**THE BLESSED LIFE**

“PEACEMAKERS”

MATTHEW 5:9

Matthew 5:9, “*Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*”

 “A retired couple was alarmed by the threat of nuclear war so they undertook a serious study of all the inhabited places on the globe. Their goal was to determine where in the world would be the place to be least likely affected by a nuclear war. They searched for a place of ultimate security. They studied and traveled, traveled and studied. Finally, they found the place and on Christmas they sent their pastor a card from their new home…in the Falkland Islands. However, their ‘paradise’ was soon turned into a war zone by Great Britain and Argentina. Their so-called ‘paradise’ was plundered by war.

 “We live in a very violent world that seems bent on destruction. News about *bombings*, *bleeding*, *broken bodies*, *battles*, and *butchery* are as common as weather reports. We are a planet plagued with wars. When WWI broke out, the War Ministry in London sent a coded message to one of the British outposts in a very remote part of Africa. The secret message said, ‘War has been declared. Arrest all enemy aliens in your district.’ Soon after this, the War Ministry received a message back: ‘We have arrested 10 Germans, 6 Belgians, 4 Frenchmen, 2 Italians, 3 Austrians and an American. Please tell us immediately who we’re at war with.’ Sometimes we may wonder who we are at war with now.

 “The celebrated historians, Will and Ariel Durant, in their book *The Lessons of History*, begin the chapter on ‘History and War’ with these words: ‘War is one of the constants of history, and has not diminished with civilization and democracy. In the last 3,421 years of recorded history only 268 have seen no war.’ That is a chilling statement, and it would, no doubt, be even more so if the facts unrecorded history could be known.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

 What is a Peacemaker? The simplest definition is just simply “one who reconciles two parties who are at strife with one another”.

 How again, this “new doctrine” taught with authority from the “carpenter’s” son must have stirred up unholy feelings within their hearts. The Jews at that moment had no love of peace, for they were looking for nothing else but for their Messiah to come and lead them in conquering the Roman Empire and delivering their nation out from underneath its iron hand. They couldn’t wait for the Messiah to come and set up His kingdom so that they could be the master race of all the earth and everyone else be in subjection unto them. Even one of the hand-picked 12, Simon called Zelotes, came from a group of people who were trying to overthrow Roman domination.

**I. QUALIFICATIONS FOR BEING A PEACEMAKER**

# A. Purity of Heart

 It is interesting to note that the Beatitude of peacemaking comes right after the one about being pure in heart. James 3:17 tells us, “*But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable*.” Before we begin to take on the task of peacemaking we need to question our motives. We must make sure that they are pure, innocent, and of good intention.

* Are we doing this to pry into other’s affairs?
* Are we just trying to get attention or notice?
* Are we trying to gain someone’s favor?
* What are we going to get out of it?

 A true peacemaker is one who has left himself out of the picture, remains neutral, and desires nothing but the good of all parties involved.

 “The title ‘peacemaker’ reveals interesting insights when you break down the word.

 “First, there is the word ‘peace.’ In the Greek language, the word is *eirene* {i-ray’-nay}, and in the Hebrew language it is the more familiar word *shalom*. In Hebrew, peace does not only mean the absence of trouble, evil things and conflict. It also means everything which makes for a man’s abundant blessings and God’s highest good for him. It bears the idea of wholeness and overall well-being. In the Middle East when a man says, ‘*Shalom*’ to another, he is wishing the enjoyment of all good things as well as the absence of trials and burdens for that person.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

 “We now want to look at the second part of the word, ‘makers,’ which demands that we understand that the person is not passive, but is a source of peace. As it is used here, it is a dynamic word bursting with energy. Both parts of the word ‘peacemakers,’ taken together, describe one who actively pursues wholeness and well-being in his own life and in the lives of others.”[[3]](#footnote-3)

 Romans 12:18, “*If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*”

 Romans 14:19, *“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.*” “The words ‘follow after’ come from the Greek word *dioko* {dee-o’-ko}which means to run swiftly in order to catch a person or thing; to press on: figuratively of one who in a race runs swiftly to reach the goal; to pursue or earnestly or seek.’ This is the attitude we are to have toward peace.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

 Ephesians 4:3, “*Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*”

 The peacemaker is one who has seen the heart of God, a God who desires, “… *on earth peace, good will toward men.*” They have seen the heart of Christ, whom Colossians 1:20 speaks of when it says, “*And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.*”

# B. Righteous Judgment

 This Beatitude also comes after hungering and thirsting after righteousness. James 3:18 lets us know, “*And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.*” This verse is telling us that before peace can grow that it first must be planted in the good soil of righteousness. You cannot help bring peace if you don’t care about what is right and the whole truth. Truth and righteousness

must be the foundation in all the decisions and choices we make. They must take precedence over our own feelings and desires, and even over our own wants and wishes. In fact, Isaiah 32:17 tells us, “*And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.*” You cannot separate the two. Paul told the Ephesian church to speak the truth in love. Truth must be spoken, but it must be spoken in the right manner. Yes, sometimes truth hurts, but in the task of peacemaking it must only be used as the surgeon’s knife. That is to heal rather than to *harm* an individual. The Bible illustrates how we should apply judgment. Psalms 85:10, “*Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*”

 “Being a peacemaker is not appeasement. Winfield Scoot said, ‘Peace won by compromise is usually a short-lived achievement.’ George Washington stated, ‘To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace.’ President Ronald Reagan called this same philosophy, ‘Peace through strength.’ George Herbert said, “One sword keeps another in the sheath.’ You can postpone war by appeasement; but it generally means that you are doing something that is unjust and unrighteous on order to avoid war.

 “…The true peacemaker, contrary to what most people think, is not afraid to make waves. He is not one who could care less what anyone else does as long as it does not directly affect him. Neither is the peacemaker always tolerant—‘You do your thing and I’ll do mine.’”[[5]](#footnote-5)

**II.** **THINGS THAT DISTURB PEACE**

**1) Lusts-** The New Testament tells us plainly in James 4:1, “*From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?*” Wars and arguments come about from the lust for power, pleasure, riches, control, and honor.

**2) Hatred-** Proverbs 10:12a, “*Hatred stirreth up strifes:*”

**3) Pride-** Proverbs 13:10a, “*Only by pride cometh contention:*”

**4) Contentious spirit-** Proverbs 26:21, “*As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife.*”

**5)** **Anger-** Proverbs 29:22, “*An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression.*”

**6) Foolish questions-** I Timothy 6:4, “*He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,*”

**7)** **Wickedness-** Lack of peace in the heart comes as a result of being wicked. Isaiah 48:22 lets us know that, “*There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.*” James 3:16 puts it this way, “*For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.*” As Clovis Chappell said, “To be at war with God is to have a civil war within your soul.”

**III. THE CALL TO PEACEMAKING**

 Ralph W. Sockman said, “Jesus could have kept this peace by remaining in the Galilean villages, basking in His popularity, healing the sick, preaching comfort. But He set His face toward Jerusalem where critics and a cross awaited Him. His was a ministry of active reconciliation.” II Corinthians 5:19, “*To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;*” Because that was His task, when He returned to Heaven He passed it along to us.”

 This call to peacemaking comes in two different forms.

 **1. First, we are called to help bring peace between man and God.** It is the act of bringing man back into the right relationship with their Creator. II Corinthians 5:18b says that He has “*given to us the ministry of reconciliation;*” and verse 19b tells us that He “*hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*”

 **2. Secondly, we are called to try to keep peace with others, and to help others keep peace with each other.** We are also admonished by Paul in Ephesians 4:3 that we need to be, “*Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*” Paul, by using the word endeavoring, lets us know that this task is something we need to be constantly partaking of.

 Ralph W. Sockman also said, “We must not mistake peace-keeping for peace-making. We may keep the peace because we are too indifferent to care what goes on around us, or too good-natured to feel any righteous indignation at wrongdoing, or too selfish or lazy to risk any unpleasantness for the sake of setting things right.” The great empires of the world were good at peace-keeping. They instilled fear into those who would try to free themselves from the tyranny they were under. They kept it with an iron fist. Their subjects had peace, but only because it was out of weakness, not of their own free will and volition.

 We must have peace-makers because peace never comes about by accident. Conflicts may start by accident. A word carelessly or thoughtlessly said, or maybe something taken out of context. Friends have become bitter enemies simply because of misunderstandings. Yet, for peace to come it always takes *work*, *sacrifice*, and *determination*.

**IV. WAYS TO PRACTICE PEACEMAKING**

 The true art of peacemaking takes great courage and patience. It is not just claiming something to be that is not really there. That is what some of the prophets in the Old Testament did. God speaks this of them in Jeremiah 8:11, “*For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.*” They put a Band-Aid on the situation instead of cutting out the cancer that was causing the problem. Though he is peaceable; he cannot be an appeaser.

 The peacemaker is brave because a lot of times he takes heat from both sides. Yet, he chooses to get involved because he hates anything that destroys fellowship. He despises it whether the fellowship is between mankind or with man and God. Personal peacemaking is not the avoidance of trouble by going and isolating yourself, nor is it simply being indifferent to other people’s problems by ignoring them and hoping that they will just go away. It is a call to heroic action.

 **1. A peacemaker starts out by trying to prevent a friction from producing a spark.** If the spark has already shot out, then he tries to keep it from breaking out into a fire. If he comes upon the fire, than he tries to stop it from spreading any farther than necessary. The sad thing is, is that; he sometimes gets burned in the process. Yet, for the joy of reconciliation he sets his own feelings aside. Hebrews 12:2 illustrates this principle so well referring to the example of Jesus. The author of Hebrews admonishes us that we need to be, “*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*”

 We need to be sowing peace in our every day lives. If we desire peace in our lives, we must want peace for others. According to Galatians 5:22 sowing peace is a sure sign that we are spirit-filled.

 To be a peacemaker in our own lives with others then we need to practice the 3 tips found in James 1:19, “*Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:*” We need to be more ready to heed advice and instruction than to give our two cents worth. We also need to make sure that we take the time to hear both sides of the argument before we just in and take sides. We must also refrain from the temptation to retort back, or to help build up the fire by continuing to spread the matter to other folks and bringing them in on the situation, instead of letting it die with us. Once wrath is kindled in our hearts the only thing that can bring it back into its right place many times is a direct act of God. We must be slow to wrath lest we do something we will always regret.

 Ralph W. Sockman gives this illustration. In the early days of the Southern Confederacy, General Robert E. Lee was severely criticized by General Whiting. It might have been expected that Lee would wait for a time when he could get even with Whiting. A day came when President Jefferson Davis asked General Lee to come for consultation. Davis wanted to know what Lee thought of General Whiting. Without hesitation Lee commended Whiting in high terms and called him one of the ablest men in the Confederate army. An officer present motioned Lee aside to suggest that he must not know what unkind things Whiting had been saying about him. Lee answered: “I understood that the President desired to know my opinion of Whiting, not Whiting’s opinion of me.”

 Another way to be a peacemaker is to go on the offensive. Not in attacking the person with weapons of harm, but with acts of love. Romans 12:20,21 states, “*Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*” David reminds us that we just can’t sit back and expect it to just happen we have to get off of the couch. Psalms 34:14 says, “*Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.*”

 Jesus also put it this way later on in the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 5:43-48 says, “*Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*”

 In Colossians 1:20 it speaks of Christ having made peace by the blood of the cross. For God to provide peace in the hearts of mankind He had to go on the offensive. It meant sacrifice. To seek peace with others, or to help bring peace between others a lot of times means that it will cost us some kind of sacrifice.

 **2. We can also be a peacemaker by going on the defensive.** The Apostle Paul in Romans 12:19 says, “*Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*” We can also go on the defensive by remembering the first and great reason that we need to try to live in peace and harmony, and be forgiving. Colossians 3:13 gives this advice, “*Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*”

 One thing we must remember as peacemakers is sometimes even our best efforts fail.

 Paul in Romans 12:18 acknowledges this, “*If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*” He is letting us know that, unfortunately, there will be times when we can’t. Jesus gives us the formula for what to do here. Matthew 18:15-17, “*Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.*” And then sometimes for the sake of peace we just have to agree to disagree.

**V. BIBLICAL EXAMPLES**

**Abraham-** Genesis 13:7-9, “*And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land. And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.*”

**Isaac-** Genesis 26:19-22, “*And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water. And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours: and he called the name of the well Esek; because they strove with him. And they digged another well, and strove for that also: and he called the name of it Sitnah. And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, For now the LORD hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.*”

**Moses-** Acts 7:26, “*And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?*”

**Jonathon-** I Samuel 19:1,2,4,6, “*And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David. But Jonathan Saul's son delighted much in David: and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to kill thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself: And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to thee-ward very good: And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, As the LORD liveth, he shall not be slain.*”

**Abigail-** I Samuel 25:14,18,23-28, “*But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he railed on them. Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses. And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, And fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid. Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send. Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the LORD hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal. And now this blessing which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord. I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days.*”

**VI. THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST**

 Jesus is our great example of a peacemaker. The Bible says in Isaiah 9:6, “*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*”

 Colossians 1:20 states, “*And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.*”

 Ephesians 2:14 says, “*For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;*”

**VII. PROMISES OF THE PEACEMAKER**

 The Bible says in the first part of our text, “*for they shall be called*”. I think this lets us know that people, especially the world, will see a difference in us. There will be something about our works and spirit that will set us apart. The second part of the verse says, “*called the children of God.*” They call us that because we imitate Him. For God Himself “*is not the author of confusion, but of peace*” (I Corinthians 14:33).

 The word “called” implies ownership.

 Proverbs 12:20b gives us another reward of peace for it says, “*but to the counsellors of peace is joy.*” They have joy of a job well done. Then there is the joy of having a clear and satisfied conscience.

 Isaiah 52:7 says, “*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!*” Even the most “ugly” part of us will be considered beautiful.

 Some people are known as a trouble-maker, but let us be known as a peace-maker. When we do people will seek us out. Then doors of ministry can and will be open to us.

--PREPARED BY: BRO. JAYME D. CARTER

1. Dr. Rod Mattoon, *Treasures From the Sermon on the Mount, Vol. 1* (Dexter, MI: Thomson-Shore, Inc., 2006), 116-117. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Dr. Rod Mattoon, *Treasures From The Sermon of the Mount, Vol. 1* (Dexter, MI: Thomson-Shore, Inc., 2006), 117-118. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Dr. Rod Mattoon, *Treasures From The Sermon on the Mount, Vol. 1* (Dexter, MI: Thomson-Shore, Inc., 2006), 119. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Dr. Rod Mattoon, *Treasures From The Sermon on the Mount, Vol. 1* (Dexter, MI: Thomson-Shore, Inc., 2006), 119. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Dr. Rod Mattoon, *Treasures From The Sermon on the Mount, Vol. 1* (Dexter, MI: Thomson-Shore, Inc., 2006), 118. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)