

I love today. I love today because we come together, and it's so exciting because you never know what's going to happen. The Sunday of the pageant could be anything. The kids can practice as much as they want all year long, and when they get up here and see everybody staring back at them, it's a whole different world. But it's great. It's great because they have a love within them that we get to share, that we get to be a part of. We get to remember the four candles. The four pillars of Advent: peace, love, hope, and joy! We get to see it in their faces. We get to participate and be a part of their vision of what Advent is. It's fantastic.

In one of my meetings, we always start with, "Where do you find," and it's either God or Jesus, depending on who's leading the group that week. Last week, two weeks ago, we got asked, where do you find Jesus Christ in Hope? I said, that's an easy one. You see it in the kids. There's so much hope within each one of them, and they don't know it is the best part. They don't know that they have hope for a better world. They don't know that they have hope for each one of us to be better people than what we really are. They don't know all the troubles that we have. That hope is pure and innocent within them.

This week I got asked, Where do you see peace? Where do you find peace in Jesus Christ? I heard there's peace in the snowfall, there's peace in a fire, there's peace in spending time together with family. And it got to my turn. And I said, I do not see peace anywhere. I see anger. I see frustration. I see divisiveness. I'm having a very hard time finding peace this year. And it's sad because this is a time of year where we should see it, or we should always see it. And I started thinking about this week's scripture, for Jesus said to his disciples.

I'm looking for external peace. I'm looking for external peace. I'm looking for people to be better than what they are. I forget that peace has to start with me. I have to find it within myself before I can give it to somebody else. I have to see the peace in me, and I don't. I feel like I'm always trying to fix things, but that's because of me. I always try to be more than what I am. I always try to help people. I always try to make things easier for someone else. And I forget that I have to start with me. If I'm not happy with myself, if I don't find the peace and comfort of being who I am, I can't help anyone else. And unfortunately, I can't see the goodness in them, because I'm expecting something to happen. I'm expecting a shoe to drop. I'm expecting somebody to take advantage of what I'm doing or what somebody else is doing because we see it.

We see people constantly fighting. We see people constantly taking advantage of others. At Greater Love we have. People dress up in costumes to come in and take advantage of the system because they can't be themselves because they've gotten in too much trouble. We see people constantly putting on facades of who they are. How much peace do they have within themselves? It's hard.

Jesus came to be a part of us. God came to Earth as Jesus to live as one of us, to see the hope that we have, to see the joy in our lives, to see the love that we share with one another. And Jesus knows. The hardest one is peace. He knows that my peace is not the same as what you see, He says it. His peace is different. The peace that God gives us is different than the peace we have between ourselves. So, how do we find that piece?

This time, I was reminded this morning seeing the children, remembering what it was like to be them at that time. And I'm not gonna lie. I hated doing this Sunday. This Christmas pageant, I hated it. Absolutely hated.

I was a donkey every year. So I guess now I'm promoted. I get to be Joseph. But I got reminded of that peace, because during that moment, nothing else mattered. I didn't have to worry about taking care of somebody else. I didn't have to worry about forgetting my lines. It was easy being a donkey. You didn't say anything. I got to remember what it was like to be a child and the joy that we have. The innocence that we had. And I got to remember that peace inside of me, because that peace fills a greater peace within you. It fills the hole that I've had the last few weeks. It feels that point when I feel like I can't go on because everything is so hard around me.

They all reminded me today that it starts with me. And I get to take that peace home today, and I get to share it later because of them.

Let us pray.