

Peacemakers

Matthew 5:9
Halifax: 14 December 2003

Introduction:

What a difference Jesus Christ makes in this sinful world!

1. sets up a kingdom of righteousness!
 - by imputation (forgiveness, acceptance)
 - by transformation (new birth)

2. In the Beatitudes, Jesus shows how the ones who are blessed in His kingdom are changed.
 - They are given a new life
 - poor in spirit, mourn...etc.
 - They are given a new hope
 - kingdom of heaven, comforted...etc.

3. This week we come to the blessing of peace.
 - He changes us from peace-breakers to peacemakers
 - Isaiah describes the beautiful change:
 - Isa 11:6-9: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.
 - Jesus is the prince of peace, and where He reigns, there is peace!
 - The world is in a condition of enmity with God and with each other...
 - But by His powerful grace, Jesus changes our very nature!
 - He makes peace-breakers into peacemakers.

I. But just what is a peacemaker?

- A. A peacemaker is a person who loves peace and who labours for peace.
 - Stated negatively...
 - He is one who hates hostility and division and who works to eliminate it...

1. A peacemaker loves peace because he himself has been reconciled to God.
 - “reconciled” means brought to peace with...
 - And now having tasted peace, you love it.
 - to know that God’s “anger is turned a way!”
 - to experience **Shalom**:
 - not merely absence of hostility,
 - but total well being and unity.
 - you want this peace for everyone

2. A peacemaker will not settle for superficial peace...
 - If you are a peacemaker, you only want the real thing.
 - a. You will not have peace detached from God...
 - 1) Ill> two crooks
 - they may enjoy a kind of peace with each other...
 - real peace is between those who are reconciled to God
 - 2) Real peace is not a peace that comes by compromising purity.
 - a) James 3:17: “the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable.”
 - Purity comes first...
 - purity is the foundation of true peace
 - pure in heart.... then peacemakers
 - b) Real peacemakers will be called troublemakers...
 - Elijah: Ahab called him “troubler or Israel”
 - Jesus: “He stirs up the people”
 - There is always pressure to compromise purity for superficial peace:
 1. to compromise your doctrine...
 - Jeremiah: less judgement.
 - John: less rigidity about Christ having come in the flesh
 2. to compromise your life...
 - Jesus could have kept a few of the extraneous rules,
 - Paul could have laid off the Corinthians about fornication

- 3) There is pressure, but the peacemaker will not yield to it...
 - Ask yourself,
 - “What will I do to promote peace when I spend time with my family?”
 - “Will I compromise purity for superficial peace?
 - or will I pursue real peace?”

TRANS> A real peacemaker will not settle for superficial peace that is not built on the foundation of purity...

- But that is not the only kind of superficial peace he will reject....
- If you are a peacemaker you will also reject...

b. Peace that is obtained by force

- 1) This is what you see attempted in Iraq right now.
 - a) Real peace is not obtained by forcing outward compliance...
 - It is often necessary to use force...
 - And it can create a certain measure of order...
 - but the peacemaker is looking for much more...
 - He is looking for peace that comes by God’s grace.
 - b) There is a great difference between...
 - a kingdom supported by forced taxation (penalties and all)
 - and a kingdom supported by free giving.
- 2) Some parents try to obtain peace in their home by force.
 - God has given parents the rod to impart wisdom,
 - not merely to get compliance.
 - “The rod and reproof give wisdom.”
 - The goal is to win the heart, not to reign by terror.
 - You want your children to be on side with you, not under your thumb.
 - This does not mean the rod will not be used.
 - It means it will be used with rebuke to bring about wisdom and peace... to wake the child up to hear correction and wisdom.

- 3) Peace by force can also be sought by those **under** authority!
- a) In this case, manipulation is probably a better word than force.
 - Solomon refers to it as the “continual dripping of the contentious woman.”
 - It makes everybody desire to move to the attic!
 - Whining and pouting and crabbiness is used to manipulate those in authority.
 - In some contexts, this is done by protests and sit-ins...
 - or by even by mutiny and revolution.
 - b) But this is not the kind of peace a real peacemaker seeks.
 - Children, employees, wives, take heed.
 - A real peacemaker tries to win the disobedient authority by quiet submission.
 - It doesn’t always work, but it is the way of someone who wants true peace before God instead of mere control.
 - In cases of abuse by an authority, of course,
 - there are times when you must appeal to God
 - And that includes appealing to the elders in the church or superiors at work or to the civil magistrate (police).

TRANS> But a true peacemaker wants the peace that God gives...

- A peace where there is true reconciliation...
- A peace where everyone is working together to serve God in true harmony...
- A peace where each is out for the other’s God and for God’s glory.
 - He wants the peace that God gives, not some cheap substitute.

B. In His love and labour for peace, a peacemaker is like God.

1. Peacemaking is one of God’s most striking characteristics.
 - a. He is rightly called “the God of peace” and Jesus is called “the prince of peace”
 - b. Consider how God went way out of His way to make peace with us...
 - He gave His only Son...
 - c. He calls all men everywhere to peace...

- Everyone is called to repent and believe with the promise of peace.
- If we do not obey His gracious call, it is our own fault.

TRANS> God has done so much to make peace with us...

- He is the One who takes the initiative.
 - He is the One who pays the price.
 - Peacemaking is such a striking quality of God....
 - It is a feature that stands out...
 - When it is understood, it is surprisingly wonderful.
2. So you can see why you will be called the “sons of God” if you are peacemakers..
- It is because you are like God in this way that stands out so much in Him...
 - a. Other people will recognise the likeness and call you the sons of God.
 - They will see the family likeness and know that you are His child.
 - Other believers will see that you are like God and receive you as a brother.
 - Remember how Barnabas saw this with Paul?
 - He knew that Paul who had been a murderer was now a peacemaker.
 - He saw the change, and soon everyone saw it.
 - They knew that Paul had become a child of God.
 - When you are a peacemaker,
 - Other believers will receive you as a son...
 - and even some unbelievers will recognise it, though they will not always admit it or like it.

TRANS> But what is even better...

- b. God Himself will call you a son...
 - 1) He will declare it to you by His Spirit.
 - Rom 8:16: The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,
 - The Holy Spirit is said to cause us to cry out “Abba, Father” to God—
 - He gives us assurance that we are God’s children.
 - 2) God will also call you His sons on the day of judgement
 - In this world, peacemakers will often suffer...

- But the scriptures say that God comforts us inwardly by His Spirit now, calling us sons...
 - and by giving us assurance that He will identify us openly as His sons at the end...
 - Rom 8:19: For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.
- 3) And if God calls you his sons, it is because you are His sons in truth.
- God will not call anyone a son who is not a son...
 - He will not call anyone who is not a peacemaker His son.
 - To them He will say,
 - “Depart from me, I never knew you.”
 - But what comfort it will for the peacemaker to hear:
 - Matthew 25:34: Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world
- c. It is a very high honour and blessing to be God’s sons.
- It means that you have a permanent inheritance with God.
 - It means that you have His affection and love forever.
 - It means that you are Jesus’ brother and will be with Him forever in the blessed family of God.

TRANS> Now I hope you all understand...

- When Jesus blesses you in this world,
 - He really does transform you so that you are not what you were.
 - You who were proud really do become poor in spirit...
 - You who did not seek God really do start hungering and thirsting for righteousness.
 - And you who were a peace-breaker really do become a peacemaker.
- But you know that you are by no means perfect.
 - Jesus has truly begun a good work in you,
 - but you still come short of the glory of God and are only accepted because of Jesus’ righteousness...

- Nevertheless, you really are changed by the Spirit's power into something new...
 - And part of that change is that you want to be like God...
 - you want to imitate Him and be renewed in His image...
 - You want to be a peacemaker—and a better peacemaker than you are.
- And because I know that you who know Him want that,
 - I want to go over some things that a peacemaker will do and some things he will not do.
 - I will begin with the negative...

I. What are some things that a peacemaker will *not* do?

- A. A peacemaker will not refuse to confront sin when called to do so.
 1. A peacemaker knows that sin sets persons **against** one another.
 - a. Consider the Ten Commandments—
 - What battles have been fought because men worship other gods...
 - What divisions are in the church because of idolatry—worshipping in the wrong way.
 - How the human race is divided and set to quarrelling because of rebellion against authority, murder and hatred, adultery, stealing, lying, covetousness!
 - b. A peacemaker knows that sin is the cause of all division.
 - And so a peacemaker will confront sin when called to do so...
 - He will confront it with the goal of establishing peace.
 2. But when are you called to confront sin?
 - a. You are called to confront sin when your Christian brother sins against you.
 - You know what Jesus said in Matthew 18:
 - Mt 18:15: Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.
 - Your goal is to restore peace between him and you.
 - b. You are called to confront sin when your son or daughter rebels.
 - Prov 18:19: Chasten your son while there is hope, And do not set your heart on his destruction.
 - Prov 29:17: Correct your son, and he will give you rest; Yes, he will give delight to your soul.
 - Eli did not correct his sons and they were destroyed—

- They did not know peace....
 - And they gave Eli no peace.
- c. When you see a brother caught sin, you are to go to help him.
- Gal 6:1: Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who *are* spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.
 - Don't just watch your brother overtaken by sin—
 - He has no peace...
 - Go and do what you can to restore him...
 - Be a peacemaker!
- d. As you have opportunity, a peacemaker will confront sin in unbelievers.
- 1) But let me tell you what sin to confront!
 - It is the greatest sin, the sin of which we are all guilty!
 - Original sin!
 - That we, the whole human race, have broken away from God and need to make peace with Him!
 - We are all in it together and Jesus is the way of peace!
 - 2) In 2 Cor 5, Paul speaks of the ministry of the word as the ministry of reconciliation—of making peace between God and sinful man:
 - 2 Cor. 5:18-20: Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.
 - A peacemaker will attempt to lead everyone to God's promise of reconciliation—
 - inviting them to church,
 - telling them of your own hope,
 - living a life of peace with God before them.

TRANS> A peacemaker will not refuse to confront sin with a view to bringing about peace.

3. None of this is easy...

- a. You know that no one likes to be confronted about sin—
 - You know how hard it can be to receive correction yourself.
 - You would rather be the nice guy

- b. There is danger in confronting sin...
 - look at what happened to John the Baptist for confronting Herod!
 - look at what happened to Jesus for confronting the Pharisees.
 - You can easily become the target of a sinner's aggression against God.
- c. But the peacemaker will not refuse to confront sin...
 - Remember how Jesus pressed on to pursue peace.
 - Aren't you glad he did?
 - Can you give up?

TRANS> What else will a peacemaker not do...

B. A peacemaker will not confront sin in a proud offensive way

1. The servant of the LORD must not strive, but be gentle toward all.
 - a. Because you are guilty of the greatest sin (original sin), pride is out!
 - Do not go with the arrogance of one who is above his neighbour...
 - Go as a fellow sinner to testify of what God has done for you.
 - b. Do not go with hostility and rage, but with gentleness.
 - Your goal is to win, not to alienate your brother.
 - Your manner should be
 - "I have come to you because I love you and I want what is best for you."
2. Special care is to be taken depending on the relationship...
 - A child is not to rebuke his parents, but to appeal to them with respect.
 - A parent is not to use his authority as legitimising harsh or abrasive speech.
 - A wife is not to nag her husband, but to win him without a word.
 - Time does not allow me to go into all the details, but understand that the wife **is** to take action—
 - she is not called to do nothing,
 - but to try to win her husband by active submission.

TRANS> Let's move on...

- What else will a peacemaker not do...

C. A peacemaker will not participate in gossip

1. Solomon said:

- Pr 17:9: He who covers a transgression seeks love, But he who repeats a matter separates friends.
- The best way to stir up division and destroy peace is to share gossip!
 - Either to listen to it or to do it yourself!
 - That is the way to separate friends!
- Gossip can be done in such subtle ways—
 - It's not always: "Well let me tell you..."
 - but it can be just sort of casually making known a fault or two—
 - or going with a "prayer request"...
 - Yet, what are you doing is turning people against their brother!

2. With your tongue, you can shoot deadly arrows at your brother without his even knowing about it.

a. That's what Psalm 64 speaks about when it speaks of those:

- Psalm 64:3-4: Who sharpen their tongue like a sword, And bend *their bows to shoot* their arrows—bitter words, that they may shoot in secret at the blameless; Suddenly they shoot at him and do not fear.

b. It's very cruel and cowardly to attack with words...

- You are fighting a war against your brother and he doesn't even know about it!
- That's why there is no fear—
 - you can take a blow with your sword and he doesn't even see you do it!
 - He can't defend himself against the attack...
 - Yet the damage is done...
 - division is caused!

c. I know a person who was slandered in this way, and because others listened without investigating,

- the slandered person soon found that others were acting differently toward him.
- He checked his breath and deodorant... and the struggle remained.

TRANS> A peacemaker will have nothing to do with gossip.

- He will not speak it or hear it...
 - And if it comes his way, he will take the talebearer to talk to the brother.
- What else will a peacemaker not do?

D. A peacemaker will not become easily offended.

1. You are not much of a peacemaker if you are always getting angered at others over every little thing:

- “Joe didn’t even speak to me”—so peace is destroyed.
- “Sally didn’t even thank me.”
- “Bill is always interrupting.”
- “Petrice has such terrible table manners—I don’t even want to eat with her”
- Or “Beatrice is so prim and proper, I don’t want to eat with her.”
- Don’t let such foolish little things destroy peace with your brother for whom Christ died!
 - The Bible commands you to be forbearing and patient with your brother.

2. Just look at how Jesus lived with His disciples!

a. He could have been on their case constantly!

- They were always doing selfish and unworthy things.
- He could have been offended with them all the time, but he was selective in His rebukes.
 - He rebuked them for their unbelief, for trying to dissuade him from the cross, for arguing about who would be greatest, for asking him to rebuke parents who were bringing children to be blessed.
 - But He also passed over many things, as He told them,
 - Joh 16:12 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now.
 - And that is how He deals with you now—
 - He works with you day by day in a gentle way, leading you into truth and holiness.

b. Jesus knew the difference between rebellion and immaturity.

- You need to recognise the difference also!
- An immature person may do many foolish things,
 - but he is growing, he is headed in the right direction.

- That is what matters!

TRANS> A peacemaker will not be easily offended...

E. Neither will a peacemaker take such offence that he refuses to be reconciled.

1. You've all seen that kind of attitude...

- "I can never forgive that!"
- How wrong this attitude when you remember that Christ has forgiven you for so much greater an offense.
 - Remember the parable of the unforgiving servant?
 - He refused to forgive a little debt when his master had forgiven him a huge debt!
 - He was no peacemaker!

2. When a peacemaker is legitimately offended, he will always try to reconcile.

- He will want to forgive more than to get revenge!
 - He will always go to His brother to make peace...
- You can't really forgive unless your brother repents,
 - Biblical forgiveness always involves reconciliation and that takes two parties...
 - but you are to always be ready on your part to forgive.
 - That is the way of a peacemaker.

F. Finally, a peacemaker will not read into the actions of others in an uncharitable way.

1. He will not be suspicious of others and think the worst of their motives.

- I knew two girls that kept up a cold war for a whole year because they read into each other's actions!
- When they finally realised what they had done, they were so ashamed and embarrassed.

2. Jay Adams tells the story of a woman who saw her good friend sitting across the church...

- She had not seen her for a long time, so after church she rushed over to greet her.
 - Her friend threw her head back and rushed out of the building!
 - The woman was offended until she spoke to her friend and was told...
 - "I didn't even see you... my nose starting running..."

II. What are some things a peacemaker *will* do?

A. A peacemaker will do good to all men

1. The Bible advocates this as the way to make peace with your enemy.
 - a. Romans 12:18: “If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.”
 - You can’t control how other people will respond, but you are to do your part.
 - b. What can you do?
 - Rather than taking vengeance (trying to get even) you are told to do good to your enemy.
 - “If he is hungry given him something to eat...
 - You are to actively look for ways to do good to him...
 - to work hard at planning good—
 - It won’t happen unless you plan it.
 - And if you do this, you are a peacemaker, no matter how your enemy responds.
2. Now if this is the way to make peace (to be a peacemaker) with an enemy, how much more with those who are not enemies!
 - a. A peacemaker maintains and promotes peace by doing good to other Christians!
 - The church is to be a place of love and concord.
 - Too often it is a place of division and strife.
 - One of the reasons this is so is because you have not done your part to do good to your brothers and sisters.
 - God binds together in local churches so that we might learn to dwell together in the unity of the Spirit....
 - That we might display His love in our assembly.
 - If you search out needs and then meet those needs with eager enthusiasm, you do your part to promote peace.
 - b. Surely this same attitude ought to characterise you to your nearest neighbours!
 - You are to be a peacemaker at home to your husband or your wife or your parents or your siblings.
 - Surely if God commands kindness to your enemies,
 - how much more to those in your own home!

- If you are there showing kindness and serving,
 - you are a peacemaker!
- Children,
 - what keeps you from making your brothers bed when you see that he is running behind!
 - What keeps you from complementing your sister when she cooks a good meal—
 - or from telling your brother what a good example he has been to you in bearing patiently with sickness or loss?

3. In Romans 14, Paul speaks of pursuing things that make for peace.

- Ro 14:19: Therefore let us pursue the things *which make* for peace and the things by which one may edify another.
- When he says pursue, is shows that it is not something that just happens...
 - you have to go after these things—to work hard at them...
 - to pick up the phone and make that call...
 - to go ahead and speak that word of encouragement or supply that need or give that helping hand.
- That is what a peacemaker does.
 - He will do good to all men.

B. Secondly, a peacemaker will pray for peace

1. Jesus Christ, the chief peacemaker, sets the example for us!
 - John 17 is an example of the kind of prayer that He continually prays for us!
 - He prays that we will be one with Him and with one another.
2. Psalm 122 tells us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem.
 - That's talking to us about the New Jerusalem—the city of God, the church of Jesus Christ!
 - God is the one who gives us peace,
 - And peacemakers know that...
 - And because they love peace, they pray for peace.
3. Don't you see how divided the church is today?
 - Get on your knees and plead that God would unify us in His truth!

- And not that insipid unity that comes by compromising God's truth!
- It is unity in the truth and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.
 - Compromisers of truth can have their World Council of Churches and pretend to be one in Jesus if they want...
 - But we are to pray for real unity in Christ in His truth.
- Get on your knees and pray that He would cause us to love one another!
 - People are supposed to know that we are God's children by the love we have for one another!

TRANS> What else will a peacemaker do?

C. Thirdly, a peacemaker will quickly admit his own sin and ask forgiveness for it.

1. When you have done wrong to your brother, it is up to you to make it right!
 - a. God tells you how to do it...
 - Go to your brother and confess your fault to him and ask him to forgive you.
 - Make restitution if you need to...
 - Go out of your way to make it right...
 - And insist that he forgive you—
 - Make him answer the question, "will you forgive me?"
 - Don't just say you are sorry...
 - He doesn't need a character reference!
 - He needs to reconcile with you.
 - b. Going to reconcile is to be an absolute priority.
 - Jesus tells you to take care of it before you even go to worship!
 - Think of it as if you are bleeding until you fix the problem!
 - And Paul says that you are to remove the leaven of malice and bitterness from your heart before you come to the Lord's Supper.
 - This is what a peacemaker does.
2. Now I know that it is hard to admit your sin and ask forgiveness.
 - But is this not a small price to pay to pursue peace when the Lord Jesus has paid such a high price to purchase peace for us with God?

D. Fourthly, a peacemaker will honour those in authority

1. You are commanded to honour the king...

- One of the best ways to promote peace in your nation is by obeying the laws of the land—
 - and by speaking respectfully of those that are in authority over you.
 - It doesn't mean you have to endorse everything they do—
 - but like David with Saul, you must recognise that God has put them there and respect them in the office.

2. You also promote peace by honouring the people you work for.

- You contribute to harmony and well being when you work hard and try to bring profit to those you work for.
 - In the world, there is often an adversarial relationship here...
 - It ought not to be so with you, on your part, even if your boss is unreasonable and difficult.

3. I have already spoken about the home...

- Wives, if you want peace in your home, honour your husband.
 - If you want your disharmony and unrest, then don't.
 - Your children will follow you and will treat you the same way you treat him.
- But men, you must honour God if you want your wife and your children to honour you.
 - They will also follow your example.
 - You promote peace by honouring those in authority.

E. But most of all, a peacemaker will promote peace by promoting the love of God.

1. God the Father is the God of peace,

- Jesus Christ is the prince of peace,
- and the Holy Spirit gives the fruit of peace.

2. He is the source of peace for this world...

- All peace that is not rooted in Him is superficial and temporary.
 - A true peacemaker knows that!
 - He knows that Jesus is the source of peace.

- You promote true peace by urging all men to be reconciled with the God of peace who makes all His children peacemakers.
3. You do this in many ways...
- By speaking well of your God and telling people what He has done for you.
 - By showing how wonderful it is serve Him by serving Him joyfully.
 - By telling them that He will bless them if they will repent of their sins and believe on Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

Blessed be the name of our God who first made peace with us through Jesus and now makes us peacemakers!

- Come to Him and you will be called the sons of God.