

Blessed 7 - the Peacemaker

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God. Mt 5:9

The universal need for the peacemaker is obvious in nearly every area of human interaction. It begins in the home when mothers and fathers bring peace to angry brothers and sisters. As people grow from infancy to adults, there is seldom a time where such guidance is unnecessary. In school, the teacher, principal, and coach must discipline the unruly to keep peace in the classroom. In sports where conflicts arise, a referee or umpire keeps the peace. When we add lawyers and judges in the courts, arbitrators and counselors in disputes, and elders and preachers keeping unity in the church we begin to see the magnitude of what a peacemaker can do.

Any relationship can escalate into a conflict. Most of the time conflicts are resolved by the peacemaker in all of us. But sometimes a mediator who can build a bridge of compromise, contrition and forgiveness is essential. Conflicts spark arguments, arguments hurt feelings, and hurt feelings often lead to minor skirmishes. Sadly what begins small can intensify into open war.

Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? 2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. James 4:1-2

*Angry words are lightly spoken, Bitt'rest thoughts are rashly stirred
Brightest links of life are broken By a single angry word. Song # 112*

Enter the peacemaker! When “wars and fights” break out and people lash out because of “angry words lightly spoken” or “bitt'rest thoughts rashly stirred,” someone has to intervene and try to pick up the pieces before the “brightest links of life are broken.” Yet the best peacemaker doesn't speak the “angry words,” or upon hearing them absorbs the sting refuses to allow this “brightest link” to break.

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Col. 3:12-16

True peacemaking begins in the heart. When we choose “tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;” over conflict. When we are willing to “bear with one another, and forgive one another” “even as Christ forgave you,” we are laying the foundation to become a “blessed peacemaker.”

In our world of anger, selfishness and lust, many put the worst possible motives on what others do or say. They see malice in a simple mistake or hear scorn when none was intended, leading to emotions and activities that destroy peace and harmony. The Holy Spirit identifies these things as deeds of the flesh and warned of grave consequences if we practice them.

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Gal. 5:19-21

Every conflict offers two ways to become a peacemaker. If we are in the midst of these deeds of the flesh no matter how strongly provoked, we must control and remove them. If another is under their influence we absorb them and keep the conflict from escalating. Relationships take years to build and are too precious to lose. So we choose peace.

A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger. Pr. 15:1

The Peacemaker

People who crush their old man to create peace are worthy of praise and honor and are highly useful to the Master. Although like meekness some see this as a weakness it is actually a powerful/mighty force for good bringing great rewards here, and great honor when we stand before Him in judgment. The word Jesus chose has three distinct meanings. Each of them is important and should be cultivated individually.

eireno-poiios ... a peacemaker... pacific, loving peace... (Thayer p. 183; 1518)

eireno-poiios... a peace-maker, one who cultivates peace and concord. (Harpers Analytical p. 119)

eirenopoios “He who makes peace” in the Greek sense of the opposite of war... denotes the establishment of peace and concord between men... the reference is to those who disinterestedly come between two contending parties and try to make peace. These God calls His sons because they are like Him.” (Kittel Vol 2 p. 419; 1518)

In these three definitions we see three distinct realms to develop and cultivate to become a peacemaker.

1. Love peace and see peace as the highest and greatest good to be cultivated between every one.
2. A great love of peace leads to being willing to pay any price short of compromise to maintain it.
3. The peacemaker is always motivated in any conflict to try to create peace by intervention and mediation.

1. The Peacemaker Loves Peace

Peace is a fruit of the Spirit and a natural affection of those still possessing the image and likeness of God. At the same time it a desire and longing, a state of mind and heart, and an attribute.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. Gal. 5:22-24

Peace reigns between love and joy. It is a quality every bit as important as longsuffering or kindness. In the kingdom of God, is listed between joy and righteousness. We must learn to see it as an attribute.

for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Rom. 14:17

Those with peace (a quality of mind not state of action) despise strife and abhor conflict. While many in the world enjoy and have a lust for strife, God's children love peace. A love of conflict and violence permeates the heart of the ungodly. It is what motivated the Roman Circus to offer gladiators fighting to the death, and the Christian thrown to the lions. We see it today in the popularity of violent films and the strife and conflict in soap operas. Once begun, bloodlust is impossible to satisfy, so films become more and more violent and the scenes offer less and less to the imagination. This is the violence that filled the earth before the flood.

The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. Gen. 6:11-12

Before it turns violent, it is a perverse pleasure in conflict and strife. Either watching or creating it is evil.

A wrathful man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger allays contention. Pr. 15:18

Cast out the scoffer, and contention will leave; yes, strife and reproach will cease. Pr. 22:10

Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; and where there is no talebearer, strife ceases. 21 As charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife. 22 The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, and they go down into the inmost body. Pr. 26:20-22

For as the churning of milk produces butter, and wringing the nose produces blood, so the forcing of wrath produces strife. Pr. 30:33

A perverse man scatters abroad strife; And a whisperer separates chief friends. Pr. 16:28

He that covers a transgression seeks love; But he that harps on a matter separates chief friends. Pr. 17:9

A worthless person, a wicked man, Walks with a perverse mouth; 13 He winks with his eyes, He shuffles his feet, He points with his fingers; 14 Perversity is in his heart, He devises evil continually, He sows discord. Pr. 6:12-14

These six things the Lord hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: 17 A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, 18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, 19 A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren. Pr. 6:16-19

Anyone involved with these emotions and activities is not a peacemaker. If we are easily provoked or find perverse enjoyment in watching strife, then we do not love peace and are not spiritually minded. All true peacemakers abhor these things. They make us feel sick and are a disgusting abomination to us. There is no place in the heart of one who loves peace for strife or even to be entertained by strife. To have unity and oneness of heart and soul with others is a wonderful blessing based on this precious emotion and attribute. It is wisdom coming from above.

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. 18 Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. Jas. 3:17-18

If we love peace, pursue peace, seek peace, are devoted to peace, and we abhor the corruption of strife and in seeking for peace then we become "peaceable, gentle, and willing to yield."

2. The Peacemaker Pays any Price

With such peace within the heart, we have a precious possession to be guarded and protected. So when conflict arises we set aside any lust or desire created by mistreatment that leads to strife. No price is too high to keep peace and avoid conflict and strife.

If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Rom.12:18

It is always possible for us to leave peaceably, unless we are forced to compromise integrity or truth. If forced to renounce faith or deny God it is no longer possible. But sacrificing our own dignity or self-importance though distasteful or difficult, is still possible. A genuine peacemaker will pay that price.

But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. 40 If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. 41 "And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Mt. 5:39-41

Most American Christians find it very distasteful to be slapped, called names, taken advantage of, or

compelled to do something in order to keep peace. But if it feels better and more normal to fight back to keep “self-respect,” we are still of this world. It is not “self-respect,” but a desire for personal vengeance seeking control.

Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. 20 Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Rom. 12:17-21

This is the path of the true peacemaker. When confronted with evil, a peacemaker refuses to be overcome by it. When contempt, hatred, or abuse leads others to scoff, mock, and even verbally or physically abuse, we overcome it with good. God will take care of the abuse and mistreatment. He wants us to diffuse the conflict and keep it from growing if possible. If our efforts fail and they hate us anyway, the peacemaker still seeks peace.

My soul has dwelt too long with one who hates peace. 7 I am for peace; but when I speak, they are for war. Ps. 120:6-7

You have heard that it was said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. 44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. Mt. 5:43-45

The genuine peacemaker cannot be forced to create or increase strife. Strife is generated by the wicked, but not a son of God. The true peacemaker will love (*agape*) all enemies and do good to those who spitefully use and hate. In this respect Jesus did more than just preach, He lived it at His trial and crucifixion.

who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; 1 Peter 2:23-24

Our “Prince of peace” said: “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.” The blessed peacemaker follows Jesus in this, pursuing peace like a prize or goal, even accepting wrong to possess peace. In many cases, it is better to allow ourselves to be cheated than to generate strife.

let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. Rom. 14:19

Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated? 8 No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and you do these things to your brethren 1Cor. 6:7-8

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Eph. 4:1-3

3. The Peacemaker Intervenes and Mediates

This is the most difficult role of a peacemaker. Whenever the peacemaker sees conflict, we long to bring peace and harmony. When we see brethren who are feuding, families without peace, neighbors who are bitter toward each other, we long to resolve the conflict. When we hear of slander or strife in a jealous co-worker seeking to get ahead by slashing another, the peacemaker longs to intervene. But peacemaking in the quarrels of others is fraught with peril, and God offers important advice.

He who passes by and meddles in a quarrel not his own is like one who takes a dog by the ears. Pr. 26:17

When we see conflict, first and foremost our goal is to try and help resolve the conflict. But if the quarrel is not ours and they do not want help then our next duty is to do no harm. There is a fine line between the peacemaker and the “busybody” or “meddler in other men’s matters.” (1Tim 5:13; 1Pet. 4:15). If we hear of a quarrel that is not our own, we are rebuffed when trying to help bring peace, and there is no sin, we keep their secret and do not gossip.

Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; and where there is no talebearer, strife ceases. Pr. 26:20

Yet there are times when a conflict must be resolved even though it is not our quarrel. Jesus was very clear that no matter who begins the conflict, both parties are responsible to end it as quickly as possible. Whether sin is involved, or just bad feelings, as much as it is within us, we need to be at peace.

Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Mt. 5:23-24

Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. Mt. 18:15

Whether our brother or sister has something against us because of something we did or they did, we are commanded to go and be reconciled, either by showing them their fault, by admitting ours or both. It must never be our fault that an issue cannot be resolved.

For “He who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking

deceit. *11 Let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. 1 Pet. 3:10-11*

Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: Heb. 12:14

When feuding brethren cross the line into sin or it creates turmoil in the church, or their friendship with the world makes them an enemy of God, then we may be forced to “*meddle in a quarrel not his own.*”

Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. James 4:4

Every sinner is an enemy of God and every attempt we make to bring peace makes us a peacemaker. God wants all men to be reconciled to Him and has given that task to His peacemakers.

Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. 2 Cor. 5:18-21

God wants us to be actively involved in this work, the greatest work of the peacemaker. All of us “*were enemies* and are now “*reconciled to God*” through the efforts of a peacemaker (Rom 5:10-11). “*For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity*” “*thus making peace.*” Through his peacemakers, “*He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near*” (Eph. 2:14-18).

All evangelism and church discipline is working as a blessed peacemaker.

They Shall be Called Sons of God

The desire to bring peace to those who have cut themselves off from others due to the terrible emotions of anger, wrath and bitterness is a quality so much in the image of God that Jesus reveals the true peacemaker is one of the sons of God. God is a peacemaker. He seeks for peace between Himself and fallen man, and He seeks for peace between man and man. God is the God of peace and Jesus the prince of peace.

*Now the **God of peace** be with you all. Amen. Rom. 15:33*

*Now may the **God of peace** Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1Th. 5:23*

*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace.** Isa. 9:6*

Jesus is the Mediator between God and man and when we join Him in this role of mediation we become God's sons.

For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, 1 Tim. 2:5

There are many opportunities for Christians to enter into this work. Every lost soul is in need of it. Preaching to the lost is seeking to bring peace between a sinner and God. Those who see conflict between a husband and wife, a parent and child, or friends and brethren and seek to help them resolve their difficulties are also peacemakers.

Whenever a peacemaker sees a conflict, he seeks to resolve it. Whether he caused it or is bearing the brunt of it, he seeks for reconciliation and forgiveness.

If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Rom. 12:18

Questions:

- 1 Why will there always be a need for peacemakers?
- 2 What are some of the professions we have created to help in this role?
- 3 What are some of things that can lead the “brightest links in life” to be broken?
- 4 What are some of the deeds of the flesh that also can break these links?
- 5 What exactly is a peacemaker?
- 6 What member in our body is the most responsible for making or breaking peace?
- 7 Why does Jesus say a peacemaker will be called a child of God?
- 8 Is peace something that God and Jesus care about?
- 9 Should we willing to “turn the other cheek” or “go the second mile” to keep a peaceful relationship?
- 10 Can we “hate our enemy” if we are a peacemaker?
- 11 Are there many Scriptures that deal with our need to pursue and take responsibility for peace?
- 12 Does it matter who started it for the peacemaker?
- 13 What did Jesus say we should do if someone has sinned against us to restore peace?
- 14 What does Jesus tell us to do if someone has something against us?
- 15 If we would love life what do we need to seek?
- 16 What does the wisdom from above teach us about peace?
- 17 What does Jesus being a mediator tell us about peacemakers?