Lord, You Ask Too Much

Lord, you ask too much, and you give too little. You ask us to be peacemakers, when we are not at peace ourselves. You ask us to overcome violence, when we are filled with violence ourselves. You ask us to effect reconciliation, when we are implacable ourselves. You ask us to love all persons, when we must deal with those who hate. Lord, you ask too much, and you give too little.

We’ve gathered here today, Lord, heavy of heart, perplexed of mind, Weary of spirit, To see if we can do you bidding; to see if we can make peace; To see if we can pursue the things that make for peace. Don’t be surprised if we come back soon, Lord, Empty handed. Cast down. Near despair. Having failed.

It’s tough, Lord. We are part of a people who know no peace; a people at war with one another; a people who hate as the world hates. What do you expect of us? Why do you make these impossible demands? Why do you ask so much and give so little?

Friends, God says, I ask the impossible so you will understand that without me you can do nothing. You can’t make peace; You can’t give peace; You can’t pursue peace, Unless you first come to the mountain of the house of the Lord, Unless you first seek my kingdom and my righteousness, Unless you first receive instruction from me.

And you’re not really doing that. Your hearts are not hungering and thirsting for me enough. Your minds are not yearning to know my ways enough yet. Your souls are not flaming to gain my love and compassion enough yet. When they are, then maybe I, the God of peace and love can give you peace. When they are, then maybe I can make you instruments of my peace. When they are, then maybe I can guide you in the paths of justice and peace.

Lord, we hear you. Today we go away chastened, humbled. We go as beggars, saying:

*Our father, who art in heaven,*  
*Hallowed be Thy name.*  
*Thy Kingdom come,*  
*Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*  
*Give us today our daily bread,*  
*And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.*  
*And lead us not into temptation,*  
*But deliver us from evil,*  
*For the Kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.*

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