

“KINGDOM CONSTITUTION” – Lessons in the Sermon on the Mount 11.27.16

Matthew 5:9 “Blessed Are The Peacemakers” Craig Crawshaw

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

INTRODUCTION

Today we come to the seventh Beatitude, and we find ourselves in the “thick” of what it means to be a citizen of God’s kingdom – we are “peacemakers” who are called “sons of God.” And as such we are following in the great tradition of the ultimate “peacemaker” who is God Himself, who sent His Son Jesus to build a bridge between God and man. And as we help others to be reconciled with God we are bearing the family identity, following in “Dad’s” footsteps, and appropriately called “sons of God.” We tear down walls and we build bridges for the sake of peace with God and one another.

It is no surprise that the final Beatitude which follows this one, speaks of being persecuted for the sake of righteousness. For there is no surer way to experience persecution than by attempting to reconcile sinners to the Holy God. We have noted in previous messages that the fifth, sixth and this seventh Beatitude give a good working definition of righteousness: showing mercy, living out a pure heart and being a peacemaker. And being and doing these things will surely bring upon ourselves some form of persecution. (Beatitude 8)

OUR 5-FOLD OUTLINE

So our 5-fold outline today will be as follows, all with “M” words for those who appreciate alliteration.

1. The Misconceptions of Peacemaking
2. The Meaning of Peacemaking
3. The Model of Peacemaking (Jesus!)
4. The Method of Successful Peacemaking and
5. The Mantle of Peacemaking, which is being called a son of God

THE MISCONCEPTIONS (of peacemaking)

- ✓ Not ABSENCE of conflict (pacifism)
- ✓ Not AVOIDANCE of strife (head in the sand)
- ✓ Not APPEASEMENT (peace at any price)
- ✓ Not ACCOMODATION (compromising my principles)
- ✓ Not ACCEPTANCE (“whatever”)

THE MEANING

Here is a good working definition: **“A peacemaker is one who is actively seeking to reconcile people to God and to one another.”**

As with all the other Beatitudes, this is a supernatural undertaking. I had no desire, not to speak of ability, to bring people to God before I was a Christian. I may have wanted to stop fights, if I could, but I had no real motivation to reconcile people to one another who had differences. This character of peacemaking is the constitution of a citizen of God’s kingdom and not a natural inclination.

The word “peacemaker” is obviously a combination of two words, “peace” and “maker.” Peace is the Hebrew “Shalom.” “Shalom” is the ultimate well-being and inner spiritual contentment of an individual, brought upon by God’s blessing “Shalom” was both the greeting and parting wish of every Jew to one another – that God would bless with peace. The traditional blessing of Aaron the High Priest strongly conveys this sense.

Numbers 6:24-26 *The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you, the Lord lift up His countenance on you and give you peace.*

The second part of the word is “maker,” which simply means to actively make things happen. A “maker” is not a “hoper” or a “dreamer” or a “planner.” A maker is a doer.

So put both of these words together and you have the full meaning. A peacemaker is one who is actively seeking to bring God's "Shalom" between God and man and between one person and another. This is who you ARE, Christian. And you must let your constitution show!

Romans 14:19 *So then we pursue the things which make for **peace** and the building up of one another.*

Ephesians 4:3 *... being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of **peace**.*

1 Peter 3:11 *"He must turn away from evil and do good; He must seek **peace** and pursue it."*

THE MODEL

Our ultimate model of this and all the other Beatitudes is Jesus, the perfect God-man.

✓ He was prophesied to be and is our "**Prince of Peace**" (Isaiah 9:6)

✓ The angels announced His birth to the shepherds, saying: "**Glory to God in the highest, and on earth **peace** among men with whom He is pleased.**" (Luke 2:14)

✓ He made peace with God possible through the blood of the cross

Colossians 1:19-20 *For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made **peace** through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.*

✓ He made peace with one another possible through the breaking down of walls

Ephesians 2:14-15 *For He Himself is our **peace**, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing **peace**.*

✓ He acknowledged that making peace was not always possible

Luke 12:51 *Do you suppose that I came to grant **peace** on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division; for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.*

✓ He departed leaving His blessing of supernatural peace – the indwelling Holy Spirit

John 14:27 ***Peace** I leave with you; My **peace** I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.*

John 16:33 *These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have **peace**. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."*

THE METHOD

Our Bible does not give us an easy 1, 2, 3 step guide to peacemaking, but many principles are taught which can inform and motivate us in the right direction.

1. Go armed with God's purity (Beatitude #6) and peace within.

Continually spend time with God in confession, meditation, prayer and study that you may be filled with the fruit and boldness of the Spirit, yourself possessing the blessed peace of God.

Hebrews 12:14 *Pursue **peace** with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.*

Colossians 3:15 *Let the **peace** of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.*

2. Go with grace and salt

Colossians 4:5 *Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.*

Here we find a number of practical “peacemaking” helps

- √ Make wise use of every opportunity (“next time” may never come)
- √ Be gracious – never “pushy”
- √ Be salty - meaning don’t be afraid to inject spiritual challenge (zest and flavor)
- √ Be especially alert to let God guide your responses

3. Engage – don’t attack

Proverbs 15:1-2a *A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable ...*

James 3:18 *And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in **peace** by those who make peace.*

4. Emphasize reconciliation, not being “right”

Romans 12:18 *If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.*

Acts 7:26 *[Stephen telling of Moses] On the following day he appeared to them as they were fighting together, and he tried to reconcile them in **peace**, saying, ‘Men, you are brethren, why do you injure one another?’*

5. Offer the promise of God’s peace

Anxiety (worry) can be alleviated through sincere prayer of asking and thanking. Peace will come to guard both heart and mind from worry and fear. This is true both for reconciling with God and for reconciling with another. The following is one of the great promises of the Bible regarding peace:

Philippians 4:6-7 *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the **peace** of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

THE MANTLE

The ‘mantle’ of our peacemaking is that we will be called sons of God. Sometimes this will be in the form of a positive statement of being a loving representative of the Almighty. Sometimes this will be in a derogatory statement of scorn – “you Christian!”, you “God-follower!” Either way, know that the true peacemaker is a son of God – a believer, a Christian, a citizen of the Kingdom. This is a high and holy privilege.

“Son of God” has a slightly different connotation than “child of God.” Both refer to our credentials as God’s child, born of the Spirit by our response to Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross for us. But “son of God” is a statement of rank and privilege – heir of the Father’s riches and bearer of the Father’s glory. It is a statement appropriate for both men and women, for it speaks of privilege, not of son vs. daughter. All of God’s children are “sons of God” in that sense.

It is a mantle we should bear proudly, whether spoken in honor or in curse. It speaks of our heavenly position, now and forever.

And notice the progression in the promises of Beatitudes 5, 6 and 7. How amazing to be given mercy and forgiven of our sin. How much more amazing to be granted vision and understanding of God through nature, Scripture and circumstances. But the penultimate of amazement is the calling of being a privileged co-heir and sharer of God’s very being both now and forever.

2 Corinthians 13:11 *Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in **peace**; and the God of love and **peace** will be with you.*