



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Friday, March 1st, 2024

“Bear With One Another in Love”

Prepared by the WDP Committee of Palestine

MEDITATION

Address for World Day of Prayer 2024

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to you our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen

Dear Friends,

Using the words of Saint Paul, our sisters and brothers from Palestine call on us today to bear with one another in love. What a timely and poignant call that is. The world and the church both seem more and more polarised and divided. Palestinian Christians, who live with conflict every day, speak from genuine experience: “bear with one another in love” – tolerate, endure, suffer with, have patience with, hold up, forbear – one another in love. That special love that is God’s love for us. Hold each other up in a love that gives all.

Both Paul and the Palestinian Christians “beg” us. The word “beg” is a strong word. It can also be translated from the Greek as “implore,” “urge,” “advocate,” or “comfort”. We know this word from Jesus’ name for the Holy Spirit in John’s gospel: Comforter or Advocate (Parakleet). It is also another form of the word “to call”. They beg us, that is -they call on us- to lead a life worthy of the calling to which we were called. That is quite a number of calls there.

Paul asks us to walk the talk, as we say today. But there is a twist. Not being hypocrites and walking the talk, our own talk, our own principles, and ideas is hard enough. Paul suggests that we walk God’s call, that we live God’s talk. I wonder: what is the call to which you are called? I wonder: what is God’s invitation to you for your life? It is worth noting that for Paul there is no doubt that all of us are called, not just ministers or elders, not just doctors and teachers, but every single one of us has a vocation from God. In the service we hear of the vocations of Eleonor, Shireen and Sara’s witness. What is your vocation?

Silence

The three stories of Palestinian Christians we hear in this service are all examples of vocations that are lived out in humility, gentleness, and patience and with bearing with one another in love. Often a vocation is something you excel at, you are passionate about, and which is very urgent. It is not easy to be humble in your ability, gentle in your passion, and patient in the urgency – even less so when you are experiencing occupation.

Clearly for the Palestinian Christians, bearing with one another in love is the most important. It is for them the crucial manner in which to live out their calling. Holding each other up in love is the way they walk worthy of their calling. And from their stories, that bearing with one another crosses not only boundaries of different vocations or opinions - they hold up in love those of other nationalities and religions as well.

In their stories, bearing each other in love becomes very concrete and practical. It is staying around when life becomes harsh. It is giving people a voice whatever their religious background and calling oppressors back to their humanity. It is the strength and resilience that is handed from one generation to another.

The example from Palestine calls on us, and challenges us, to think of our calling and of the manner in which we live out that calling. How can we, each of us, walk in our particular and diverse vocations and bear with each other in love? What does holding each other up in love mean in the divisions and conflicts that we face? How can we live life worthy of our calling?

In the silence you might want to think of one little, practical thing that you can do in the coming day or week or month that bears in love with somebody who is very different from yourself. It might be somebody you disagree with, or somebody from a different background, church or even religion. Or just somebody who has a totally different calling on their life. What can you do to bear with them in love?

Silence

Amen