

DAY 15

PEACEMAKER

Matthew 5:9

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."

When preaching the "Sermon on the Mount," Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. "We find very little peace in our world. We are far better at loving the idea of peace than at making peace within the realities of our lives." Hudson What is peace? Some people say peace means the absence of fighting. Or maybe avoiding a dispute. The peace Jesus is talking about here

is neither of those definitions. The peace that Jesus is talking about is the presence of God's goodness and righteousness. Jesus congratulates those who are bringing the presence of all God's best for them; his righteousness, his goodness, his rest, his wholeness.

Being a peacemaker requires us to do something. It can be costly. It requires us to go out of our way. Being a peacemaker applies to both our friends and our enemies. Let's read Matthew 5:23-24. Jesus says this, "Therefore, 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."

Jesus is talking about relationships with other Jesus Followers. Jesus says making peace with a brother is more important than going to church! Presenting an offering at the altar was going to church. Jesus says, "Don't bother coming to church if you're bothered with a friend. Before you come to church, you go and make things right with your friend." Notice Jesus says it's when your brother has something against YOU that you should act. That means we know that our friend is upset with us. God is calling us to make it right. It doesn't matter who is right or who is wrong or who started it, or it's not fair! It just says YOU, YOU go and make it right. There is a price to pay. It might be the pain of saying, "I am sorry. I blew it. I was wrong. Would you forgive me?" It might be the pain of forgiving someone when they ask for it. It's hard to do those things. Our pride gets in the way.

If we go further down the page, look at vv. 43-45. Jesus says, "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."

Here we are dealing with enemies. Jesus has in mind here those who hate us because of our connection with him. We are even to be peacemakers with them. We are to love them and pray for them. We are to do what God does. He gives to them every day. They never thank him. They never acknowledge him. But instead, he keeps on showering them with His blessings. Jesus says, "You do the same. Find a way to build bridges with people. Find ways to bless them." This is not always easy for us. We like to hold on to every wrong that has been done to us so we can throw it back into that person's face. It's hard to let go! But God calls us to be peacemakers! When we are peacemakers, God calls us children of God. Maybe because God himself is called "the God of peace." When we know the God of peace, we experience the peace of God. But when we know the God of peace, we also become peacemakers. If someone is called a child of God, that person is displaying God's character. When we go out of our way to bring people together with God and with others, we are doing the work of God, and we look a lot like him.

So as we focus on the word "peacemaker" today, ask God who you need to make peace with? Is it a fellow Follower of Jesus, a family member, a friend? Ask God how you can be a bridge-builder with people in your sphere of influence? How can you bring God's peace, grace, and blessing to them?

As we close, let's pray the prayer of Saint Francis, "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love, where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. O God, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

Daily Practice

Think of someone with whom you are not on good terms. Ask God, "Lord, how can I be a peacemaker in this relationship?" Seek God's guidance in the role of peacemaker.

The below reflections are written by congregants & staff of CPC. All reflections are following Trevor Hudson's book Pauses for Lent and are both heavily influenced and borrowed from his work. Any quotes without attribution should be credited to him.