

Having considered purity of heart last week we come this morning to v9—“blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God...”—if you recall we have learned that our Savior is here describing a true subject of His kingdom—they are [1] poor in spirit, that is, they acknowledge that in and of themselves they are and have nothing, thus [2] they mourn over sin, theirs and others, [3] they are meek, they possess a humble and gentle spirit before God and man, [4] they hunger and thirst after righteousness, having been emptied of any merit in themselves they now long for the salvation of God, [5] having experienced mercy, they now extend mercy, [6] they now have a clean, single, and sincere heart, which all results to [7] a peaceable spirit—a spirit that seeks to promote peace, both between God and man and between man and man...

But here I want to point out the connection of this beatitude with what immediately precedes and follows—it comes after purity of heart because only the pure in heart can be peaceable—and it is immediately followed by v10—“blessed are those who are persecuted...”—because, as we shall see, the promotion of peace does not discount the confrontation of sin—thus our Savior places “peacemaking” between “purity” and “persecution...”

Now it goes without saying, that this beatitude is in contrast to the Jewish mindset of our Savior’s day, who were anticipating a messiah to liberate them from Roman oppression through military and political force—in opposition to this our Savior describes His followers as those who promote peace...

Martyn Lloyd-Jones—“We can see that this statement must have come as a very great shock to the Jews. They had the idea that the coming kingdom of the Messiah was to be a military one, a national, materialistic one...Here our Lord reminded them again at the very beginning that their whole idea was a complete fallacy. They thought the Messiah when He came would set Himself up as a great King, and that He would deliver them from all their bondage and would thus establish the Jews above everybody else as the conquering and the master race...”

- I. What does it mean to be peaceable?
- II. What does it mean to be called sons of God?

- I. What does it mean to be peaceable?

- A. It is to promote peace between God and man

1. While I do not believe this to be the major meaning of our text, I do suggest that it does have a very important application...
2. The blessed man is one who attempts to promote peace between God and man through communicating the gospel of peace...
3. Isa.52:7—“how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, Your God reigns...”
4. Within the surrounding context we find that this prophecy has its historical fulfillment in the public ministry of the Messiah...
5. He would come as the Lord’s Servant, to proclaim the acceptable day of the Lord—He would bring glad tidings of good things...
6. In Rom.10:15 the apostle applies this verse to the church—“and how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things...”
7. The point being—Christ Himself continues to bring good news to the world through the ministry of His church...
8. But to be more specific, I suggest that fundamentally there are three reasons why the gospel is referred to as “the gospel of peace...”

9. Notice [1] because it obtains peace with God, Rom.5:1—“therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...”
10. By nature we are at odds with God, but through Christ God makes peace with us and we with Him—thus where there was enmity there is now peace...
11. How this is done is plainly stated in Col.1:19-20—“for it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him...having made peace through the blood of His cross...”
12. How God makes peace with sinners is through the cross of Christ—for the two things that necessitated this enmity were our sins and His wrath...
13. Thus where are these things dealt with but on the cross, for it was there that our sins were laid on Christ and God’s wrath satisfied in Him...
14. Notice [2] because it brings peace of conscience—by this is meant the “peace of God” that resides within our hearts...
15. Col.3:15—“and let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body...”—notice the phrase—“the peace of God...”
16. This is in distinction to “peace with God”—because we have peace with God through Christ we now have the peace of God within our hearts...
17. Notice [3] because it promotes peace among men—the gospel is a message of peace because it makes us peaceable or peace-loving...
18. This of course was graphically realized in the first century by the refusal to allow social or ethnic difference divide the church...
19. Eph.2:14-15—“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...so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace...”
20. Through Christ the wall that separated Jew and Gentile was abolished, bringing together into one body people from every nation, tribe, and tongue...

Obs.1—there is no true peace outside the gospel

1. Throughout the history of the church our text has been mishandled and misused by those who want peace without the gospel...
2. But it must forever be remembered that the Scriptures nowhere promote peace at all cost—but peace in and because of truth...
3. But to be specific, let me suggest three areas where this is true [1] domestically—by this I refer to those who want peace in homes where Christ has come to bring a sword...
4. Matt.10:34—“do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword...”
5. Verses 35-36—“for I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; 36 "and 'a man's enemies will be those of his *own* household...”
6. I recall a statement that one of my extended family members once made concerning the tension that my new found religion had brought...
7. She said—“I think that God would want unity in the family above all else...”—and I remember I told her that what God wants is truth...
8. I’m sure we all have family members that describe us as trouble-makers simply because we open our mouths to tell the truth...
9. Thus the “peacemaker” that our Savior calls blessed, while desirous to promote peace within the family, is unwilling to do at the cost of the gospel...
10. Notice [2] ecclesiastically—by this I refer to the church and a supposed cry for unity irrespective of what a person believes...
11. For example, such people may appeal to Eph.4:3—“endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace...”
12. But they fail to notice that Paul goes on to say that Christ has given pastor/teachers, v13—“for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith...”

13. Thus the Lord exhorted His people in Zech.8:19—“therefore love truth and peace...”—that is, a peace that is keeping with truth...
14. Some of you may remember back to the mid 90’s when certain prominent Protestant leaders sought to promote unity with various other Roman Catholic leaders...
15. They drafted a document commonly entitled ECT—Evangelicals and Catholics Together—it was signed by leaders on both sides...
16. It was considered by some to be the greatest display of peace and unity ever formulated since before the Reformation...
17. But by others, it was an attempt to have peace at the expense of truth—an elevation of unity over the importance of truth...
18. Thus any person who promotes peace at the cost of truth is not the peacemaker of our text—they are not the blessed of God...
19. Notice [3] socially—here I refer to a common misapplication of our text that reinterprets the mission of church to that of social peacemaking...
20. This is something common in our day—when supposed Christians are placing great emphasis upon social issues such as war and poverty...
21. They desire to bring in a global and social peace—a peace between nations—a peace that replaces war and political unrest...
22. But this is absolutely opposed to the nature of Christ’ kingdom—a kingdom that is spiritual and not of this world...

B. It is to promote peace between man and man

1. Here we come to the heart of what our Savior had in mind, specifically, the promotion of peace among men...
2. Lenski—“At peace with God and thus themselves filled with sweet peace, they live in peace, if possible, with all men and work to keep and to make peace wherever peace is threatened or lost...”
3. Thus here I want to suggest three general spheres wherein peace must be pursued—notice [1] within the home...
4. We might refer to this form of peace as domestic peace or harmony—happy is that home that is characterized by peace...
5. Prov.17:1—“better is a dry morsel with peace and quiet, than a house full of feasting with strife...”—that is—better to live in a shack filled with peace than a mansion without it...
6. Let me here speak directly to you children—do you want to know what troubles your parents greatly—sibling strife...
7. When children fight and squabble with one another like cats and dogs—this brings as much anguish to our hearts as anything else...
8. But such domestic strife is not limited to siblings but can also be experienced by parents—husbands and wives fighting and bickering...
9. Notice [2] within the church—how contrary would it be if Christ, who is the Prince of Peace, had a bride who was filled with discord and strife...
10. Rom.14:19—“therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another...”
11. Within the context of this verse the apostle has been dealing with what is commonly referred to liberty of conscience or Christian liberty...
12. The issue fundamentally concerned whether or not it was lawful for Christians to eat meat that had been sacrificed to idols...
13. The apostle makes plain that eating such meat was not in itself sinful—but his emphasis lies in being willing to forgo our rights for the benefit of our brethren...
14. Verse 19 serves as the practical outworking of his previous arguments—“therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace...”
15. That is—let us be willing to forgo our rights if it will serve the purpose of promoting and securing brotherly peace...

16. What is the source behind much of the controversy that exists within churches but pride, self-interest, and selfish-promotion...
17. Jas.4:1—“where do fights and conflicts come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members...”
18. Let me here clarify—the promotion of peace within the church must not be confused with the refusal to deal with sin within the church...
19. Let me illustrate, 1Thess.5:13—“be at peace among yourselves...v 14 and we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men...”
20. Notice [3] within the community—by this I refer to those we come in contact with within our community, including those that profess to be Christian and those who do not...
21. Not long ago there was a church in Ohio who had an ongoing controversy with its neighbors over the volume of their music...
22. The neighbors were quoted as saying—it wasn’t so much the volume but the base-drum that went on for hours ever Sunday morning...
23. The controversy was covered play-by-play in the Canton newspaper—the dispute was finally settled by the courts...
24. In contrast to this the Scriptures teach, Rom.12:18—“if it is possible, as much as depends upon you, live peaceably with all men...”
25. Let me suggest two things—[a] the implication is that there may be times when peace is not obtainable—“if it is possible, as much as depends upon you...”
26. Notice [b] peace is to be sought with great diligence—“if it is possible, as much as depends upon you...”—that is, do all that is within our ability...

Obs.1—peace among men must be obtained and maintained

1. When our Savior speaks of the peacemaker He necessarily refers to both obtaining and maintaining of peace between brethren...
2. For example, within this church I think I would be correct in saying that generally speaking we have known peace and unity...
3. But brethren we can not take such a present reality for granted—we are not immune from discord and dissension...
4. Thus I here want to very briefly suggest a few practical helps on the obtaining but especially the maintaining of brotherly peace...
5. Notice [1] put a high value on peace, Ps.34:14—“seek peace and pursue it...”—seek it as if it were a valuable treasure...
6. Heb.12:14—“pursue peace with all men, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord...”—at times this text is misquoted...
7. We quote it as—“pursue holiness, without which no one will see the Lord...”—but brethren, the text says—“pursue peace with all men, and holiness...”
8. Let me put this as plainly as possible—the pursuit of brotherly peace is as important as the pursuit of personal holiness...
9. Notice [2] see how God hates the opposer of peace—because God so prizes peace, He hates those who would oppose it...
10. Prov.6:16—“these six things the LORD hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him...v19b one who sows discord among brethren...”
11. Watson—“If blessed are the peacemakers, then cursed are the peace-breakers. If peacemakers are the children of God, then peace-breakers are the children of the devil...”
12. Notice [3] be willing, when appropriate, to yield—by this I mean, we must be quick to yield to others in the promotion of peace, Prov.20:3—“it is to a man's honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel...”
13. Let me first illustrate what I mean from a couple fictitious accounts, and then from a text of Scripture—think of two 9 year old sisters...
14. Let’s say they find an old purse that they were given on their seventh birthday—but the problem is, while they were each given a purse they only find one...

15. Thus they begin to bicker and fight—this is my purse—no, you lost your’s, this is mine—how do you know it’s yours—because I can tell...
16. Now if one of these girls wanted to become a peacemaker what must she do—she must be willing to yield to the desires of her sister and give her the purse...
17. Now I want you to think of a husband and wife—let’s say, one Lord’s Day morning they leave the house forgetting to turn on the oven...
18. When they return in the afternoon they fail to smell roast—thus in their carnal and hungered state they begin to blame one another...
19. I told you not to let me forget to turn on the stove—no, you never said one single thing about the stove to me all day...
20. Again if one of them wants to be a promoter of domestic peace, they must be willing to yield to the other one—ok honey, I’m sorry, I guess I didn’t hear this morning...
21. Jas.3:17—“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...”
22. Notice within this text we have a similar list as found in the beatitudes [or at least four]—pure, peaceable, gentle [meek], and full of mercy [merciful]...
23. But for our purposes I want you to notice the single Greek word translated “willing to yield” in the NKJV and “easy to be entreated” in the KJV...
24. The word literally means “yielding” and refers to “a willingness to give or be flexible”—the opposite would be an obstinate or stubborn spirit...
25. Notice [4] foster the grace of humility—if pride is one thing that hinders peace then humility is the oil that keeps it running...
26. Eph.4:1-3—“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...”
27. Notice [5] guard your private speech, Prov.25:23—“as a north wind brings rain, so a backbiting tongue brings angry looks...”
28. That is—as sure as the north wind brings rain, so will backbiting bring anger and discord—it is inevitable...
29. Because fewer things will destroy peace than backbiting, we must diligently guard our tongues from even the slightest form of gossip...
30. Prov.26:20—“for lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, contention quiets down...”

II. What does it mean to be called sons of God?

1. The phrase “called sons of God” refers to acknowledgment of our true identity—to call someone a son of God refers to the recognition that that person is a son of God...
2. Thus we read in Heb.2:11 concerning Christ as His spiritual seed—“He is not ashamed to call them brethren...”—that is to acknowledge them as brethren...
3. Thus to be “called sons of God” doesn’t refer to the actual act of making us sons, but to the declaration or acknowledgement of our sonship...
4. Let me put it another way—because God is a God of peace, those who promote peace, will be seen to be partakers of the divine nature...
5. In fact I could go further and suggest that we never look more like God than we are promoting or pursuing peace...
6. Pink—“To be made a child of God is to be renewed in His image and likeness; to be called so is to be esteemed and regarded as such...”
7. But to be specific I suggest to you that the peacemaker will be called a son of God in two ways—[1] they will be esteemed as sons of God now by good men...
8. Notice [2] they will be declared as sons of God publicly by all men—by this of course I refer to that final and public Day of Judgment...
9. There is a sense in which, for the most part, the peacemaker goes unnoticed in this world—but there is coming a day when he shall be seen for what he is...