

"Blessed Are The Peacemakers"

Matthew 5:9

INTRODUCTION —

- I. One of mankind's oldest, deepest longings is the desire for peace—the opposite of conflict, discord, strife, anxiety and fear.
- II. But for centuries the search for peace has seemed at times, to some, largely in vain.
- III. This is true in spite of the fact that "The Prince of Peace" was born 2000 years ago in Bethlehem of Judah, and his birth was announced to the shepherds in the words, "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased" (Luke 2:14; Cf. Isaiah 9:6).

DISCUSSION —

- I. THE PRECIOUS NATURE AND MEANING OF PEACE (Psalm 133:1).
 - A. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace..." (Gal. 5:22).
 - B. Peace is not merely the absence of strife, a ceasefire, or an end of hostility, or just giving up the struggle (John 14:27).
 1. It is not just a fear to fight, but something produced by and which follows "the good fight of the faith" (1 Tim. 6:12).
 2. It is not what the world calls peace, apathy or death (John 14:2).
 3. It is not weakness, surrender to or compromise with evil: Withdrawal from reality by wishing for "the wings of a dove," etc., does not bring peace (Psalm 55:6).
 - C. "The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17).
 - D. The genuine peacemaker puts an end to strife by working actively for and bringing in its opposite: He substitutes love for hate and greed; right for wrong; truth for error, falsehood and deceit; friendship for hostility; tranquility for discord/turmoil; joy for sorrow: He overcomes evil with good!
 1. Christian peacemakers engage in righteous activity: They turn "swords into plowshares...spears into pruning-hooks" (Isaiah 2:4; Galatians 5:22).
 2. Its basis is set forth plainly: Peace follows purity and righteousness (James 3:17; Romans 14:17; 2 Timothy 2:22).
 3. The mind and spirit of the peacemaker is divinely programmed and plainly identified in the Bible (Romans 8:6; Gal. 5:19-22; Isaiah 26:3; 1 Timothy 6:9, 10; 1 Corinthians 1:10).
 - E. Because peace does not come by itself, or by accident, it must be sought, produced and made to exist, to be enjoyed & shared (1 Peter 3:10-12). Therefore,

2. It is a fundamental part of the life and harvest of one who has decided and determined to "love life and see good days" rather than enjoy (?) "the works of the flesh" or "the pleasures of sin for a season" (Hebrews 11:25).
 3. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace" because "the tree is known by its fruit" (Matthew 12:33).
- B. "...For they shall be called sons of God," by those who know Him.
1. They partake of, demonstrate and reflect the nature of their Father. "Sons of God" are those who imitate God, follow His Son, and are like Him.
 2. The Bible calls people "son of" a person because they are "of" him, and are like him, or they resemble him.
 3. Do you resemble Jesus, the Son of the Living God? Read Mark 6:35-38, and compare yourself!
- C. Peacemakers are most appropriately called "sons of God:" Their God is "the God of peace" (Romans 15:33; Philippians 4:9; 1 Corinthians 14:33); their Lord is "the Prince of peace" (Isaiah 9:6,7); and their message, "the gospel of peace," is "the word of reconciliation" to God (Romans 10:15; 2 Corinthians 5:19). They give their lives to God's work like Isaac, Jonathan and Jesus.
- D. The task of peacemakers is difficult and dangerous, but not hopeless or impossible. And those who engage in this work may be "called everything else but sons of God by their contemporary peacebreakers." But the benefits and blessings are always worth the cost and those principles are effective. The reward is enormous here and in eternity: Far Greater than any Nobel Peace Prize! The pay here may not seem great but the eternal retirement plan is unbeatable and out of this world! (Revelation 14:13; 22:14,17).

V. THERE IS ROOM IN GOD'S KINGDOM OF PEACE FOR EVERY CHILD OF GOD ON EARTH TO BE A PEACEMAKER.

- A. Will you be one? Peace alone does not make us sons of God (John 3:3,5). It takes more than a peace-loving desire and disposition to go to God's heaven.
- B. But if we are sons of God, we will be both peace-loving and peace-makers!
- C. Can God count on you to be both? If not, why not? If not now, when?

--Charles E. Crouch

II. THE NEED FOR PEACEMAKERS IS ENORMOUS, URGENT, VERY GREAT.

- A. Because the lack of peace on earth is so widespread (Isaiah 48:22).
1. Everyone talks of some aspect of this need (Jeremiah 6:14).
 2. Beginning with Adam/Eve, man has been at war with God.
 3. Beginning with Cain/Abel, man has been at war with his fellowman.
- B. The need for peacemakers is very great because true peacemakers are so scarce, while the number of peacebreakers is very large (Proverbs 6:16-19; Matthew 24:5; Galatians 5:19-21; 1 John 4:1).
- C. The need for peacemakers is very great because enmity, hate and strife are exceedingly costly and unwise.
1. This is true in the conflict between and among men, where so little has been and is being done for peace: Hate is the most costly part of every city, county, state and national budget.
 2. It is also seen in the widespread enmity between man and God his Maker, where even less has been and is being done for peace: Hate is enormously costly to family, church, nation, the world, and eternally costly to individual souls.
 3. Only God can measure the sorrow, pain, heartache, burdens, despair and death which pride and greed, discord and strife have inflicted upon this sin-cursed and enemy-filled world from the beginning until now.
- D. True peacemakers are desperately needed now!!

III. QUALIFICATIONS: HOW DOES ONE QUALIFY AND BECOME A PEACEMAKER?

- A. First step: A right relationship with God, in Christ (John 16:33): "Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1; "He is our peace" Ephesians 2:14; Philippians 2:5-8).
1. To establish peace with God through Christ, one must believe, turn from his sin, be baptized, resist/wage war against the forces of evil, including Satan (Galatians 3:26, 27; James 4:5-10). "Fight the good fight of the faith" (1 Timothy 6:11, 12).
 2. Peace is a by-product of righteousness: Right thinking, right-doing, and right speaking, "as a good soldier of Christ Jesus." (2 Timothy 2:1-5).
 3. This establishes peace with God, inner peace, within self. (Philippians 4:4-9).
- B. Second step: Peace in the kingdom of God is the purpose of the gospel and the aim of every New Testament book.
1. "Be at peace among yourselves" (1 Thessalonians 5:13).
"Walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called... giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:1-3).

2. We must strive to be at peace with our brothers and sisters in Christ (Matthew 5:23,24).
 3. How? By seeking and pursuing peace (1 Peter 3:11).
"Giving diligence ("Make every effort") to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Cf. 1 Corinthians 1:10).
- C. Third step: Righteous family relations and peace is an enormous and urgent need of our time.
1. The greatest single threat to the nation and western civilization is the breakdown of the family as God ordained it.
 2. The greatest poverty on earth is the poverty of faith in God's truth represented by the poverty of values and morality which is devastating the world, which should be a wake-up call for a true "Back To The Bible" movement.
- D. Fourth step: Maintain peace and good will with all men, "as far as it depends on you" (Hebrews 12:14; Romans 12:18).
1. "Love does no ill to his neighbor" (Romans 13:8-10).
 2. "Love thy neighbor as thyself" and "love your enemies" as Jesus did (Luke 6:35-38).
 3. This demands a good disposition constantly, which is an attitude of sustained, unbroken good will!!!
- E. Fifth step: "GO FOR IT!" "Things that make for peace" must be "follow(ed) after" (Romans 14:19; Hebrews 12:14).
1. The wisdom from above is "first pure" (James 3:17).
 2. Hence, the true peacemakers must think on things that are "true... honorable... just... pure... lovely... and of good report," and do the things Jesus teaches, and then "the God of peace shall be with you" (Philippians 4:8,9); and our lives will be filled with "mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy." Because "the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace" (James 3:17,18).
 3. We must sow the seed of God's kingdom to enjoy the fruit of God's kingdom (Luke 8:11; John 17:17-21).
 4. We must practice Christian love, longsuffering, forbearing tolerance, an essential Christian virtue which includes meekness and is forgiving: We must guard against giving needless offense to others (1 Corinthians 16:13,14). And we must "Avenge not" ourselves, but "Overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:19-21; Ephesians 4:1-3).

IV. WHAT IS THE REWARD/BLESSING JESUS PRONOUNCES UPON PEACEMAKERS?

- A. "Blessed are the peacemakers:" Happiness and joy is the portion of God's fellowworkers who share in His ministry of reconciliation!
1. Joy is the wonderful possession and feeling which follows children of peace—those who partake of the nature and work of the Father of mercies/ God of peace, as surely as reaping follows sowing (Isaiah 26:3).