

The Ministry of Reconciliation

Introduction: Blessed are the Peacemakers

We live in a world full of conflict from micro level disputes between two people to macro level wars between nations, such as the Russian – Ukrainian war. The world wasn't any better at Jesus' time when the Romans had invaded Israel and oppressed the Israelite people. The Israelite Zealots, who were freedom fighters, rose up to fight the Romans. Jesus had even called a zealot, Simon, to be one of his disciples. It's in this context that Jesus said:

Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

1) God sends us to be peacemakers

- God can work peace through us only if He has worked peace in us... Those who are in the best of circumstances but without God can never find peace, but those in the worst of circumstances but with God need never lack peace. John MacArthur
- John 20: 21 – 23 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."
 - Jesus was sent to be a peacemaker – primarily between God and man.
 - Without true peace with God we can't have true lasting peace between people.
- Jesus sends us to allow His peace to rest on those who deserve it
 - Matthew 10:11-13 Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house until you leave.¹² As you enter the home, give it your greeting.¹³ If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you.
 - As a peacemaker you can go with the intention of making peace – whether it be reconciliation with God or reconciliation with others – but the other person has to have the willingness for that to happen in order to receive the offered peace.
- Before you can be a peace maker you need to first be at peace yourself – peace with God and peace with others
 - It's not possible not to be at peace with God and try to get someone else to be at peace with God.
 - Romans 5:1-2 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.
 - Neither is it possible to be a peacemaker in a conflict between two people if you're in an unresolved conflict situation yourself
 - Matthew 5:23-24 If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.
- What are the qualities of a peacemaker that Jesus sends out?
 - Has peace with God through faith
 - Has peace with others – hasn't got unresolved conflict
 - Has a passion to bring peace into hostile situations
 - Is humble – dependent on God and not on self for ultimate resolutions
 - Is not biased. Has the ability to listen and understand both sides

2) Peace making reflects who God is

- Peacemakers are blessed, for they will be called children of God
 - As God is so His children are
- Jesus came to bring peace between God and man and also to break down the dividing wall of hostility and bring peace
 - Ephesians 2:14-16 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.
- So when we become peacemakers we do the work of our Father and Lord
 - We don't do it merely as an instruction, but because His Spirit dwells within us forming us into His character and giving us His desires, including the desire to be a peacemaker.
- When we do the work of a peacemaker, we reflect who God is
- But didn't Jesus say that he didn't come to bring peace, but the sword?
 - Matthew 10:34-36 Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn "a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law — a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.'
 - What Jesus was saying that there will be division within communities and families over Him
 - Those who don't believe will persecute and excommunicate those who believe. This has happened from the time of Jesus and still is happening
- That doesn't mean that we stop being peacemakers – we continue in the face of hostility
 - John 15:20-21 Remember what I told you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me.
 - This is another way we reflect who God is while being peacemakers

3) Peacemakers are mediators

- Jesus was a mediator between God and man
 - 1 Timothy 2:5-6 For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave himself as a ransom for all people.
- A mediator is someone who is neutral in a conflict situation and tries to bring the two sides together
 - They work towards a win – win situation
- The ministry of reconciliation entails being peacemakers who are mediators
- Are you:
 - A peacemaker
 - A divider – someone who either divides or someone who doesn't resolve their own conflicts
 - A fence sitter – indifferent to the conflicts of others around you
- Blessed are the peacemakers