

# The Peacemaker

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Date: 01 January 2000

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[ 0 : 00 ] And we'll focus tonight on ongoing study of the Beatitudes. We'll focus on verse number nine. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. Now the Bible itself opens with peace in the Garden of Eden, and closes with a vision of peace in the New Earth, when Christ comes back as the Prince of Peace.

When amongst its own people there will be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, when God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

But sadly, the world's record on peace, as we know it, and as history tells us, it's a very sad one, the world's record on peace. There have been moments of peace, but they turn out to be just houses to reload.

The motto of the United Nations to have succeeding generations free from the scourge of war is a dream, which is no nearer its fulfillment today than it was in 1945 when it was set up.

[ 1 : 07 ] The superpowers, Russia and America, they do have a better relationship one with the other, but in Ulster, in South Africa, in Yugoslavia, South America, and many other areas, there is still heavy fighting.

Newspapers and television, the media, they tell us that there is no peace in society. We don't seem to have the ability to get on with each other. Every relationship is fragile.

People have emotional and mental illnesses as never before. There are family breakups, disorder in schools, disorder on the streets, even disorder within churches.

There seems no end to it. Christ in the verse that we have here says that he will especially bless those that are peacemakers. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

Now, when the Lord Jesus Christ said that, first of all, on that mountainside in Galilee, it came as a complete shock to the Jews who heard him. For they had an idea that was absolutely ingrained in them, that the Messiah, when he would come, would set himself up as a king, as a great king, who would lead the Jewish nation against their enemies, and who would lead them to victory, establishing the Jews above everybody else as the conquering and master race.

[ 2 : 37 ] But Jesus here tells them, no, no, you don't understand. My kingdom is not of this world. My kingdom is not built on worldly lines.

My people do not destroy their enemies. Blessed are the peacemakers. And just as the Jews of Christ's day on earth there, just as they were wrong in their thinking, so natural man has been wrong throughout the whole of history, and is wrong today in his thinking about peace, and in his plans to establish a lasting peace.

All sorts of ways have been tried to establish a lasting peace. And people with good intentions have worked long and hard, but we are no nearer a worldwide peace today than we were at the very beginning.

We must return to the word of God to find an answer. We must come to the maker's handle to see what is really wrong.

And that tells us that the explanation of all our troubles is human love, grief, selfishness, self-centeredness.

[ 3 : 51 ] All the trouble and all the strife and all the discord, whether between individuals, between groups within a country, or between countries themselves, can be traced back to their origin in the human heart.

It is out of the human heart that evil thoughts, murders, adultery, fornication, jealousy, envy, malice, and all these things come. And while men and women are like that, then there can be no people.

Whatever is tried is bound to fail until the heart of man is changed. If the source of the river is contaminated, then no amount of chemical put down stream will clean up that river. And Jeremiah 17 verse 9 says, The heart is deceitful above all things, and is desperately wicked. And the prophet Isaiah says in chapter 48, There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked. So really Christians should not be surprised at all at the lack of peace in the world, because it is simply a confirmation of what the Bible says. But we cannot just stand back, and hold up our hands, and moan, and criticise, and do nothing else.

[ 5 : 11 ] Because if the abitures do anything at all, it is that they strip us of all our self-righteousness, and they drive us into action.

And as we look at this one, we will see how the owner falls fairly and squarely upon each Christian to do his bit for peace. Christ knows what the world needs.

He knows that it needs peace. He himself is the Prince of Peace. So he calls his people to be his special agents, whom he calls peacemakers, to restore a fallen, wicked world to the peace which it forfeited when it rebelled against God.

To be a peacemaker, we have to come to the six stages of the growth of the Christian life that we have already studied. We have already pointed out, it's a progression in the Christian life, stages that we have in the Christian life.

So in order to reach this stage of being a peacemaker, we have to come through being poor in spirit, mourning over our own sinful conditions, meekness before a holy God, hungering and thirsting up the righteousness, merciful and pure in heart.

[ 6 : 23 ] And only then, after coming through all these, can we be a peacemaker. Please note again, that there is a progression in the Beatitudes. The peacemaker involves an apprenticeship, an apprenticeship, a time-serve, in each of the six preceding stages.

Because it is not a natural thing at all for a person to be a peacemaker. Not just the person who has an easygoing nature, not the person who wants peace at any price, not a person who says anything to avoid trouble, because these people are really a menace because they simply appease us.

They often evade the issues. They won't grasp an effort. So the trouble builds up on somebody else has to take over when they lead them into so much trouble.

The peace of the Bible never evades issues, never sacrifices truth, never glosses over anything by compromising principles or compromising truth.

A truth, a ceasefire, a cold war, a time to reload, that is not the biblical peace. Jesus himself said, Matthew 10, think not that I am come to send peace on earth.

[ 7 : 42 ] I came not to send peace, but a sword. It appears to be against this theology, doesn't it? But what he means is that he would not bring peace at any price.

He knew that he came and by working his way towards peace that there would be strife before there could be peace. unpaid for preachers of the gospel and certainly vouch for this because you have to upset some people before you can make them better.

They will get angry with you before they become happy with you. So, it is in bringing up two pieces into the world. First, the sword falls.

And out of the sword can come peace because it is the sword of purity, the sword of righteousness, the sword of holiness. Remember Jesus himself, the accusation that his enemies made about him? He stirs up the people. He went about doing good. He went about preaching the gospel. He went about preaching what was, seen and what is seen now as something that no man can say anything against because it was all good.

[ 8 : 49 ] But it caused strife. It caused trouble. And his enemies were able to accuse him of stirring up the people. Paul went about and he preached the gospel.

There was hardly a place where he went to that there wasn't a wholesale riot. He brings the gospel before people and it ruffles feathers. It convicts.

It brings contention and strife. But when the conflict is over and faith in Jesus Christ fills us, then that is the day when there is real peace.

But there is a danger that we may be trying to do the right thing but our attitude is completely wrong. So that instead of bringing peace into a situation we drive people away. We drive people away from the gospel, away from Christ.

We appear as self-righteous, do-gooders, speaking down to them. But again, before you can be a peacemaker, you must have come through the previous stages of the Christian life.

[ 9 : 53 ] So that you are coming in all humility. You are coming with a new attitude because you've come through the other stages of the Christian life. You are entirely forgetful of self.

The peacemaker has sinned himself for sin herself as he or she really is. He is poor in spirit. He is mourning because of the blackness of his heart.

He is hungering and thirsting up the righteousness. His heart is being cleansed of all that would make him impure. He has a new view of life. He has a new view of unbelievers.

He looks at an unbeliever and he says, that poor person is a victim of self, a victim of Satan. He's on the road to hell and I must have mercy and pity on him.

You see, when you begin to think like that and when you look at people with tears in your eyes and you're genuinely sorry for them and you love them for what they are, then you are well on the way to being a peacemaker.

[ 10 : 50 ] You're in a position to help them because you're at it in this right. And a peacemaker has a new view on this world. The peacemaker has the glory of the Lord central to his own life and he spends his whole life working to that end.

He sees things like quarrels and disputes and wars. He sees them first and foremost as something that is offensive to God. Things that are offensive to God.

Oh yes, he sees the suffering and he sees the effect it has on humans and the effect it has on the economics of the country. He sees all these things but the thing that gets him through the quick and the thing that really hurts him is, oh Lord, it hurts you.

You love this world. You want us to be happy. You want us to be good. And here we are. making a mess of things so that the peacemaker is prepared to suffer.

He is prepared to suffer injustice and wrongs so that peace would result in God's glory will be magnified. And that's the theory of peace.

[ 12 : 04 ] Let's see how it applies to us and see what is the practical side of it coming down to each one of us in our seats wherever we are. If you are a Christian here this evening then you are a messenger of peace.

All things are of God who have reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ and have given to us the ministry of reconciliation and have committed and have committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ as though God did speech you by us. We pray you on behalf of Christ be reconciled to God.

That's what we say. That's our witness. That's what we tell others. That we have the authority of God because we have been reconciled to God ourselves and he has entrusted to us the ministry of reconciliation.

The ministry of making friends of making peace between God and man. We have the word of reconciliation the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 13 : 15 ] Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ. So we plead with people be reconciled to God. Make peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

And as messengers of peace we must maintain peace with God. We are at peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ but whenever sin comes into our lives whenever we start backsliding whenever we allow a sin to get a hold of us no matter how small it is then that peace is interrupted and we cannot be peacemakers if we are indulging in sin.

So what we must do if we are to be peacemakers is we must get rid of that sin quickly. Not cover it over not hide it hand it down to the open get rid of it and confess it quickly to God and get on with the work of being a peacemaker.

because only when you have cleared yourself before God and before you are at peace with God yourself can you be a member of the peace corps of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And then secondly learn to hold your tongue if only we could hold our tongue how much trouble and discord would be avoided. Gossip sharp reply and assistance on saying I must express my mind.

[ 14 : 45 ] The peacemaker is somebody who doesn't say things. He or she often feels like saying oh yes the words often come up on the back of the foot and you're dying to say it to sort of give somebody a blast.

But for the sake of peace you mustn't do it. The peacemaker doesn't say it. The peacemaker remains quiet. James puts it be swift to hear slow to speak slow to laugh.

And then thirdly we have to view every situation in the light of the gospel. That just means put yourself last. Because when situations and circumstances come up and you have to make decisions you have to do things you have to ask what does this mean for the cause of Christ? What does this mean for the church? What does this mean for other people? And when you think like that then you're making peace. But when you view things in a personal way when you view it and you have yourself in the center and you ask how does it affect me?

How do I appear? What does it mean to me? Then there will be no peace there will be war. And unfortunately help others to make peace with God.

[16:00] Tell them about Jesus. Evangelism is peacemaking. How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace. Go to your way to tell people about Jesus.

Go to your way so that by your example they come to see Jesus. Not just your close friends, not just the family circle, or even the circle of the Bible class.

But your enemies, those that you've quarreled with, those that are obnoxious, those that are ugly, those that are difficult to love in any way at all. These are the people that the peacemaker has to go to.

These spoke bad things about you, so you held your tongue. You recognized that they were motivated by Satan, so you prayed quietly for them. Yet you must go further than that.

If an enemy hunger, feed him. If your enemy falls on hard times, you must humble yourself, you must help him, you must take the initiative, you must try to be friendly, you must do everything you can to produce peace.

[17:11] But again, sometimes people won't cooperate, but the Lord lays it upon us that we have to make the effort, because Christ says have peace one with another. And that means as well in the family home.

Maybe there's a little thing to be sorted out in the family. Maybe there's little thing to be sorted out between husband and wife. And it's not sufficient to say, okay, let's not argue about it anymore, especially on the way to church, we're supposed to be worshipping today, and you keep quiet about it.

That's not peace at all, that's a cold war. And such a problem has to be sorted out. Otherwise, your worshipping is spoiled. Otherwise, you're not a peacemaker.

And your whole worshipping is spoiled, especially your prayers. Because Peter says in 1 Peter 3, 7, that if there are things like that in a relationship, in the home, then your prayers will be hindered.

So be a peacemaker by being lovable, by being selfless, by being approachable, by not standing on our dignity. There will be such people that others will be encouraged to come to us with their worries, with their anxieties, and with their troubles, that they will know that even when they come in an obnoxious fashion, when they come full of bitterness, full of twistedness, then that our very attitude to them gives them hope of peace.

[18:37] Who is the maker of peace? Well, Paul in 1 Corinthians says that God is not the author of confusion, but of peace. God is the source of peace.

Since the fall in Genesis 3, man has not known peace, unless he receives it as a gift from God. God gave his own son, that sinners would believe and be at peace with him, and he with them.

There was a couple, a man and a woman, arguing in a divorce court. a little boy of four was crying between them as they harangued each other and gave evidence about how bad each one was to the other.

And this little boy cried, age four, he takes the father's hand and he pulls it, and he takes the mother's hand and he pulls it, and he carries on pulling until he places both hands together. and for the first time in years, the couple looked at each other, looked into each other's eyes. That little boy became a peacemaker, and in a way Christ did that for us.

[19:50] He provided the righteousness that allows man to take the hand of God. He made peace through the blood of his cross.

That's enough dereliction and chaos. where there was no peace. He provided the righteousness that alone makes real peace. You see, God does not want conflict.

People say, all right, your God is the God of love. Your God is somebody who reaches out in love to you. How do you explain these wars? Well, wars are not God's wars.

God didn't start any of those wars. God says is, I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil.

Jesus said, these things have I spoken unto you that in me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulations, but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.

[ 20 : 58 ] No matter the turmoil in the world, no matter how circumstances buffet you, the Christian has within him the indwelling spirit of peace, given by the God of peace.

So my friend, be encouraged to be a peacemaker. Maybe it'll cost you, and maybe it'll make you suffer some. But that's what Jesus did, and he is our example.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. They shall be called the children of God. They shall be owned as the children of God. God will own them as his own children.

The peacemaker is a child of God. He's like his father, for God is a God of peace. The God of peace that brought again from the dead, our Lord Jesus.

What is the meaning? Of Christ coming into this world? What is the meaning of Christ's death? What is the meaning of his resurrection? Why did he come? He came because God is a God of peace.

[ 22 : 03 ] He didn't turn away from man. He didn't turn away from man in his trouble, in his strife, in his war, in his rebellion, in his riots, in his murders. God didn't say, I'm sick of my man, finish with him, and turn away.

No, what did he do? He became involved. He came in the person of his own son, to bring peace. If God had stood upon his rights, the whole world, every one of us, would be consigned to hell.

But God is a God of peace, and he sent his own son, and provided us with a way of salvation. And Jesus came willingly.

He was equal with God, but he humbled himself, and came into this world in the likeness of man.

He humbled himself to the death on that cross. He didn't think of himself.

He thought of you, he thought of me, and he thought of sinners like us. And he wanted us to enjoy the peace of God. And that is what we must be.

[ 23 : 08 ] Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Forget self, humble self, follow in the steps of Jesus, who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, who when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he suffered, threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.

That's it, you see. And may God give us peace, to be truly children of the God of peace. Amen. Let us pray.

O Lord, we praise thee that thou art a God of peace, that thou dost not wish to be at war with man, that thou art not at war with us, but that we are often at war with thee.

But we praise thee that thou didst not turn away from us, that thou didst not stand on thine own rights, but that thou didst come in the passion of thine own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to establish a lasting peace between sinful men, who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thyself.

So we pray and ask for an understanding that we may know what it is to have peace with God. We ask that thou would remember each and every one of us, every man, woman and child in here, that they may know the peace that passeth understanding in their own heart, and that they will be members of thine own peace corps, going out into this world, seeking to make peace, between man and man, throughout the world.

[ 24 : 44 ] Bless each one of us and bless all the peacenakers who are attempting great things, but we pray that we would always look to thee as the Prince of Peace. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.