

SERMON - THE 2ND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY - 18 JANUARY 2009
St. John's Anglican Church, Greensboro, North Carolina

*ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who dost govern all things in heaven and earth;
Mercifully hear the supplications of thy people, and grant us thy peace all the days of our
life;*

We prayed for peace this morning in the words of the Collect. We pray a lot for peace.
We pray a lot for peace yet there doesn't seem to be much of it in the world these days.
In fact there are always some fifteen to twenty conflicts going on at any given time.

*Mercifully hear the supplications of thy people, and grant us thy peace all the days of our
life;*

This morning's Collect was translated by Cramner at a time when England was just
recovering from the Wars of the Roses, a series of civil wars that stretched over some
thirty-two years between the royal houses of Lancaster and York.

*Mercifully hear the supplications of thy people, and grant us thy peace all the days of our
life;*

Do we really expect ever to have peace all the days of our life? Do we really expect ever
to have peace in our time?

Jesus told us in **Matthew 10:34-36 (KJV)** *Think not that I am come to send peace on
earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. ³⁵For I am come to set a man at variance
against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against
her mother in law. ³⁶And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.*

And yet we hear Paul tell us in **2 Cor. 13:11 (KJV)** *Finally, brethren, farewell. Be
perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace
shall be with you.*

And again in **Romans 12:18 (KJV)** *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*

Is there then a conflict in what we hear? Is there a difference in what Jesus tells us and what Paul wrote to the Corinthians and the Romans?

No there isn't because we are always faced with the forces of good and of evil, of God and Satan.

Jesus tells us that his message of hope for eternal life will cause conflict between those who accept his Gospel and those who reject it right down to the family level.

Paul tells us to live the Gospel message of loving our neighbors as ourselves.

We are to live the Gospel ideal of peace among ourselves in the Christian community and if possible, then with everyone.

Jesus said in **Matthew 5:9 (KJV)** *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*

We hear also, **James 3:17-18 (KJV)** *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. ¹⁸And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.*

1 Peter 3:10-11 (KJV) *For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: ¹¹Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.*

Let's face it, we will not ever really see peace until the Christ reigns on earth. As long as Satan is allowed to roam the earth, we will have wars and conflicts. As long as Mammon exists, we are going to have those who worship the almighty God, money, want more and more. And as the

great tectonic plates of greed and avarice grind against each other, we will always have the social, political and economic earthquakes occur as is what is happening today.

What are we as Christians to do? What are we to do in the light of the ever present conflicts around us?

First of all we are to live our Christianity. First of all we have to remember as Christians we live in the world but not of the world. We are called to a higher set of standards, standards where we put God as the center of our lives not ambition and accumulation; standards that call us to a life of radical hospitality, a life of risk-taking mission and service to others, a life of extravagant generosity and a life of passionate worship of God.

As long as we are truly practicing our Christianity we will not have time to be drawn into the “my dog can whip your dog” mentality of today’s society.

Then we will have peace, the peace that only God can provide.

Amen.