

"Blessed Are The Peacemakers"

Introduction. The word "peace" sounds so pleasant to the ears. But amazingly, most of us do not know the true nature of peace, or how it is attained. It is something that is greatly desired, but is so elusive. For God's people the word "peace" takes on a special connotation.

In this beatitude, Jesus is reminding us again that the life of a Christian is completely different from the life of a non-Christian. He was establishing an entirely new and different kingdom. Only the new person in Christ can live this new life (Romans 6:3-5).

This statement must have come as a great shock to the Jews of Jesus' day. They had the idea that the coming kingdom of the Messiah would be a military one. They thought the Messiah when He came, would set Himself up as a great King, and that He would deliver them from all their bondage and establish the Jews above everybody else as the conquering and master race (Acts 1:6-8). But the Lord tells them that this was not so.

We live in a world that is far from being at peace. Most of us here cannot remember a time when there was peace in the Middle East. The United Nations, NATO, Camp David talks, Geneva conferences, etc., have all tried to find peace in the Middle East and in the rest of the world. But there will be no peace as long as God is unseated at the conference table. Peace is not made in documents, but in the hearts of men, so we must find heart peace before we will have world peace. When man cannot find peace with himself, it is useless to look for it elsewhere.

The importance of this lesson is seen in the fact that peace is achieved only by replacing greed, distrust, and hatred with love, mercy, and kindness. It is not the absence of war that makes peace, it is the presence of God!

I. "***Blessed Are The Peacemakers***"

- A. Everything revolving around Christ involves peace. He came as the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). Angels proclaimed peace at His birth (Luke 2:14). The gospel is a gospel of peace (Isaiah 52:7; Ephesians 6:15; cf. Luke 12:51). The kingdom is a kingdom of peace (Romans 14:17; Ephesians 2:13-14). His death created peace between Jew and Gentile and between man and God (Romans 5:1).
- B. The word for peace, *eirene*, occurs in every book of the New Testament except 1 John. All of Paul's epistles open with a wish for peace and many epistles close with it.
 1. The word describes serenity, tranquility, or perfect contentment (Psalm 4:8; Isaiah 32:17; Jeremiah 12:5).
 2. The word also describes the perfection of relationships.
 - a) The home (1 Corinthians 7:12-16).
 - b) Nations (Joshua 9:15).

- c) The church (Ephesians 4:3; Colossians 3:15).
 - d) Jew and Gentile (Ephesians 2:14-17).
 - e) Man and man (Hebrews 12:14; 2 Peter 3:14).
 - f) Man and God (Isaiah 54:10; Jeremiah 29:11).
3. Ancient philosophers saw peace in terms of detachment and isolation. Involvement in the human situation as it existed outside oneself was strictly forbidden. To them, peace consisted of four aspects.
- a) Peace could only come from the elimination of desire. They felt that you must remove from man those instinctive human desires which create a battleground of frustration.
 - b) Peace could only come with the death of emotion. If he allows anyone to have the keys to his innermost being, then peace is lost forever. They made life a desert and called it peace.
 - c) Peace could only come from the acquisition of indifference. The Stoics maintained that anything affected by forces and circumstances outside of man's control must be held in absolute indifference.
 - d) Peace could only come from complete independence. Man's happiness must never depend on anything outside of himself. His life must be absolutely self-contained, defended by the determination not to care.
- C. There are a lot of ways to obtain and destroy peace.
- 1. It is achieved only in Christ (John 16:33; Ephesians 2:14-17).
 - 2. It is achieved in justification (Romans 5:1).
 - 3. It is achieved by the spiritual mind (Romans 8:6).
 - 4. It is achieved by doing good (Romans 3:8-17).
 - 5. It is achieved through the knowledge of Christ (2 Peter 1:2-4; 3:18; 1 John 2:3-4).
 - 6. It is destroyed by contentiousness (Proverbs 29:22; Ephesians 4:25, 31-32).
 - 7. It is destroyed by vengeance (Romans 12:19).
 - 8. It is destroyed by an uncontrollable tongue (James 1:19; Proverbs 15:1).
 - 9. It is destroyed by gossip (Proverbs 16:28).
 - 10. It is destroyed by foolish and unlearned questions (2 Timothy 2:23).
- D. How do we contribute to peace?
- 1. We must not be contentious (Proverbs 15:1; Matthew 5:39).
 - 2. We must pursue and follow after peace (Romans 12:18; 14:19; 1 Peter 3:11).
 - 3. We must be zealous for peace (2 Peter 3:14).
 - a) Peace in our relationships does not come easily or automatically.

- b) We must desire it with our whole heart, seek it with our whole mind, and strain every faculty to find it and maintain it (1 Thessalonians 5:13).
- 4. We must do unto others as we would have them do unto us (Matthew 7:12).
- 5. We must do good to those who oppose us (Romans 12:20-21).
- 6. We must hold to bonds that make for peace (Ephesians 4:1-6).
- E. Notice that Jesus said that we are to be peacemakers, not just lovers of it. We must do something positive to bring it about (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). Rather than angered prejudice and nurtured suspicions, a peacemaker creates understanding, harmony, and love among all men.
 - 1. Being a peacemaker is a thankless task because peacemakers may find themselves under attack from both sides.
 - 2. However, the moment you start hating a man, you become his slave. He controls your thoughts, invades your dreams, absorbs your creativity, and determines your appetite.
 - 3. He ruins your religion and nullifies your prayers. He affects your attitude on the job, and distracts your mind when you speak to your boss, wife, and child.
- F. There is a divine limit to peace. We cannot have peace at any price, for peace won by compromise is a short-lived achievement. Being peacemakers does not mean that we will do anything to avoid trouble. A true peacemaker is not an "appeaser." This was not the model of Jesus (Matthew 10:34; 21:12). The peacemaker is someone whose central concern is the glory of God, and who spends their life in trying to work toward that glory.

II. ***"For They Shall Be Called The Children Of God"***

- A. This reward is God's acknowledgement of all of those who work so hard to be like Him and His Son (Matthew 5:43-45). God is a God of peace (Romans 15:13; 16:20), and no one can be His child who does not bear this mark.
- B. The happiness of peacemakers is one that lasts and lasts. Who has the greater happiness? The irritable, conceited, squabbling strife-maker or the gentle, kind, loving laborer for peace (Proverbs 26:20-22)? If peacemakers have a reward, and they do, what about the peacebreaker? They have their reward (Proverbs 6:16-19; Galatians 5:19-21; James 3:16).

Conclusion. A peacemaker can truly be congratulated. God never promised peace to the wicked (Isaiah 48:22). A part of God's blessing upon the righteous is the giving of peace (Psalm 29:11). Jesus gave Himself that you and I might be at peace with God, that we might have peace within, and

that we might have peace with one another (Colossians 1:20). This is truly life at its best. This is the person who can be congratulated.

The great need in the world today is for a greater number of peacemakers. If only we were all peacemakers there would be no problems or troubles. According to the Bible, the problem is in the heart of man and until the heart is changed, you will never be able to solve problems by manipulating what is on the surface. Today, you have the ability to change your life. If you want to have life at its best, answer the invitation call.