



The Manifesto of the King, Part 7: Blessed are the Peacemakers

Series: Matthew: The King and His Kingdom

Matthew 5:1-12 (v.9)

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Recap and Introduction

One of the chief lessons that we learn as we work through these beatitudes from Christ is the central truth that grace truly received by the people of God leads to real change and real results in their lives. These words from Christ serve as an excellent examination of the reality of our discipleship.

Remember what we have seen so far in the beatitudes. So far we have looked at the beatitudes that describe the character of the disciple described in the first three: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven...Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted...Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth...Then we saw the pursuit of the disciple. Jesus said: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied...justifying, practical, reign of righteousness...only Christ can satisfy.

Then two weeks ago we began to look at the conduct. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy...Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God...

Now we come to the last of the beatitudes that are dealing with the conduct of the disciples: Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God. Like most of Christ's words, these words would have come as a surprise to the Jews and to the Pharisees. This is not what those who were listening to Jesus would have necessarily expected. Most of those who were listening to Christ preach had a preconceived notion of what the Messiah was to be and what he was to do. From their perspective, they expected from Jesus a military, a national, a physical kingdom. They expected the Messiah to defeat the Romans, to be an earthly King. They thought that He was coming as a man of war, to conquer their enemies, and to set up the society that they had longed for, but Christ's Kingdom was not to be a militaristic kingdom, nor was He coming to conquer the Roman Empire – He came to conquer the enemies of sin and

Satan. He came forging peace with God. For that reason, he gives this word regarding His disciples. Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God. First, we need to consider the precept and then we will look at the promise.

1) The Precept: Blessed are the peacemakers (v.9a) If we are going to understand what it means for the disciples of Christ to be peacemakers, we need to first understand what is peace.

What is Peace? Peace, in this context, like the word pure did last week, has a couple of shades of meaning – an Hebraic meaning and a Greek meaning that are both indispensable to understanding this text. The first understanding of the word for peace comes from the Hebrew word "shalom" which describes a deep sense of tranquility and well-being, the contentment and the security that comes with being the people of God. When things are the way they should be, when your relationship with God is as it should be, when your relationship with others is how it should be then you've got shalom, peace. Shalom peace means not only freedom from all trouble it means enjoyment of all of God's good, all of God's blessings.

Here is the problem that stands in the way of shalom – mankind's natural enmity with God. Ever since Adam's rebellion against God in the Garden of Eden, mankind has been enemies of God. We have been at war with God. There's been no peace between God and man since Adam took of that fruit in the garden - and the book of Romans testifies to that truth. Not only has man made himself enemies with God, but God has declared sinful, rebellious man to be the object of divine anger, divine wrath, divine hostility.

But this very same God who cannot overlook sin, and whose righteous anger is revealed against sinful man's rebellion, as Paul says: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth." (Romans 1:18, ESV). This same God, is the God who has acted in mercy and grace to bring peace where there was no peace.

The Gospel of peace, the good news, the glorious message of a Redeemer, of a Savior, is the wondrous solution the enmity that exists between Holy God and sinful man.

Jesus Christ, the one and only Son of God, is the Ultimate Peacemaker. Our God has forged the way of peace, but peace based on truth and righteousness. The truth is we are born sinners,

deserving only the wrath of God, but God desires for His people His highest good -- shalom peace. How can that happen? The peace of God is not peace without a price or without a cost. The peace of God is not just ignoring what has caused the hostility and enmity. God brought sin out in the open and dealt with it by the blood of His Son's cross. God made peace with sinful, depraved man at immense cost to Himself. God's peace does not ignore sin, it pays the cost for it, a cost that only God in His Son Jesus Christ can pay to put away the cause of our enmity and war with God. And that is just what Christ has done. And that is where the Greek sense of the word for peace shines so brightly. The word for peace is the Greek word "eirene" which means to join together. It comes from a root that was used to speak of gluing things together. The idea being that one something is glued to another, they are one, never to be separated. Christ is our peace with God. It is He that joins repenting and believing sinners to God. (Romans 5:1-11, ESV)

The moment you put your faith in Christ, the war between you and God is permanently over. God has signed the peace treaty with the blood of his own Son and he will never go back on his word. Therefore, you never need worry again that God will reject you, or condemn you, or be hostile toward you. But this peace is more than merely the absence of enmity. It is an invitation from God to come into his presence and enjoy intimacy with him.

But again, this peace is costly. That is why John wrote: (1Jn 4:9-10, ESV) This peace never ignores sin, but deals with it. The demands of righteousness must be fully and completely satisfied if God is ever going to be at peace with us. God's holiness must be upheld. He cannot and will not simply overlook sin as if it didn't really matter. He will not act as if His glory is unimportant, as if righteousness is trivial. God's just wrath must be dealt with, and it is -- in Christ. So that God could bring us to Himself and forge peace with us, and He could pour the blessing and benefit of His love upon us, He had to deal with our sin and our guilt and our condemnation and His wrath that we deserved as a result of our sin. He had to remove His wrath from us; God had to take His wrath out of the way, and the only one who could bear His wrath away, the only one who could absorb His wrath, the only one who could remove the barrier of His fury against us for our sin, was His only, begotten, glorious, and sinless Son. It is that objective peace with God, forged by Christ, that allows us to experience the shalom peace of God. This is true peace with God...any other concept of peace is a "cheap peace." True peace with God is an expensive treasure. Do you see? Peace never occurs simply by ignoring what started the war in the first place. True reconciliation depends on dealing with the real problem. This important to understand, because

We are to be Peacemakers, not Peacekeepers. So what is a peacemaker? A peacemaker is someone who having experienced the great joy of reconciliation and peace with God through the cross now strives by their words and by their actions to call others to peace with God and peace with one another rooted in the gospel and in God's truth and righteousness. There is a massive difference between peacemaking and peacekeeping and we need to see that.

Peacekeepers seek to keep the status quo. Peacekeepers work hard at pretending that nothing is wrong. Peacekeepers avoid conflict at any cost. They gloss over very real sins and very real issues. Peacekeepers expend huge amounts of energy trying to hide the proverbial elephant in the room, trying to cover up issues. A peacekeeper always guides conversations away from the subjects that might cause strife. Peacekeepers are compromisers. They are experts at changing the subject, preventing arguments and misdirecting the conversation. The peace achieved by a peacekeeper is a pretend peace. The world loves peacekeepers because they just go around "loving" everybody with a superficial love that leaves people in the same condition in which he found them. For a peacekeeper, truth and righteousness are flexible and something to be manipulated and toyed with.

Peacemakers are something else entirely. I'm going to tell you, if you are ever going to be a peacemaker, someone who introduces people to the freedom, the righteousness, and joy that is in Jesus Christ and if you are going to be a person who seeks to forge true and lasting peace between man and women, it is going to require of you a holy hatred of sin and its effects, and desperate love for God and other people that is willing to do what it takes to bring people face to face with the truth and lead them to Christ and to submission to the truth of God in His word.

Peacemakers faithfully declare the problem and faithfully declare the solution. They call sin, sin. They called wickedness, wickedness. They rightly identify what is robbing souls of true peace – spiritually, relationally, whatever – and identify the solution which is calling people to Christ, calling people to the gospel, calling people to righteousness and holiness. Let me add that we must do it with grace and with mercy – we must be speaking the truth in love -- but we must do it uncompromisingly.

Now this requires some things to be true of a peacemaker. First, a peacemaker needs to be at peace with God. Now, through salvation, we have been called to peace with God, right? And we know that objective declaration of peace, accomplished by Christ's blood cannot be broken. That is not what I am talking about. I am talking about the experience of that peace. But because the experience of peace with God is always disrupted by sin, if we are to be

peacemakers, we need to be holy and pure in our walk with God. Sin breaks our fellowship with God and when our fellowship with God is out of whack, peace escapes us. It is quite difficult for a disobedient Christian to be an instrument of peace.

Second, peacemakers must minister out of a heart filled with grace, mercy and love, recognizing the calling that we have to be the ambassadors of reconciliation. Paul talks about it: (2 Corinthians 5:17–21, ESV) And the pursuit of peacemaking is not only the peace that Christ has forged with God, but also the peace with others that are at peace with God. Christ not only died to bring together God and man, but to bring together man and man. (Ephesians 2:14–16, ESV) So, where do we pursue this ministry of reconciliation? Let's talk about

The Pursuit of Peacemaking

We must seek to make peace in our homes. We need to strive by our words and by our actions to call others to peace with God and peace with one another rooted in the gospel and in God's truth and righteousness in our homes. Here's the truth, when sinners marry other sinners and give birth to sinners, there is going to be a whole lot of potential for sin in your home, isn't there? Sure there is. The very first place we should seek to apply the gospel and apply the Word of God is in our homes. If your home does not reflect the peace of God, start by applying the word of God to yourself – examine yourself in the light of these beatitudes – are you poor in spirit, so you hate your sin, are you submitted to God, as you pursuing Christ and His righteousness, are you practicing mercy with your family members, are you single of heart toward God with no divided motives? Evaluate your own heart and then exhort others to submission to Christ. Second, pray asking, "O God, make this home a gospel-centered, God loving, Christ exalting, Spirit-filled home. Make it a place of peace in which people are relating rightly to you and rightly to one another." Pray that your family will be saved. Seek to teach your family to walk in submission to the Lord and to His word. Teach them to obey God and model obedience to the Lord.

We must seek to make peace in the church. We need to strive by our words and by our actions to call others to peace with God and peace with one another rooted in the gospel and in God's truth and righteousness in the church. In Ephesians 4, Paul writes: (Ephesians 4:1–3, ESV) The very reason that we can be a united people is found in the fact that we are new men and women in Christ. We have been cleansed by His blood and redeemed and brought into a new relationship with Him and with one another. We have been united by the blood of Christ and

by faithfulness to the doctrines and teaching of the Word of God. It is that unity that we are called to protect.

What is the cause of conflict in the church? Sin and ignorance: errors in doctrine, interpersonal conflict, personal sin and rebellion to the teaching of the Scripture. We must pursue peace in the church. The way that we do it is much the same as the way that we do it in our homes. Start by applying the word of God to yourself. Evaluate your own heart and then exhort others to submission to Christ. Correct with graciousness and love, errors in doctrine and errors in living. Seek to mediate conflicts by pointing brothers and sisters to Christ, to the gospel, to God the peacemaker. Peace will rule in a church when the Prince of Peace is present and the flock of God is focused upon His presence.

We must seek to bring peace in the world. We need to strive by our words and by our actions to call others to peace with God and peace with one another rooted in the gospel and in God's truth and righteousness in the world. It is our calling to preach the gospel of peace to a world that is increasingly in turmoil – not just on a national or international scale – but as we see in our community, in our neighborhoods, in our schools and workplaces. We do not live in a world that is characterized by peace. We see the consequences of sin played out before our eyes everywhere. For that reason we must seek to proclaim the gospel. We must offer solutions to the turmoil and conflict around us that are rooted in principles of truth and righteousness that are recorded for us in the Word of God. This is at least part of what Christ was speaking of when he says later in this sermon: (Matthew 5:13–16, ESV)

The only hope for peace is the gospel of Jesus Christ. In any interpersonal conflict, the key is the party's willingness to submit to a commonly accepted authority. If people are willing to come together under the Lordship of Jesus Christ or under the principles of righteousness declared in the Scriptures, conflicts can be settled.

Now, this does not mean that there will be no risk involved in being a peacemaker. Peacemaking can be a struggle indeed, in every one of these arenas...in the home, the church, and the world. Sometimes people resent your efforts at peacemaking. You open yourself up to accusations of being unloving, judgmental, or intolerant. John the Baptist ...Jesus...most of the 12 disciples lost their lives. When believers bring the truth to bear on a world that loves

falsehood, there is going to be opposition. When believers set God's standards of righteousness before a world that loves wickedness, there is an inevitable potential for conflict. But that is the only way. We must love people enough to give them the truth.

It's tough to deal with the world, but it is sometimes just as difficult to deal with our families and the family of God. Peacemaking is hard work. The person who is not willing to disrupt and disturb in God's name cannot be a peacemaker. Those who in the name of love or kindness or compassion try to witness by appeasement and compromise of God's Word will find that their witness leads away from Christ, not to Him. God's peace comes only in God's way. A peacemaker, having experienced the great joy of reconciliation and peace with God through the cross, is concerned with striving by their words and by their actions to call others to peace with God and peace with one another rooted in the gospel and in God's truth and righteousness.

What is the promise of the peacemaker?

2) The Promise: ...they shall be called sons of God.

What Jesus is simply saying here is this: those who are peacemakers demonstrate that they have the character of their heavenly Father. When we seek to bring others to peace with God, when we engage in the work of proclaiming God's peace that upholds truth and righteousness, we are joining God in His work of peacemaking. Peacemaking is the hallmark of the sons and daughters of God. The great promise of peacemakers is that we receive the joy of being called the sons of God. And the sense behind these words is that it is God Himself who calls us His sons and daughters. God will own as His sons and daughters those who strive by their words and by their actions to call others to peace with God and peace with one another rooted in the gospel and in God's truth and righteousness. For in so doing they imitate the character of their Father and show themselves to be sons and daughters of God.

Being a peacemaker is the most difficult calling in the world sometimes, but it is absolutely Godlike. I think of all the excuses we give for failing to evangelize our friends, or confront our brothers and sisters in Christ so that they could repent and find the forgiveness of God and His peace, and I realize that they are nothing more than a covering for our own self interests that we place above the spiritual life and well being of other people whom we are called to love with the love of Christ

Beloved, because the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts, because we have been made at peace with God, not because we deserved it, or because of our own works, but because of His grace, we must desire all men and all women to share in that peace with God. We must sound forth the gospel of peace.

Do you know the peace of God in Christ?

Are you striving by your words and your living to call others to peace with God and peace with one another rooted in the gospel and in God's truth and righteousness?

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