

A Peace of Heaven

Matthew 5:9 - NCBC, June 30, 2019

Main Point: **Jesus' kingdom blessings belong to the peacemakers.**

- **Peacemaking is not:**
 - Winning conflict
 - Avoiding conflict
- **Peacemaking is:**
 - Bringing peace to conflict
 - Peace = Shalom = God's highest good to you
 - Peace = The presence of God's righteousness
 - Helping others experience righteousness after sin
 - Impossible for natural person
 - Possible only by the Prince of Peace
 - Fulfilling God's ministry of reconciliation
 - Sharing the Gospel of peace – Eph 6:15
 - Aiming for restoration – 2 Cor 13:11
- **Peacemaking receives:**
 - NOW: Public recognition as God's own
 - Sharing in Jesus' character
 - Sharing in Jesus' suffering
 - THEN: Eternal recognition as God's own
 - By our Heavenly Father
- **Peacemaking comes by:**
 - Receiving salvation blessings by God's grace
 - Submitting to control of God's Spirit (Beatitudes)
 - Loving your enemies – Matt 5:44
 - Praying for those who mistreat you – Matt 5:44
 - Spreading gospel of peace with life & lips – Eph 6:15

Opening Announcements:

- Kerry & Terri Psinas exit offering – invitation to partner through short-term teams with Grenada churches

<<Before the Throne of God Above>>



Welcome to the worship of our Lord Jesus Christ this morning. It is our joy to sing this good news together—that by the grace of God we have died to sin's power! The cross of Jesus Christ has conquered sin, and now through faith our life is hidden with Christ in God. Jesus is our life, our righteousness, our hope, and our peace!

This morning our sermon will come from **Matthew 5:9**, *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.* To help set the stage for our meditation, our Scripture reading will be from **Ephesians chapter 2.**



If you do not have a Bible with you this morning, simply raise your hand as people are coming now with Bibles for you to use. Once you receive a Bible, please prepare to read from **Ephesians chapter 2**.

Church – I want to thank you for your prayers, your teachability, and your responsiveness to this *Behold King Jesus* sermon series, especially as we’ve taken the last several weeks to focus on the Beatitudes.

Progression of Thought in Jesus' Beatitudes		
Poor in Spirit:	Right view of <i>Self</i> before God	5:3
Mourn:	Right view of <i>Sin</i> before God	5:4
Meek:	Right view of <i>Suffering</i> before God	5:5
Hunger:	Right view of <i>Salvation</i> before God	5:6
Merciful:	Right view of <i>Serving</i> before God	5:7
Pure:	Right view of <i>Satisfaction</i> before God	5:8
Peacemaker:	Right view of <i>Shalom</i> before God	5:9

As we’ve slowly worked our way through each of the beatitudes, I’ve progressively become more and more aware of how sinful I am. And yet, in a mysterious reality of the Gospel – I have not given into despair but rather to joy. For Jesus didn’t give these pronouncements to tell us *how* to live...but rather He teaches so we’d see how far short our own efforts at being righteous truly are, and we’d stand amazed and in thankful awe for the perfect righteousness of King Jesus Himself! These beatitudes describe the joyful blessed position for every person who is “in Christ.” Every person who has been born again by God’s Spirit has some seed of these expressions of Christlikeness already within them! Yes, they must be cultivated and grown through the practice of obedience and suffering until we experience the fullness of Christlikeness in His presence. But the Beatitudes are describing the blessed condition and Divine approval of all who have been miraculously hidden in Christ!!

Therefore, I pray that as you study Jesus’ teaching, you always walk away with greater joy and faith in Christ. Jesus is better. Jesus is sufficient. And Jesus is superior to anything sin can offer.

To help us gain a right view of *Shalom* before God this morning, we’re going to read from **Ephesians chapter 2** starting in **verse 11**.



Please stand in honor of the public reading of God's Word as I read from **Ephesians 2, verse 11**, in the English Standard Translation:

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—¹² remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. ¹⁷ And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.¹⁹ So then

you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

This is God's Word. Please be seated.

Let's Pray.

This weekend our family got to watch fireworks, and I noticed that I jumped every time one of those very loud, earth-shaking rockets would explode. It wasn't every firework that would make me jump... just certain ones. I'd watch as the rocket would shoot up into the sky, and then even though I knew what was coming – I'd lurch as it would explode with a chest-pounding boom that would seem to shake everything and everyone around us.

I have to wonder if that's how the disciples and the large crowd around Jesus must have experienced this opening to His Sermon on the Mount almost 2,000 years ago.

From his first opening words, they might have seen this coming. After all, they knew Jesus was different from the Scribes and the Pharisees. These crowds had been observing Jesus' ministry for nearly a year by this point. There was something very different about this miracle-worker from Galilee. And yet when Jesus pronounced this 7th Beatitude: *Blessed are the*

peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God, and it must have hit them like a chest-compressing thunderclap from the heavens.



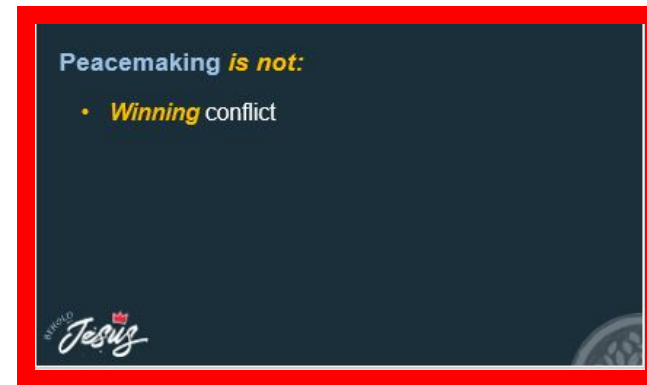
Jesus' kingdom blessings belong to the ...peacemakers?

This is so radically different from what the Jews would have expected from the long-awaited Messianic king. The Jews expected God to send them a warrior – a military or political fighter who would help overthrow all Gentile oppression and in fact conquer all of the surrounding nations in order to bring the Jews lasting peace in the promised land.

They were expecting the Messiah to make war and establish God's justice on the earth. What does Jesus mean by pronouncing a Divine blessing upon those who are peacemakers? And how does this illustrate the kind of superior righteousness that characterizes all those who are in the kingdom of heaven?¹

¹ Matthew 5:20
Page 4a of 18

Well first we need to learn right along with Jesus' original Jewish audience that,



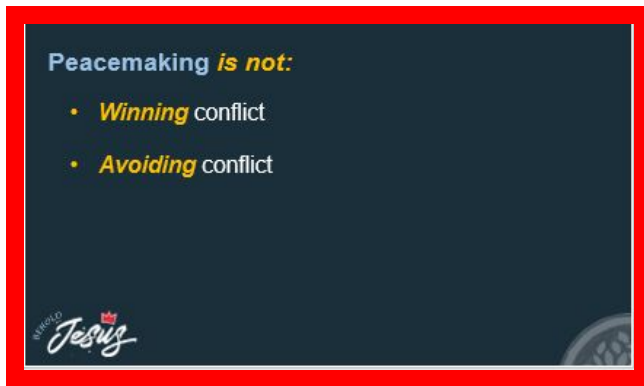
Peacemaking is not, about Winning conflict.

Peacemaking is never about winning. It's never about just defeating whoever opposes you. If you ever are tempted to do a victory dance after resolving conflict with an enemy, then you don't yet have a complete understanding of what it means to be a peacemaker in God's kingdom.

Just like the first-century Jews, we can easily adopt a wrong view of God. We can see Jesus as the *means* to helping us get what we want, rather than the *end* of all our desires. Jesus is not some fixer that will help us achieve our own version of tranquility. God never sent Jesus to help us win! God sent Jesus to make peace and reconcile us back to God. God sent Jesus to overcome our greatest problem – namely our own sins which separate us from God.

Therefore, the peacemaker is not a powerbroker with honed manipulative powers of communication in order to get what he wants from others.

Peacemaking is not about winning, and further, peacemaking is not about,



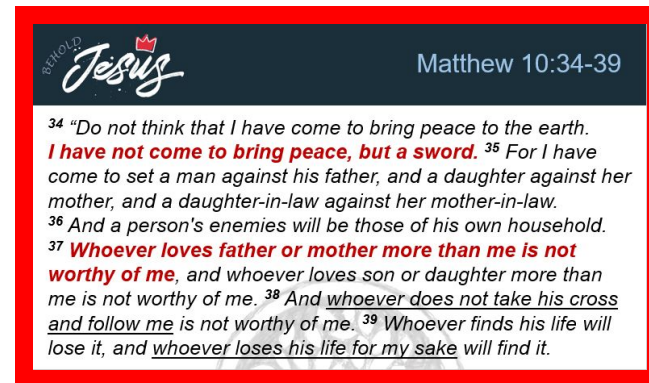
Avoiding conflict or masking conflict either.

Notice Jesus didn't say, *Blessed are those who love peace*, or *Blessed are those who keep the peace*, or *Blessed are those who fake peace*...

Peacemaking is way more than pretending everything is ok and peace-faking.² Some of us here today are especially prone to peace-faking, aren't we? We hate confrontation. We wrongly believe that if we just walk away or don't fight, that we've resolved the conflict. One of our ruling idols is this desire to just have a little bit of peace and quiet now and then! But at its best, avoiding conflict just postpones conflict; it doesn't create peace.

² C.f. Jeremiah 6:14; Ezekiel 3:10

Remember what Jesus taught later in **chapter 10** of **Matthew**:



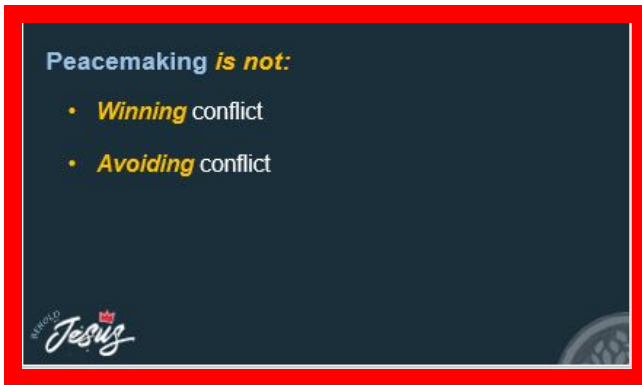
*Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.*³

Now at first that's confusing. How could King Jesus declare blessings on the peacemakers and then say He didn't come to bring peace but a sword?

Listen – there is no cheap way to make peace with sinners. Peacemaking requires truth telling – but impure hearts love falsehood. Peacemaking requires righteousness, but this world is full of wickedness. Therefore while God is not at war with the world – and in fact has sent Jesus to come and make peace with sinners⁴ – the world responds with war against God.

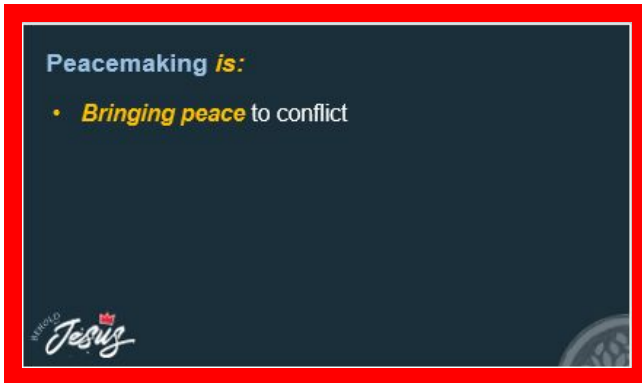
³ Matthew 10:34

⁴ Luke 2:14; Matthew 11:28-30; Ephesians 2:13-18



So being a peacemaker does not mean being a peace-faker who simply avoids conflict. Anytime honesty or purity is sacrificed for the sake of peace, you are not peacemaking. Peacemaking is not cowardice, and it's not compromise.

Instead, to be a peacemaker means genuinely,



Bringing peace to conflict

Truly creating peace, working for peace, and eagerly striving to bring harmony to broken relationships.

To be a peacemaker is not about winning conflict, or avoiding conflict...but truly bringing peace to conflict.

But this causes us to ask a very important question:



What is God's peace?

Since peacemaking is bringing peace to conflict, what exactly is peace from God's perspective?

Sometimes when people think of peace, they only think of an emotion of serenity and calmness. But biblically it's much more than this. How many of you have heard of the Hebrew word, *Shalom* before?

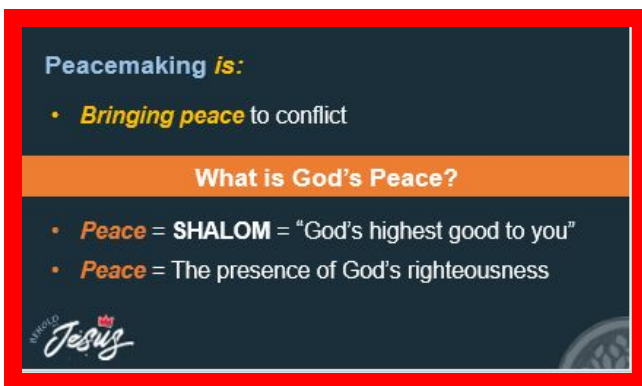
Ok! *Shalom* is the Hebrew word for peace that is used in the Old Testament over 200 times.⁵ And I find it a helpful way to teach the meaning of God's peace, for when a Jew says, "Peace to you," or *shalom*, they are not just wishing you no war...but they are wishing you to have all the righteousness and goodness that God can give.

⁵ https://www.preceptaustin.org/shalom_-_definition



From a biblical perspective, **Peace** or **Shalom** refers to **God's highest good to you**. Often in Scripture peace is used as a synonym for prosperity.⁶ *Shalom* refers to a person's entire wholeness, health, well-being. In fact, occasionally *shalom* serves as a synonym for "salvation."⁷

Therefore when you think of peace from God's perspective, it's much more than just a calm feeling or absence of conflict. Biblical peace, or *shalom* is,



⁶ Deuteronomy 26:6; Ezra 9:12; Job 21:13; Zechariah 8, especially verse 12.

⁷ C.f. Isaiah 52:7

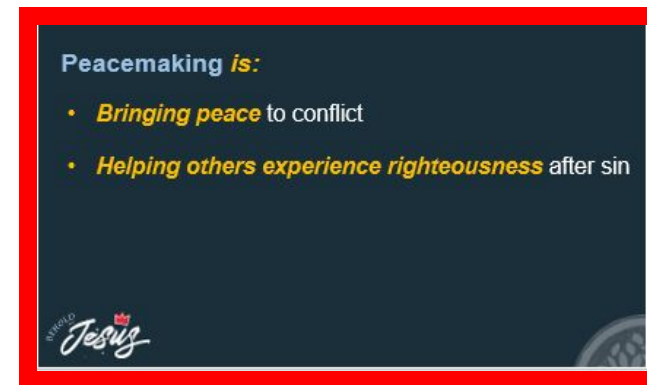
The presence of God's righteousness.

"Everything just as it should be!" God's peace is the result of receiving freedom from sin in all its forms.⁸ Apart from righteousness – or freedom from sin – people will never experience true peace or reconciliation.

Of course people can stop fighting without righteousness. But only righteousness can produce true peace or *shalom* between those in conflict.

By the way, this is why the opposite of peace is not war, but biblically speaking, the opposite of peace is sin. Sin is the enemy of peace. Wherever sin exists, there can be no peace, since sin by definition separates us from the righteousness of God.⁹

Therefore, a peacemaker is one who seeks to make the world a better place by,



Helping others experience righteousness after sin

⁸ Romans 5:1

⁹ Romans 3:21-23

When you are born-again by God's Spirit, He makes you one of His peacemakers...meaning you now have a Spirit-given desire to help others experience God's highest good. To bring peace into conflict literally means you desire to bring *Shalom* to others. By God's grace you now possess this yearning to pursue the whole-person eternal prosperity of righteousness for others.

Peacemaking is:

- **Bringing peace** to conflict
- **Helping others experience righteousness** after sin
 - **Impossible** for natural person

Behold Jesus

Now of course the achievement of *shalom* for a loved one is **Impossible for a natural person**. In fact, peacemaking is really,

Peacemaking is:

- **Bringing peace** to conflict
- **Helping others experience righteousness** after sin
 - **Impossible** for natural person
 - **Possible only** by the Prince of Peace

Behold Jesus

Possible only by the Prince of Peace.¹⁰

Only Jesus has the power to bring *shalom* – or the presence of God's righteousness – into the experience of a sinner's heart and relationships. Since peacemaking is helping others experience God's righteousness, or freedom from sin, then Jesus Christ is the greatest peacemaker ever!! And no natural person will ever be able to truly bring peace into conflict apart from His Spirit!

Peacemaking is supernatural work. **Colossians 1 verse 20,**

Behold Jesus

Colossians 1:19-22

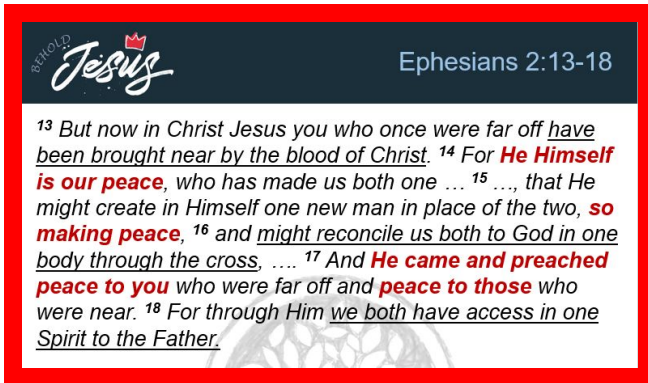
*19 For in [Christ] all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, **making peace by the blood of His cross.** 21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 He has now reconciled in His body of flesh by His death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before Him,*

teaches that Christ **made peace by the blood of His cross**. It sounds gory doesn't it?

But the only way Jesus was able to reconcile sinners like you and me who were against God in our minds, and doing all kinds of evil, was to die in our place on the cross. There is no more powerful nor successful peacemaker than King Jesus Himself! Jesus took the

¹⁰ Isaiah 9:6

place of sinners like you and me in order to truly bring about *shalom* between us and God.



This is why the Scripture we read from **Ephesians 2** at the beginning of this message spoke clearly of **Christ Himself being our peace**. There is no such thing as peacemaking apart from connecting people with Christ. Jesus alone has the power to reconcile sworn enemies like Jews and Arabs into one body, and thereby secure righteousness for all sinners before our holy God.



In other words, what I'm trying to teach you this morning is that biblical peacemaking is a far larger concept than just conflict resolution and communication principles. To be a peacemaker means you bring peace to conflict, which means you eagerly exert yourself to help others experience God's righteousness after sin, or we could also say that biblical peacemaking is simply, **Fulfilling God's ministry of reconciliation.**

To be a peacemaker is to live as an ambassador for Christ, imploring others on behalf of Christ to be reconciled to God.¹¹

Peacemaking must always be accomplished *vertically* between a person and God before it can ever be accomplished *horizontally* between two different people.

This thrilled my own soul this week when I stumbled upon **Isaiah 52:7**:

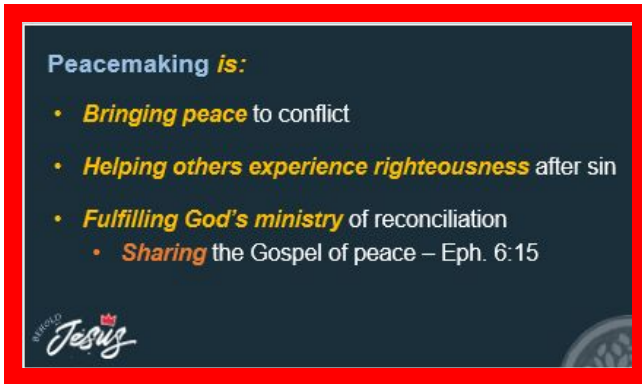


How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings

¹¹ 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, especially verse 20.

good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."

Clearly in this verse, to be a peacemaker means to proclaim the good news of salvation! Therefore the first and most important definition of peacemaking is to,



Share the Gospel of peace with others. Isn't this fascinating? While I do not believe **Matthew 5:9** limits peacemaking to sharing the Gospel with sinners, I do believe that our public sharing of the Gospel of peace is the first application of what it means to be a peacemaker!

When you are born again, God gives you the ministry of reconciliation, meaning as one of His children you are called to,



Publicly proclaim His **gospel of peace** to all who are experiencing sin. For it is this foundational commitment to share the gospel of peace that will motivate you to press into broken relationships with others and,



Aim for restoration.

As **2 Corinthians 13:11** says so beautifully,



Finally brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

In other words, peacemaking extends beyond sharing the Gospel with others. Peacemaking extends to every kind of reconciliation effort.



Peacemaking is bringing peace, or *shalom* to conflict. Peacemaking is helping others experience God's righteousness after sin. To be a peacemaker is to be a minister of reconciliation – sharing the Gospel of peace

while also seeking to live in peace with others by the all-sufficient power of our peace-giving God.¹²

Now just like the rest of the beatitudes, **Matthew 5:9** reveals a reward that is both already present for the believer, but will not be entirely fulfilled until eternity.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. This is glorious! Notice Jesus doesn't say, *for they shall be sons of God*, but *they shall be called*, or recognized as being God's children.



NOW: while the Peacemaker lives on the earth, **peacemaking receives: Public recognition as** being one of **God's own.**

When you are born again by God's Spirit and granted entrance into God's kingdom, your passion to help others experience God's righteousness bears a remarkable family resemblance to your Heavenly Father. In other

¹² C.f. Psalm 34:14; Proverbs 12:20; Romans 12:18; Ephesians 4:3; Colossians 3:15; Hebrews 12:14; 1 Peter 3:11; etc.

words, to be *called sons of God* in **Matthew 5:9** is to be publicly recognized as,



Sharing in Jesus' character.

Just like children resemble their earthly parent, so likewise it is your peacemaking on earth that publicly communicates to others that God is your Heavenly Father, and you are one of His children!

But as you share in Jesus' character, being called sons of God will also mean you must,



Share in Jesus' suffering.

Peacemakers will always be misunderstood and despised. After all, Jesus was. When you proclaim the gospel of peace, you will be rejected, criticized, and attacked by the very people you seek to bring *shalom* to. Sharing God's truth with others usually produces anger before it ever realizes reconciliation. Your own freedom from sin may cause others to persecute you for righteousness' sake.¹³

But could you imagine a higher privilege? Than to be publicly recognized as one of God's own children? This is the reward for peacemakers now, and



THEN, in reference to our final judgment, all King Jesus' peacemakers will receive **Eternal recognition as God's own**. Continuously being recognized

¹³ Matthew 5:10-12



By our Heavenly Father as those who are His own children.

These are the ones whom God's Spirit brought forth from sinful humanity. These are the ones who are "chips off the ole block." These are those who partake of the very character of the Heavenly Father Himself.¹⁴

What a delightful promise to all peacemakers!! Not only will we see God,¹⁵ but we will see God as our Father, and He will receive us as His very children who represent His own character forever and ever!

Does your heart delight in the thought of being recognized as a peacemaker who reminds others of God Himself? Then let's focus on how to cultivate and practice this fruit of God's Spirit within our vertical and horizontal relationships.

¹⁴ 1 John 3:1-2

¹⁵ Matthew 5:8



Just like all the other descriptions of Christlikeness found in the Beatitudes, *Peacemaking can only come through:*



Receiving God's salvation blessings by His grace

Since sin is the enemy of peace, no heart still controlled by sin will ever want to pursue *shalom* with others. It doesn't matter how religious you are. Remember, the Pharisees were smug and proud. They were complacent about mercy, but stringent about the law. They were peace-breakers – creating strife and sowing discord

wherever they went. For although they were very religious, they were not born again.

Peace is a fruit of God's Spirit.¹⁶ Therefore only those who have personally experienced the peace which Christ gives at His cross can ever share it rightly with others.

Jesus died and rose from the grave to bring you peace, and turn you into one of His peacemakers. Joyfully accept your calling this morning!¹⁷ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be reconciled to God!



Secondly, peacemaking comes by **Submitting to the Holy Spirit's control**. In other words, by continuing to grow deeper in your progress of all the preceding beatitudes.



Please don't miss this. Each beatitude builds beautifully towards being recognized as being one of God's children who is a peacemaker.

Only those who acknowledge their own spiritual poverty will be humble enough to remove all prejudice, and be willing to suffer injustice to make peace.

Only those who see their own sin first, worst, and most will persevere in the relentless pursuit of peacemaking.

Only those who are meek – whose tempers are controlled by God, and who have self-control over their tongue, can ever hope to be a peacemaker. Only those used to the Lord's hand, who are able to restrain their words when they are attacked, will ever be recognized as peacemakers.

Only those who crave to be free from sin and falsehood in all of its forms will desire to share God's truth to help others experience His righteousness themselves. You can't be a peacemaker if you aren't honest with the truth.

¹⁶ Galatians 5:22

¹⁷ 1 Corinthians 7:14

Only the merciful who aim to relieve sin's consequences through forgiveness or friendship will be able to strive for peace without being contentious, disagree without being disagreeable, and confront without being condemning.

And then **James 3:17** teaches that *the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable...* In other words, any doublemindedness of heart has to be cleansed first, before one can truly help others experience God's *shalom*. You cannot bring peace where sin still controls.¹⁸ Peace only walks on sidewalks paved and purified by repentance.¹⁹



So again, peacemaking comes by submitting to the work of God's Spirit in each of the preceding beatitudes.

But later in this Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gives further insight to how to practically live as a peacemaker:

¹⁸ Isaiah 48:22
¹⁹ Jeremiah 8:11-12; Isaiah 32:17
Page **15a** of 18



In **verse 45**, Jesus refers to being publicly recognized as sons of our Heavenly Father. Well that's the same reward promised to peacemakers in **verse 9**, right? So then **verse 44** should help us understand what it means to be a peacemaker:

Two ways: *Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.*

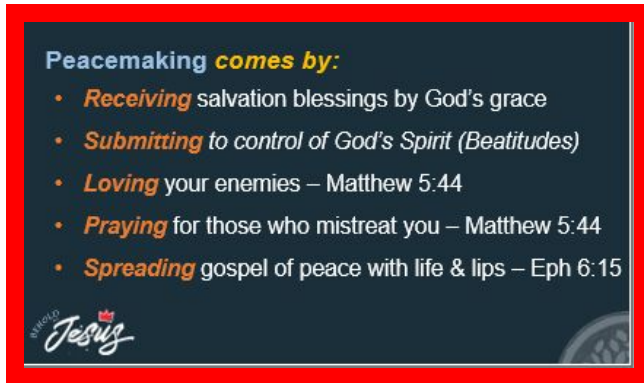


Peacemaking practically looks like, *Loving your enemies and Praying for those who mistreat you.*²⁰ You say, but

²⁰ For further study, please see the "Radical Love" sermon on Luke 6:27-38 preached at New Castle Bible Church on 11-12-2017.

that's supernatural! No one lives like that in America these days. And you'd be exactly right. That's what makes God's true children stand out so much.

Finally peacemaking comes by,



Spreading the gospel of peace with your life & lips.

We will never fulfill the ministry of reconciliation God has entrusted to us until each of us is faithfully and regularly sharing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ.²¹ This is the characteristic habit of God's children, who are publicly recognized as being His own children.



Jesus' kingdom blessings belong to the peacemakers.

Not to the fighters. Not to the religious zealots. Not to the peace-fakers. No. Instead Jesus pronounces that those who are really righteous – those who are joyfully accepted and favored in His kingdom – are the peacemakers. For peacemakers publicly reflect and promote the very work of the Heavenly Father Himself!

So if you get to watch fireworks this week, let the truth of **Matthew 5:9** thunder into your soul as well. And may we be a people who seek peace and pursue it – that many people might experience the *Shalom* of God through us.

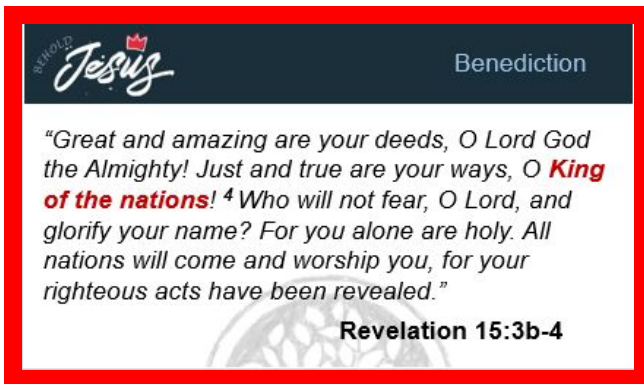
²¹ Acts 10:36



Let's pray.

<<Closing Song>>

Let's pray our benediction together as we dismiss.



Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! 4 Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.
Revelation 15:3b-4

Recommended Resources on A Peace of Heaven:

- Psalm 133:1
- Isaiah 32:17; 52:7
- Hosea 1:10
- Luke 6:35
- Romans 5:1; 8:14; 10:15; 12:18; 14:19
- 2 Corinthians 13:11
- Ephesians 2:13-17
- Colossians 1:20; 3:15
- Hebrews 12:14
- James 3:17-18
- 1 Peter 3:11

- <https://rw360.org/peacemaking/>
- <https://unlockingthebible.org/sermon/cultivating-peace/>

- *The Peacemaker*, Ken Sande
- *Peace Child*, Richardson
- *Unpacking Forgiveness*, Chris Brauns
- *Choosing Forgiveness*, Nancy Leigh DeMoss

Discussion Questions:

1. Read Isaiah 52:7. What is the meaning of peace in this verse? And what does it mean to be a peacemaker according to this verse? (c.f. Acts 10:36)
2. Compare Matthew 5:9 and 10:34. Since Jesus never taught “peace at any price,” how should we reconcile these two teachings of Jesus? (C.f. Matthew 5:10-11)
3. Read Jeremiah 8:11-12. Explain why repentance from sin and purity of heart is absolutely necessary for making peace. (c.f. James 3:16-18; Hebrews 12:14). What is the result of pursuing peace apart from repentance from sin?
4. Read Ephesians 2:13-17. Where does peace come from? (c.f. Judges 6:24; Romans 15:33, 16:20; Galatians 5:22; Philippians 4:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 13:20-21) So then what does it mean to be peacemaker?
5. Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 and Ephesians 6:15. Consider common ways we fall short of being the peacemakers God’s Spirit has made us to be. Review the progression of all the beatitudes which lead up to, and are necessary foundations for, peacemaking. What practical steps could you take this week to fulfill your God-given identity as one of His peacemakers?