

BLESSED ARE THE
PEACEMAKERS

Matthew 5:9

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

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Main Idea: If you are a follower of Jesus, you are a peacemaker.

1. How you see Jesus
2. How you see others
3. How you see yourself

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Matthew 5:9

1) How you see Jesus

We miss [the point] when we reduce the Beatitudes to maxims of positive thinking, new rules for getting by well. How many moralistic sermons have we heard urging people to be peacemakers, or meek, or feeders of the poor? The indicatives become moralistic imperatives, new rules which lead to conventional forms of ethical activism, anguish, or security, depending on the particular species of self-deception at work in the practitioner.
[continued...]

So peace "makes sense," for everyone knows that if we do not negotiate a treaty with the Russians, we may blow ourselves to bits. It makes sense to make up with someone in your church before offering your gift at the altar, for this will make for a more unified congregation. As Richard Lischer asks, "But why should [Jesus] be crucified for reinforcing what everyone already knows?" What if all this is not new and more stringent rules for us to observe but rather a picture of the way God is?

[continued...]

Of course, we are forever getting confused into thinking that scripture is mainly about what we are supposed to do rather than a picture of who God is. If Jesus had put forth behavior like turning the other cheek when someone strikes you as a useful tactic for bringing out the best in other people, then Jesus could be justly accused of ethical naïveté. But the basis for the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount is not what works but rather the way God is.

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Cheek-turning is not advocated as what works (it usually does not), but advocated because this is the way God is—God is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. This is not a stratagem for getting what we want but the only manner of life available, now that, in Jesus, we have seen what God wants. We seek reconciliation with the neighbor, not because we will feel so much better afterward, but because reconciliation is what God is doing in the world in the Christ.

Stanley Hauerwas & William Willimon, *Resident Alien*

God has made peace. He has humbled Himself in His Son to produce it. That is why the peacemakers are `children of God'. What they do is to repeat what God has done.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you [continued...]

...to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

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And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death —even death on a cross!

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:1-11

For in fact this was the crucial work of the Only Begotten: to bring together things divided and to reconcile the alienated.

Chrysostom

2) How you see others

The natural man is so strong in us. You often hear Christian people say, 'I must express my mind'. What if everybody were like that! No; you must not excuse yourself or talk in terms of what you are by nature. As Christians you are meant to be new men, made after the image and pattern of the Lord Jesus Christ, 'swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.'

Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right.

Acts 10:34-35

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

“Then the King will say to those on his right,
‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father;

[continued...]

take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’
“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you,

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or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire

[continued...]

prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

"They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'

[continued...]

“He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’

“Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

Matthew 25:31-46

So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.

2 Corinthians 5:16

My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism.

James 2:1

3) How you see yourself

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

Matthew 5:9

Let me sum it all up like this: the benediction pronounced on such people is that they 'shall be called the children of God'. Called means 'owned'. 'Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be "owned" as the children of God.' Who is going to own them? God is going to own them as His children. It means that the peacemaker is a child of God and that he is like his Father.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones

As every reader knows, the Gospels are overwhelmingly concerned with the conduct of human life, of life in the human commonwealth. In the Sermon on the Mount and in other places Jesus is asking his followers to see that the way to more abundant life is the way of love. We are to love one another, and this love is to be more comprehensive than our love for family and friends and tribe and nation.

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We are to love our neighbors though they may be strangers to us. We are to love our enemies. And this is to be a practical love; it is to be practiced, here and now. Love evidently is not just a feeling but is indistinguishable from the willingness to help, to be useful to one another. The way of love is indistinguishable, moreover, from the way of freedom. We don't need much imagination to imagine that to be free of hatred, of enmity, of the

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endless and hopeless effort to oppose violence with violence, would be to have life more abundantly. To be free of indifference would be to have life more abundantly.

Wendell Berry, *Blessed Are The Peacemakers*