation in thanksgiving to God. Sing "This is My Father's World" (see Google for lyrics).

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 16

Read: Isaiah 65: 17-23

In an address that Pastor Mike delivered last Friday night during a conference to celebrate the release of his new book, *A Light to the Nations*, he reminded us of the calling God's people have to be a *tangible display* people—people who evidence in their lives that the earth is being renewed. We are a display people, a preview, a foretaste, and I think Isaiah might add, we are a new earth people.

As God creates Jerusalem to be "a delight" and its people a "joy" we find ourselves living into that text as we *create* in our own neighbourhoods, and cities and world, places of delight and joy. Would it be that some would say of churches in our city, "my, how they love Burnaby! My, how they love the world!" "See how they bring *shalom* into New West through the House of the Good Shepherd. See how they bring *shalom* to orphans in Africa through OATS. See how they bring hope to the struggling in El Coyolar, Honduras.

Being "new earth" people begins each Lord's Day, even today. As you pray from your heart, "Lord, display your hope and peace through me" new earth life will flow through you by the power of the Spirit. The one thing you must be certain of is this, God will give you ways to answer that prayer.

PRAY: Lord, display your hope and peace through me, through our family, through our church, through all your people. Holy Spirit, fill us with "new earth" joy and delight.

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 17