

Living the Beatitudes (Part 8)

“Blessed are the Peacemakers...”

The Beatitudes – spiritual, personal, foundationally relevant for a Kingdom-focused life

The only standard of righteousness the people knew was that laid down by the current religious leaders, the scribes and Pharisees.

...

The qualities Jesus mentions in this list...obviously could not be products of Pharisaic righteousness. The Pharisees were concerned primarily with **external** qualities, but the qualities Jesus mentioned are **internal**. These come only when one is properly related to God through faith, when one places his complete trust in God.

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary,
John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck*

Blessed are...

The poor in spirit

Those who mourn

The gentle

Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness

The merciful

The pure in heart

The peacemakers

Those persecuted for the sake of righteousness

Jesus is interested in our **heart** – he is **NOT** interested in our **keeping up appearances!**

Unpacking questions for each beatitude:

1. How does this quality of the Kingdom defy the value system of this world?
2. How does this quality of the Kingdom become “salt” and “light” to the world (5:13-14)?
3. How is the reward associated with this quality realized in this life?

Matthew 5:9

“Blessed are the **peacemakers**, for they shall be called **sons of God.**”

On the surface, a **peacemaker** sounds much easier or more comfortable to “be” than the other beatitudes. Such a word conjures up mostly positive images – people signing peace accords, happy neighbors living in peace, or perhaps a harmonic, peaceful scene involving the natural beauty of God’s creation.

Although there is truth in this perspective, this beatitude goes much deeper. We are talking about being a peace**maker** here. **This is sounding like a lot of work – even sacrifice!**

Let’s start our deeper dive by considering what is the special blessing or reward for the peacemakers.

They shall be called sons (or children) of God!

Galatians 3:24 – 29

So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian. So in Christ Jesus you are all **children of God through faith**, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. **If you belong to Christ, you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.**

Personalize this in our 2020 context: “I, [your name here], will be called a child of God.”

Q: *What images or ideas come to mind?*

- Familial relationships
- Mindset / characteristics
- Follower...and following

Romans 8:14 – 17

For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are **sons of God**. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of **adoption as sons** by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that **we are children of God, and if children, heirs** also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we **suffer with Him** so that we may also be glorified with Him.

Vivid illustrations of peace....and peacemakers in scripture

Q: *What does peace mean in scripture? Who are the biblical peacemakers?*

Peacemaker (who)		Peace (what...and at what cost)
	→	
	→	
	→	

Genesis 45:4 – 5

Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Come close to me.” When they had done so, he said, “I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you.

Galatians 2:14

When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, “You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?”

Romans 5:1

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.

Jesus Christ is the ultimate peacemaker, reconciling us to God the Father!

Within the total biblical framework, the greatest peacemaker is Jesus Christ – the Prince of Peace. He makes peace between God and man by removing sin, the ground of alienation; he makes peace between man and man both by removing sin and by bringing men into a right relationship with God. Jesus gave the traditional Jewish greeting new depths of meaning when, after his death and resurrection, he greeted his disciples with the words, “Peace be with you.” Thus the good news of Jesus Christ is the greatest peacemaking message, and the Christian who shares his faith is, fundamentally, a harbinger of peace, a peacemaker.

Jesus’s Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World
D.A. Carson

Matthew 5:9 peace is εἰρήνη (*eirénē*) – broader context per *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*:

- A state of **national tranquility**; exemption from the rage and havoc of war
- Peace between individuals**, harmony, concord
- Security**, safety, prosperity, felicity
- The **Messiah's peace** (the way that leads to peace)
- The **tranquil state of a soul** assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that is
- The **blessed state** of devout and upright men **after death**

Next up: YOU (a real-life “maker” of peace!)

Pursue peace – Cultivate peace – Promote peace – Work for peace – Sacrifice for peace

<u>Eternal</u> context	<u>Earth-bound</u> context
Sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ	Demeanor, actions, reactions
This is not about “ our ” peace. We are talking about God’s peace . As a peacemaker in this context, we are the delivery vehicle for true peace that only God can bring.	This is about our interactions with others around us, here on earth – our social, family, work, and other relationships. And these might point to eternal possibilities!

James 3:16 – 18

For where you have **envy** and **selfish ambition**, there you find **disorder** and every evil practice. But the **wisdom that comes from heaven** is first of all **pure**; then **peace-loving**, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. **Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.**

Romans 12:16 – 18

Live in **harmony** with one another. Do not be proud – be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, **as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.**

Q: Today (and this year, and this decade), what might it look like – personally – to be a peacemaker?

Micah 6:8

And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

2 Corinthians 13:11

Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, **live in peace**. And **the God of love and peace** will be with you.

Shalom!