

## BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS II

### Message 14

Scripture: Text Matthew 5:1-9

INTRO: Matthew 5:1-9 has been read for us this morning. I did not introduce our subject in this beatitude by defining peace, but rather by dealing with a major misunderstanding regarding the idea of 'peacemakers'. We said that peacemaking and peacekeeping are two very different things and I said I believe that difference is on the view each takes of the importance of truth. Peacekeeping, is a major problem of almost all people of good will no matter of what religion or in what country.

Let us begin this morning by way of introduction, by defining peace. I have defined peace as the absence of friction. Joseph Webb and John MacArthur say it is more than that. It is the presence of righteousness and holiness. The Hebrew word for 'peace' is *shalom*. The TWOT says, "*shalom* means 'absence of strife' in approximately fifty to sixty usages; e.g. 1 Kgs 4:25 [H 5:4] reflects the safety of the nation in the peaceful days of Solomon when the land and its neighbors had been subdued. 'Peace,' in this case, means much more than the absence of war. Rather, the root meaning of the verb *shalem* better expresses the true concept of *shalom*. Completeness, wholeness, harmony, fulfillment, are closer to the meaning. Implicit in *shalom* is the idea of unimpaired relationships with others and fulfillment in one's undertakings."

Now, at present I am not qualified in my studies to argue with those views. Maybe some day I will take the time to study this further. In the sense of peace we are talking about, it is peace in relationships. My view is that peace in relationships is the absence of friction in those relationships. Scripture exhorts that, as much as possible, we are to live at peace with all men. When sin happens and it is not dealt with, true peace is not possible. Those who smooth things over without dealing with the issues are only playing games. It is not reality.

Let me mention one other imperative before we get into peacemaking. No man can be a true peacemaker in the Biblical sense, that has not first been to beatitude one; blessed are the poor in spirit. The true peacemaker must first deal with his own

wicked heart; he must be convicted of his sin, mourn his sin and deal with it and become meek. And when that happens, he will; he will hunger and thirst for righteousness. That is the automatic result of the preceding beatitudes. And then he will become merciful which will lead to purity of heart. And unless a person has to some degree come to that, he cannot be a true peacemaker. Peacekeeping you can enter before you are saved, but it is a vain practice as far as lasting peace is concerned.

What happens when one truly becomes poor in spirit and one mourns one's sin and one deals with one's sin, is that one, for the very first time, experiences peace with God! You see, we are all at enmity with God before we are saved. God has no unsaved friends. Every unsaved person is an enemy to God. But, while we were enemies, God gave His Son in order to reconcile us.

When we are saved, we are restored to God and we have peace with God. But we may be at peace with God, and not have the peace of God within. That is usually due to a problem within ourselves, such as sin or worry and so on. Consider that like this. Any truly saved person will find themselves, sooner or later, in the wilderness between Egypt and Canaan. It is described by the Apostle Paul like this in Romans 7:18-24: "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" You see, this person has peace with God but he does not have the peace of God dwelling within.

When I discover how bad I am inside, this happens after I become a Christian, then, if I obey God, I will become meek and then I will hunger and thirst for righteousness. Then I will become merciful and pure in heart, and that will bring, not peace with

God, I already have that; but the peace of God within. It is the person who gets here that is the potential peacemaker.

## 2. As compared with Biblical doctrine

Well, we have looked at the peacemaker as contrasted with the peacekeeper. Now we want to see him as compared with Biblical doctrine. In other words, what does the Bible have to say about the task of the peacemaker? I have said before that the reason why there is a need for peacemakers is all caught up in this one little word: Sin. Is it not most obvious then, that the peacemaker will have to deal with sin? And I said before, I know of no more dangerous, no more demanding, no greater potential for disaster than that of dealing with sin as it relates to others. And I might say, this is probably the weakest area for both the church and Christian families.

Now, let me give you the main points of reference in peacemaking. First, there is the peacemaker, of course. But you do not need a peacemaker, if nobody is at odds. So second and third, you have two or more parties at odds. So you have the peacemaker, and at least two parties at odds. The task of the peacemaker is to bring about reconciliation between the parties at odds.

Now, of the two parties at odds, you may have two situations. The two parties at odds may both be in the wrong, or one party may be in the right and the other in the wrong. Vine says that when both parties are in the wrong, the word *dialasso* is used for reconciliation (Matt. 5:24). When only one party is in the wrong, the word *kattalasso* is used.

### a. The task of the peacemaker in the world

So we want to look at the task of the peacemaker. His task is to reconcile the parties that are at odds, whether only one party is in the wrong or both. Now the realm in which the peacemaker is to operate is twofold. He is to make peace between

the lost and God. That is the great commission given by Jesus Christ just before He ascended to heaven. And the second are for the peacemaker is in the church.

Now, right at the outset, let us learn a lesson from the life of Christ. How many lost people of the world was He able to reconcile to God? Very few! How many lost religious people was He able to make peace between Himself and them? Very few! And what were the results of His peacemaking efforts? He was crucified! Don't despair. Though He was crucified, His life had a greater impact on the world than any other has ever had, though He was crucified!

So let me give you the task of the peacemaker as relates to the lost first. You will know the Lord's command to the Church to go into all the world and make disciples. But go with me to a most crucial passage on this in 2 Corinthians 5 (read 14-21). Now notice the word 'reconciliation' in verse 18. It is the word 'katalasso'. If Vine is right, one party is in the right and the other in the wrong, and we know it is so. God was in the right and we in the wrong. He did not need to be reconciled to us; we needed reconciliation to Him. That is what happens to the poor in spirit and those who mourn their sinfulness.

But, verse 18 says He has given to us the ministry of reconciliation. It is the same word, and we are talking here about reconciling the lost to God. God is in the right, and the lost are in the wrong.

The word 'reconciliation' has to do with change, or exchange. It is used of money changers. So let us say you are exchanging Canadian money for US money. The two monies are at odds. Since the Canadian dollar is worth less than the US dollar, it is at odds with it. So, the money exchanger will make peace between the two by giving you less

US money for your Canadian money. But now, when you are in the US, you can pay for anything you buy with the money the exchanger gave you for exactly the same amount as is on the tag of whatever you purchase.

With man's relationship with God, man must be brought to God's standard in order to make peace. If I have cheated on my tax, in order to become at peace with God, I will have to deal with that wrong by the amount I have cheated the government. If I have lied to someone, I am in the wrong and the other person is in the right, and I will have to repent and tell that person the truth.

Now, when a money changer gives you the right amount of US dollars for the higher amount of Canadian dollars, he has reconciled them and you can buy US goods for the exact price shown on the tag. When I have repented of my sins and confessed them to God, I become reconciled to God.

So, how does the peacemaker make peace between God and the Lost? First, he has to give the lost the message that they are lost. They must understand how horrible sin is and that they are guilty of sin. And then they must be brought to repentance and confession of sin. Here, there is a very weak point in the church today. We have told people they have to believe in Christ and many times we have left repentance out. This is most tragic! And so we have many people who are baptized church members who are lost! The very issue why we need to be saved, we have minimized, and that is the matter of sin. We have been peacekeepers in evangelism. Friendship evangelism may have its place, but I fear it has made many so called converts two-fold more the child of hell than before. If they have just been friends, and have not brought them to repentance, they are still lost. Only now they think they are saved.

b. The task of the peacemaker in the church

So, the peacemaker's task is to bring reconciliation between the lost and God. Second: the peacemaker must deal with sin between himself and others, and sins committed in the church. It is my view that the Church, both in missions and home evangelism has failed miserably many times in not truly getting the lost, lost; and not truly leading them to repentance. But the greatest danger to the Church as a whole, has been to not deal with sin in the church as it should have been.

Some 15 years ago I did seven messages on dealing with sin in the church. If you would wish more detailed teaching on this, as of last week we have made those messages available on sermonaudio. The written notes are available as well. You should be able to find them under the title of 'Dealing With Sin In the Church.' Let me recommend one other sermon I called, "The Holy Kiss And Its Exception." What I want to do now is to reduce those seven messages on dealing with sin in the church into half a message.

In those messages I gave first of all, what I believe are the necessary prerequisites to dealing with sin. If you will deal with sin in the church, that is be a peacemaker, you must recognize the Scriptures as your authority. It is not man, nor man's view, but Scripture that is your authority. We will be looking at some of those Scriptures shortly. Then I warned of extremes. One of our young men in the former church went to extreme and I was told he only did what he was taught. But he was not taught to do what he did. Then I warned of extremes, both of too much or not enough discipline. Then I greatly encouraged to understand the purpose of dealing with sin in the church. It must always be redemptive in nature. It must never be condemn.

Further, I challenged to deal with sin in love, and deal with it, understanding the need for this kind of judgment in the church. The Church must deal with sin within, or die. And if you will insist on the fact that the church is to deal with sin, and if you will deal with sin, be prepared to be labeled. You will receive all kinds of labels. And many of these may make you wonder if you are doing the right thing. Go to the Word, and let it be your guide.

So, let us first look at dealing with sin in the interpersonal realm. Let us go to our first passage to Matthew 18 (read 15-20). What is the problem? A brother or sister has sinned against another. What is the procedure? Go talk to the person who has wronged you first. I have said I believe this is one of the most disobeyed commands in the Bible. Very, very few do this at all. Most talk to others, not the person involved. In 20 years of ministry, I have had only one case brought to me. And when we dug into it, we found two guilty parties, not one.

What is the procedure? There are three steps and the last is excommunication. Let him be to you like a heathen and a publican. This is usually misinterpreted as meaning you now go out of your way to be friendly to this person in order to win them back. That is absolutely wrong. It is shunning that is taught here. I have not time to make defense for all of this. If this is the first time you have heard this teaching, you will likely rebel at what I am saying. Study it, is all I have to say.

[[[[[Now let me make a note about verse 18 (read). I spoke with a certain bishop one time, with a number of other pastors present. The bishop was from the Old Colony denomination. We were dealing with a certain sin that I had brought to his attention within one of their churches. We had

talked of keeping this matter away from the public because of the nature of the case. And in the course of our conversation he said, "In a sense, we (pastors) have more power than the government. We can lock a person out of heaven."

When no one said anything, I felt I could not let it go. And so, dealing with this verse in Matthew 18 I said, "As I see it, there is not a man on earth who has the power to lock anyone out of heaven." He was a bishop. And I proceeded to explain this passage and there are a few others. You see, there are some pastors who do not want to excommunicate, because they think that doing so locks that person out of heaven. This is a gross misinterpretation.

Now note what it says, "Whatever you bind on earth, will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth, will be loosed in heaven." I recently taught on this in a grammar class for our pastoral students. Without much explaining, let me simply give you the sense of the original tenses here: "Whatever you bind on earth, will have been bound in heaven already..." and so on. You see, the context is that of excommunication. When someone lives in sin, when the church excommunicates, they are only doing on earth what God has done in heaven already. When we fail to excommunicate, we fail to agree with heaven. When we excommunicate on legitimate ground, we are only agreeing with heaven. If we do not excommunicate, we let the person think he is OK, when in fact, heaven has already excommunicated.]]]]]]]]]]

Well, that, just briefly, is dealing with sin in the interpersonal realm. Consider now the instructional realm. That is, in the area of teaching biblical doctrine. Go to Titus 3 (read verse 10). Now go to 1 Timothy 1 (read verses 18-20). The problem is wrong teaching. The prescription is two give two warnings, and then to

excommunicate, to remove them. The peacemaker must safeguard biblical doctrine in the church.

So we have briefly considered peacemaking in the interpersonal and instructional realms. Now we want to look at it in the individual realm. We are looking at sins of individual Christians, not as relating to oneself, but as relating to the church body. We go to 1 Corinthians 5, where we have a very serious case (read). That is peacemaking!

Now the problem is stated in verses 1. A man, as it seems, had married his step mother. And not only had the church tolerated that, they had rather boasted in their great freedoms according to verse 2. But look at what they were to do (read 3-4). Who is to do this? The members. What are they to do? Hand the person over to the devil. How? In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ! When? As soon as they can gather together! Why are they to do this? That the flesh might be destroyed, the very vehicle of the sin! That the spirit might be saved when Christ returns, and that the church might be relieved of this leaven or sin! Here are the peacemakers! They must purge out leaven! I ask you, where do you know a church that obeys this? And why don't we do it? Peacekeepers!

Let me take you to a less severe case of individual matters. Our passage is 2 Thessalonians 3 (read 6-15). I won't take much time to explain. The problem is lazy Christians. It has often been interpreted that the Thessalonians did not work because they were expecting Christ at any moment and they thought working would not pay off. I do not subscribe to that interpretation. They were lazy. Paul addressed that when he was there the first time. He addressed it in his first epistle to them and he addressed it again in this epistle and he said to the rest, if anyone does not heed our advice yet, avoid him that he might be

ashamed. So the procedure was several warnings and the prescription for disobedience was shunning.

Let me take you to another passage related to this. We go to Romans 16 (read 17). In any church there may be sincere but weak Christians who make issues of things that ought not to be made issues of. Then, in any church there may be false brethren. 2 Corinthians 11:26 and Galatians 2:4 speak of such false brethren. They look like Christians. They talk like Christians. But they are 'false' brethren. Today's evangelical churches are loaded with such so called brethren.

And such people are a potential for disaster. We know this from our own recent experience. And these kinds of people cause divisions. At a church membership service the other day I challenged the church as to what to do if they came into disagreement with the church. There are right ways of dealing with such things. I pointed out that what is listed in the major sin list of Scripture is a word sometimes translated 'strife'. It speaks of party making. It is where a disgruntled Christian gathers others to his camp and then causes trouble to the whole. In this word 'divisions' of our passage we have the same idea. We saw this in operation in its most evil form just recently.

Every church is in danger of having weak or false brethren among them. And they are susceptible to this kind of danger, but they also are prone to create offenses which are contrary to sound doctrine. This word, 'offenses' is from the original word, 'skandalizo'. We get our word 'scandal' from this word. It is the idea of a stumbling block or an offense. This subject, like numerous others I am mentioning only briefly, needs a whole message.

Now, what is one to do in such cases? Well look at what it says. First, Christians are to 'note'

them. The KJV says Christians are to 'mark' them. It means to look at them so as to observe them carefully. And when you have ascertained what they are about, and have noted them, then it says, 'avoid them.' I have, in the past, not made enough of this verse. It is part of inspired Scripture.

And let me say here, if you obey the Scriptures of which we are speaking here, you will be viewed as intolerant, self-righteous; judgmental; a legalist; a troublemaker; a divider of families and a whole list of other possibilities.

I taught the doctrine of sin in a Bible school one year and I assigned the students the passages we have looked at. I said, "You must study only these passages. You may not use commentaries. You must state the problem, outline the procedure as given in the text and prescribe what to do in each case." So the next morning in class I asked them what they had found and it was not a difficult assignment and they gave the answers. And then I said, "What would happen if you went to your home church and you recommended you obey these Scriptures." And without hesitation, as it immediately dawned on one of the students what would happen; with wide eyes he said in total surprise to himself, "They'd kick you out."

Well, let me tell you this. We have not looked at anything yet that the church today obeys except for a few odd exceptional churches. Shunning? To modern evangelicalism, that sounds cultish. On the other hand, unconditional love, that is more like it. Joseph Webb rightly said when he spoke of the Christian's need for spiritual armor, "I don't know why many Christians today need armor. All they're doing is just going around loving the daylights out of everybody and absolutely refusing to declare sin is sin. They just want everybody to love them and be at peace with them. Anyone who doesn't do that is a trouble maker." Someone else

called Evangelicals, 'evangellyfish.' Those are peacekeepers!

Let me take you to one other matter in Galatians 6 (read verses 1). I mention this, because this passage is sometimes used to show how we should deal with situations where excommunication is to be exercised. But I believe that is not correct at all. Now there are two interpretations of this verse. One, someone has been caught in a sin red handed; and two, a fellow Christian has fallen into something that is wrong, but he is not aware of it. Maybe a fellow Christian got into some gambling that appeared quite innocent, or some money making scheme or maybe a lady, unawares is wearing clothing that she should not be wearing, or maybe some man has made too much of hunting or fishing. It is this kind of thing this passage has in view, as I see it. It is this view I believe is the case in this passage.

So the problem is not one where outright sin needs to be dealt with. And the procedure given is not excommunication. It is given like this: "You who are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness lest you also be tempted." This passage, in my view does not deal with an obvious sin.

CONCL: And so, in conclusion, Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers! But I ask, where are they? But to summarize, let me ask, who is a peacemaker? Well, only one who has made peace between himself and God already. And he has grown to become pure in heart. And what does a peacemaker do? Jesus gave the Church the task of world evangelism. The peacemaker is to seek to bring reconciliation between the sinner, who is in the wrong; and God, who is in the right. This is a major task and the only hope for final peace.

But, within the church the peacemaker is to deal with sin when he is sinned against. He is to rebuke those who sin against him, and if the wrongdoer will not deal with that, the church is to excommunicate him. I have never seen or heard of this practiced. We have excommunicated, but never for this reason. Why? Because those sinned against fail to obey this Scripture.

And then, if there is doctrinal deviation in the church, the peacemaker is to do his part to see to it that that is dealt with. If there is sin in the Church, the church is to deal with that. If individual believers stray in things that are not major sins, the peacemaker is to mark and avoid them.

Blessed are the peacemakers, not blessed are the peacekeepers! And I said in the previous message that unless I am mistaken on what is meant by peacemaking, this is the most difficult, the most dangerous task with the greatest potential for disaster that exists. But it is the only hope of the world and of the Church. May I ask you, will you do your part? There are times when we may not be responsible to see to it that something is done, but it will be our part to raise our voice, and to stand with doing right when it is done.

Now let me give you fair warning. If you will obey those Scriptures we covered this morning, you will meet the devil face to face. Mark my words, I lie not. So let me warn you what it may be like for you to become a peacemaker. When I took a stand with some of my family regarding very sinful practices some said, "Oh, that's easy for you to do." They could not possibly know what it is like to do something like that because they have never done it. It is not easy to do. One of my siblings said, "I know the stands you take in the family are wrong because I have seen the pain they cause in the family." Does that prove it is wrong? That is a peacemaker talking, isn't it? The stands Jesus took caused such pain, and that to very religious people, that they delivered Him to be crucified! They literally hated Him because of the pain He had caused them!

What does it feel like to be a peacemaker? How do you like it when once you were part of your family, or your uncles and aunts, and now many of them prefer to avoid you and they are talking negatively about you? How does that feel? How does it feel when you walk down town and people look at you like you come from mars. How do you feel when you are made to feel like scum? May I tell you something? Most Christians do not know what that feels like. They don't take enough of a stand to bring anything like that on themselves. They are peacekeepers. Most preachers don't preach sin and righteousness enough to be much opposition to the devil. They are peacekeepers. They couldn't get persecuted if they wanted to.

What does a peacemaker feel like? Weird. He is different from the world and different from most professing Christians. He is weird. He feels as attractive as an hippopotamus. He feels as appealing as a skunk. He feels like he does not fit anywhere but in that small group of avoided and shunned, troublemaking, legalists. What does it feel like to be viewed as the trouble of the community, the legalist, the scum? Need I ask?

But, there is a very huge honor in all of that. When you are there, for the sake of truth, let me stress that; you know what Jesus felt like. You can identify with Him. He came to His own, and His own received Him not. He had poured out His heart and life for His own people, and they cried out, "Crucify Him! Give us Barabas. Give us a murderer. But crucify this man!" It is the peacemaker who has the honor of sharing in Christ's death like that. Such Christians are a treasure to God, but as Paul said of himself, "We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now." Welcome, blessed pilgrim. Welcome blessed peacemaker. Now you can 'honestly' sing, "This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through."

And someone will say, "But, pastor Phil, it shouldn't be like that. At least Christians should get along. There should not be this kind of division between them such as peacemakers and peacekeepers." You are right! Totally right! We should all be peacemakers! John MacArthur has said, "Peacemaking is a hallmark of God's children. A person who is not a peacemaker either is not a Christian or is a disobedient Christian." If we were all peacemakers, then we would be obeying God and then we might possibly have unity, as well. I mean true unity. As long as we have unity by peacekeeping, we will continue to be playing church and playing right into the devil's hands; and we will continue to have this division, because there will always be a remnant of truth seekers. And as long as we have unity by peacekeeping, the church will continue its downward spiral. Mark it. It will not fail to be true.