

7
OCTOBER
36 DAYS

They must turn from evil and do good, they must seek peace and pursue it.

1 Peter 3:11 (NIV)

Revd Al Nicoll is a Baptist pastor who has served as an RAF Chaplain for 15 years in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, the Falkland Islands and the Arabian Gulf.

PURSUING PEACE

Conflict raged in Mozambique for three decades, starting with a war of independence from Portugal (1962-1975), immediately followed by a civil war (1975-1992). By the end of the conflicts, millions of weapons remained in the hands of private individuals. To ensure that peace would last there were several attempts to convince individuals to surrender their weapons. One project, started by Bishop Sengulane, offered instruments of production (building materials, farming tools) in return for the anonymous surrender of weaponry. The weapons were then decommissioned and some were turned into works of art aimed at encouraging peace.

Speaking to the early church, Peter's words remind us that peace is never easy to attain. It involves repentance: turn from evil and do good. Peter reminds us that it does not happen by accident, we must actively look for ways of making peace, and once we find the path to peace, it must be 'pursued'. The hatreds, suspicions and jealousies which inspire conflict must not merely be papered over. For peace to endure we must doggedly stay on the pathway to peace, however hard or sacrificial it might be for us individually. We might worry that there is so little we can do on our own to bring peace to those around us, but just as conflict starts in the hearts of individuals and spreads to encompass nations, so can peace.



PRAYER

God of Peace, where evil abounds, may I do good; when conflict tears us apart, give me the eyes to find your path to peace, and grant me the endurance to stay on that path until the very end. Amen

ACTION

Build peace this weekend by endeavouring to stop conflict escalating. Peace begins between individuals, so avoid insulting or sarcastic words; use your words to build up rather than tear down.

1
OCTOBER
42 DAYS

So we say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?'

Hebrews 13:6 (NIV)

Mike Forsyth is a trainee vicar at Ridley Hall in Cambridge. Prior to training he served in the RAF as a Logistics Officer.

GOD IS ON YOUR SIDE

When deployed on exercises with the RAF Mobile Catering Squadron I learnt never to worry about being fed. Though food ran out on the servery in the mess tent, freshly cooked food always appeared. Deploying with the chefs, the creators of food, meant I need not fear going hungry! God is the creator of the universe and he is our helper; we have no need to fear. We have peace because of who we are with. God is with us whatever the circumstances; even when life is not going as

intended. (Who hopes for conflict at work, or to see family unwell?) He is our helper who we can trust. He has not brought us this far to forsake us.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, you are the creator of the world and your love for us endures forever. Wherever we go and whatever we do, you are there. Help us to know your presence with us so that we will not be afraid. Make us messengers of your peace. Amen

2
OCTOBER
41 DAYS

Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

Hebrews 12:14-15 (NIV)

Latifah Forrest works for the Peace Alliance, a charity that works in partnership with the police, government agencies, the corporate sector, and faith and voluntary organisations.

INNER PEACE

Peace comes from within; it comes when there is no cloud between us and God. Peace is the consequence of forgiveness and the hope that nothing will obscure his face and break union with him.

PRAYER

Father forgive us our sins as we forgive those who have sinned against us, so that we are able to live together in peace and harmony, releasing all our fears, woes and pain to you for your divine healing. Thank you Lord for your saving grace, through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen

3

OCTOBER
40 DAYS

Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile.

Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.

Jeremiah 29:7 (NIV)

Matt Baker is Pastoral Support Director in English Football for Sports Chaplaincy UK and chaplain to Charlton Athletic FC.

FOR THE PEACE OF THE CITY

On the Sunday after 9/11 I was at a service in Westminster Central Hall in London and remember being moved to tears as we cried out for our city and nation. Since then we have seen terrorist attacks in cities around the world including Manchester and London. Jeremiah was calling the Jewish people to pray for the peace and prosperity of the city where they were to be exiled. As Christians with a heavenly home that awaits, we are exiles - strangers and aliens wherever we live. Whether we face acts of

terrorism, the increase of gun and knife crime on our streets, or an uncertain political climate, we are called to pray for our city.

PRAYER

Father we pray for the peace and prosperity of our cities, whatever situations of enmity and aggression they face. Stir our hearts to be agents for peace and hope in the knowledge that as our cities, towns and villages prosper, so we your Church will prosper too.

4

OCTOBER
39 DAYS

You must be very careful not to forget the things you have seen God do for you.

Keep reminding yourselves, and tell your children and grandchildren as well.

Deuteronomy 4:9 (CEV)

Paul Woolley is Deputy Chief Executive of Bible Society and was founding Director of Theos, the public theology think tank.

PAST AND PRESENT

My grandfather was 15 when World War I was declared. He lied about his age in order to sign up. The first his mother knew about it was when a friend told her how smart Bernard looked in his uniform. He had to wait another year before he saw action as a gunner in the Royal Medical Corps. Unlike so many young soldiers, he returned to live a long life. In the Old Testament, there is a constant encouragement to remember the past without living in it. It's important that I remember the

sacrifices of those, like my grandfather, who fought in the war, whilst, at the same time, remembering that I am called to live life faithfully with God in my day. Getting this balance right should mean I fight evil wherever I encounter it and work for peace.

PRAYER

Lord, as I remember your action in history and the actions of those who took part in World War I, help me to live my life as Jesus would live it if he were me - in this day. Amen

5

OCTOBER
38 DAYS

'For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,' says the LORD, who has compassion on you.

Isaiah 54:10 (ESV)

Gavin Dickson served for 13 years 6 months in the Scots Guards and saw conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan. He now works as an Army Scripture Reader with SASRA in Germany. Gavin came to know the peace of God in 2009 as a soldier.

PEACE DURING WAR

The world is often troubled and during war it is as if the mountains are shaken, the seas roar and all around is in turmoil. Yet those who know the steadfast love of God and the promise of his peace can stand firm. As a former soldier, who has seen the realities of war, I hold fast to God's peace, knowing that God indeed cares for my circumstances, and has made a way for me to

have peace with God, through the death and resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER

There is a time for war and time for peace yet Lord you command all who belong to you to pursue peace. Lord help us stand in your peace when trouble comes even war. In your Son's name. Amen

6

OCTOBER
37 DAYS

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

2 Corinthians 4:16 (NIV)

Bob Fraser is Christian Vision for Men (CVM) Regional Director for England (North West).

A FRAGILE PEACE

In times of conflict, our choices are equally daunting. Do we stay in enemy occupied territory and remain a victim of war? Do we stay close to our roots and all that is familiar, surviving rather than living? Or, do we leave everything behind and head for somewhere, anywhere, in the hope of a better life? Even when a cease-fire is declared, it's a fragile peace and experience suggests it will not last, and there will be yet more suffering. Sometimes, our hearts feel like that enemy occupied land - battle weary,

battered and bruised, desperately wanting peace. Yet, in our darkest hour, God offers us new hope and courage to keep going.

PRAYER

Father God, we remember with compassion those caught up in the chaos and devastation caused by conflict. Help them not to lose heart. Shine your light into their darkness. Bring your peace which passes understanding. Give them hope for the future as they re-build their broken world.