

BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS III

Message 15

Scripture: Luke 20:27-38

Song: I'm a child of the king.

INTRO: We are in beatitude seven, and we have been looking at the peacemaker. Unlike Samuel Colt's new pistol called the Peacemaker because it could be loaded with a number of metal cased shells that could quickly be fired to get rid of enemies, God's peace makers are the poor in spirit; those who grow to be pure in heart. Much of the Arab world today is hoping to make peace with Israel, by annihilating them. Annihilating one's enemies is one way to make peace, but is a selfish peace.

Consider how differently God works. God's plan was ultimately revealed in His only begotten Son. Instead of having His Son kill His enemies, He allowed His enemies to kill Him! God said that if His kingdom was of this world, then His servants would fight (John 18:36). Who would have thought of setting up a kingdom by dying? Who would have thought of setting up a kingdom by sending out your followers as sheep to the slaughter? Well, the devil couldn't believe his ears either! He thought that if he could only kill his enemy, the Christ; he would have won the battle. But he found out to his great surprise and horror that by killing the Christ, he had set up Christ's kingdom and caused his own defeat. First Corinthians 2:8 says that if the princes of this world had known the Lord's plan, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Jesus told His followers, "I send you out as lambs among wolves." May I ask you how lambs survive among wolves? How do peacemakers survive? Here is the answer. They trust in their shepherd! And what do these lambs have by which they think to win this great battle of peacemaking? First, it is the importance they place on truth. And second, it is their view of sin, and the importance of bringing sinners to repentance and faith in Christ. I want to propose to you, not only that the major difference between the peacemaker and the peacekeeper is their view of truth; but that truth is the crucial factor for peacemakers. And so, armed with truth and standing in opposition to sin, the lambs make peace between the lost and God. And armed with truth, this army of lambs goes forward. Only by truth can they overcome sin in the world and in the Church. It is not by peacekeeping, but by peacemaking through obedience to the truth of the Word of God, that the peacemaker overcomes.

Once to every man and nation
Comes the moment to decide,

In the strife of truth with falsehood,
For the good or evil side;
Some great cause, some great decision,
Off'ring each the bloom or blight,
And the choice goes by forever
'Twixt that darkness and that light.

Then to side with truth is noble,
When we share her wretched crust,
Ere her cause bring fame and profit,
And 'tis prosp'rous to be just;
Then it is the brave man chooses
While the coward stands aside,
Till the multitude make virtue
Of the faith they had denied.

Though the cause of evil prosper,
Yet the truth alone is strong;
Though her portion be the scaffold,
And upon the throne be wrong,
Yet that scaffold sways the future,
And, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow,
Keeping watch above His own.

When it comes to peacemaking, one of the guiding principles will be truth. One of the Proverbs says, "Buy the truth and sell it not." The truth is very costly. It is bought, in a sense. And when we have it, we may well be tempted to sell it, especially when it comes to many of these difficult situations where we need to take a stand. You see, we are to put on the whole armor of God in order that we might be able to stand. And when we have done all to stand, we are to stand. And the first piece of armor for spiritual warfare is to be girded with truth.

I was given this quote by A.W. Tozer. He said, "There is a great decision that every denomination has to make sometime in the development of its history. Every church also has to make it either at its beginning or a little later -- usually a little later. Eventually every board is faced with the decision and has to keep making it, not by one great decision made once for all, but by a series of little decisions adding up to one great big one. Every pastor has to face it and keep renewing his decision on his knees before God. Finally, every church member, every evangelist, every Christian has to make this decision. It is a matter of judgment upon that denomination, that church, that board, that pastor, that leader and upon their descendants and spiritual children. The question is this: Shall we modify the truth in doctrine or practice to gain more

adherents? Or shall we preserve the truth in doctrine and practice and take the consequences?"

So, here is the question: The peacemaker's task is there because of sin. We are taught in Scripture how to deal with sin. Scripture is our truth, and I ask, will we obey that truth? A.W. Tozer also said, "Christians habitually weep and pray over beautiful truth, only to draw back from that same truth when it comes to the difficult job of putting it into practice! Actually, the average church simply does not dare to check its practices against biblical precepts.

It **tolerates** things that are diametrically opposed to the will of God, and if the matter is pointed out to its leaders, they will defend its unscriptural practices with a casuistry equal to the verbal dodgings of the **Roman** moralists..." end quote.

But, though the price of truth is high, and the desire to sell it may be ever present, in the end, the promise to the peacemaker will make it all worth it. In light of our beatitude, the promise is wonderful. Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons of God! That promise is what we want to explore in this message.

In this message I want to answer these questions: Who are the sons of God? What is the significance of this name? When will they be called the sons of God? And, who will call them the sons of God?

B. The Promise To The Peacemakers

-Who are the sons of God?

So we begin with the promise to the peacemakers. The promise is that they will be called 'the sons of God.' And so we ask, just who are the sons of God? I was amazed at how sparingly this promise was treated by commentators. It is admittedly difficult to understand, and I do not know if my conclusion is correct, but I will seek to answer the questions that I felt needed an answer. Even D. Martyn Lloyd Jones was much shorter than he usually is in his comments and I wondered, is that all there is to it?

And so, we have asked, who are the sons of God? In the OT, the phrase 'sons of God' occurs 5 times. Genesis 6:1-4, that highly debated passage, has this phrase twice. The debate is, does 'sons of God' refer to angels or to people in this passage? Well, the phrase 'sons of God' further occurs 3 times in Job, and all of those seem to be references to angels. If the Genesis 6 passage refers to angels, then the phrase 'sons of God' never refers to people at all in the OT.

However, when we come to the NT, the phrases 'sons of God' or 'children of God' occur 15 times. These two phrases are inconsistently translated interchangeably in the KJV. For example, in our passage it has been translated, 'children of God' but it should be translated 'sons of God.' In Luke 20:36, again, when it should be translated 'sons of God' it is translated 'children of God.' In some places where it should be translated 'children of God' it has been translated as 'sons of God.'

Well, our question is, "Who are these sons of God?" We go first to 1 John 3:2 which says, "Beloved now we are the sons of God..." The 'we' refers to Christians. Romans 8:14 says, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God." No doubt then, that the people we call Christians today are those who are referred to as the sons of God. Now I ask you, could a higher honor be placed on any human being than to be called a 'son of God'! And Scripture says of believers, "Beloved, now we are the sons of God!"

I think the phrases *sons of God* or *children of God* refer to the same people. Go to John 1 (read 11-13). John says that to as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the children of God. The word, 'children' instead of 'sons' is an endearing term. They are God's children. Now, this word translated 'the right' is the word *exousia*, meaning, He gave them the authority to become the children of God. And why are they the children of God? Well, verse 13 says they are 'born of God.' And how do they become born of God? By repenting of their sins and receiving Christ as their personal Savior! (John 3:16).

Jamieson, Faucett and Brown have put forth another view as to why the peacemakers are called the sons of God. The thought they give is that they are the sons of God because they are like God insofar as making peace is concerned. Here is what they say, "... it was not till Christ 'made peace by the blood of the cross' that God could manifest Himself as 'the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant' (#Heb 13:20)". Furthermore, they say, that it is not till Christ, and I quote, "...could reveal Himself as 'in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them,' and hold Himself forth in the astonishing attitude of beseeching men to be "reconciled to Himself' (#2Co 5:19,20)."

They then say, "When this reconciliation actually takes place, and one has 'peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ' – even 'the peace of God which passeth all understanding' – the peace-receivers become transformed into peace-diffusers. God is thus seen reflected in them; and by the family likeness these peacemakers are recognized as the children of God" end quote. So, not only are these peacemakers born of God, but they are like God in the matter of making peace.

So it may be that they are called the sons of God, not only because they are born of God, but because they are like God in that they are peacemakers!

-What is the significance of this name?

So, who are the sons of God? They are those who have been born again by the Spirit of God and possibly also because they are like God in that they are peacemakers. Now let us take special note of what they will be called. They will be called the 'sons of God'. We have already said that it is a very huge honor to be called the sons of God. In the OT Jacob's name was changed from Jacob, the heel catcher; to Israel, prince with God. And after he successfully wrestled with the Lord, those born to him were called the children of Israel. In the OT, over and over again, God's people were called 'the children of Israel.' But those very same people, God's chosen people, were never called the sons of God or the children of God. But the Christian, born of the Spirit of God is called 'a son of God.' What a huge honor!

Now, take note that our beatitude does not say that these blessed ones will be called 'sons of Christ'. They are not. It does not even say they will be called Christians. What it does say is that they will be called 'the sons of God'. After Christ ascended to heaven, those who became His followers were called by various names, but when Christianity had spread out as far as Antioch, there, for the first time they were called 'Christians'. So Acts 11:26 says, "So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch." And from that time until today, that is what they are called, but they are not called the sons of God.

It must have shortly become a common name, for in Acts 26:28 it says, "Then Agrippa said to Paul, 'You almost persuade me to become a Christian.'" The name 'Christian' occurs 3 times in the NT and the last is in 1 Peter 4:16

which says, "Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter."

So here is the significance of the statement that believers will be called the sons of God. And since believers have never been called the sons of God yet, we must ask when will they be called 'the sons of God'?

-When will they be called the sons of God?

Well, let us note here, once more that the peacemakers 'shall be' future tense, called 'the sons of God'. The Church age was then future, but we have been in it now for 2,000 years, and still believers have not been called the sons of God. So we ask, when will they be called that?

Go now to Luke 20. I think here we get a possible clue as to when believers of this age, those born of God, will be called the sons of God. In the context the Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection, had questioned Jesus about it. And listen to Jesus' answer (read 34-36). Notice carefully now that it speaks about an age called 'this age' in verse 34, and then it speaks of those accounted worthy to attain another age called 'that age', in verse 35. Now let me tell you something about the ages given in Scripture. Turn to Titus 1 (read 1-2). "Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised *before time began...*" Notice first the words 'eternal life'. In my view, we have no English word to accurately translate the word translated 'eternal' here. It is a word that comes from the Greek word for an age. So let me coin a new English word. This is 'ageous life'. The believer has *ageous* life, that is the life of the next age.

Now, look at the clause 'before time began' in our passage. In the original this is, 'pro chronwn aiwniwn.' Literally, that is 'before the times of the ages.' That is not the same as saying, 'before time began' because time never began and will never end. That is what the word 'eternity' means.

Now listen to 2 Timothy 1:9, "...who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began..." Again, it is, 'pro chronwn aiwniwn, before the times of the ages.'

So there are the times before the ages, that is eternity past. But then the Scriptures speak of 'this age'. Luke 20:27 speaks of the sons of 'this age'. What age is that? It is the time from creation to the millennium. Go to Matthew 12:32 (read). If you are using the KJV you will see that it has the word 'world' twice in this passage. The word for 'world' is 'kosmos', but this word is not kosmos, but aiwn, an age. So this verse speaks of 'this age' and the 'age to come'. You can find many references to the phrases, 'this age' and the 'age to come'. Those who have what we call 'eternal life' have 'ageous life', the life of the age to come. That life has no end. So there are the past ages; this age, and the age to come.

But after the millennium there will be a new heaven and a new earth and then follows eternity future. The Scriptures also speak of that time. So listen now to Philippians 4:20, "Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen." Now, the phrase 'forever and ever' means what we call eternity future. In the original it says, "eis tw'n aiwniwn two aiwnwn. Literally it would read, 'into the ages of the ages'. In that phrase we have the idea of an endless future. But even more than that, we have information that eternity future will be marked by ages, epochs. Twenty times, this phrase is used in the NT.

So, we have the times before the ages. Then we have this age, followed by the age to come, which is then followed by the ages of the ages. Now, back to the sons of God. Luke 20:35 says, "But those who are counted worthy to attain that age (that is the age to come), and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage, nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels, and they are the sons of God, being the sons of the resurrection."

Now what I want to glean here is this: Those who are counted worthy to attain 'that age' that is the age to come, and the resurrection from the dead, these are the sons of God. Those who are truly born again and remain faithful until death or the rapture, are the sons of God and they attain to that age.

Our question has been, when will the peacemakers be called 'the sons of God'? Here is my conclusion: Since believers are not called that now, they will be called that in the millennial age. There are those who say that understanding prophecy is not so important. They say it is so confusing and there are so many views, the key thing is just to live in such a way as to be ready for the Lord's return. Let me

say this as respectfully as I can, such people are very foolish. The very thing that will keep them living in such a way as to be ready, they are avoiding. To understand the times past, this age, the age to come and what lies in the future is tremendously important.

-By whom will they be called the sons of God?

Now, you may not agree with my conclusion that the peacemakers will be called the sons of God in the millennium, and I would be interested in any other possible view. Admittedly, however, today, believers are not called the sons of God, but 'Christians.' In the age to come, I think, they will be called the 'sons of God.'

Now I want you to notice that our text says, 'they shall be called' the sons of God. The verb, 'shall be called' is future tense, but it is in the passive voice. That means that others will call them 'the sons of God.' Our question is, who will call them the sons of God.

Let me read to you from John MacArthur. He writes, "**Shall be called** is in a continuous future passive tense. Throughout eternity peacemakers will go by the name 'children of God.' The passive form indicates that all heaven will call peacemakers **sons of God**, because God Himself has declared them to be His children."

Let me note two problems there. First, contrary to what MacArthur says, these believers are not called the sons of God because God has declared them to be His children. He said they would be 'called the sons of God' because they are peacemakers. That must be held as most significant in our passage. Second, if all heaven will call the peacemakers the sons of God, that would include the peacemakers. But the verb is passive and that means they do not call themselves the sons of God. Others call them that. Our question is, who are these others?

Well, if I am correct the peacemakers will be called 'the sons of God' in the millennium, I ask you, what groups of people will there be in the millennium who would call them the sons of God? Let us note first that after the rapture the Church comes back down to earth with Christ at the end of the tribulation (Rev. 19). So the peacemakers will be there in the millennium. And if I am correct, at least in this age that they will be called the sons of God.

So our question is, what other people will be there that would call the peacemakers the sons of God? Well, in Revelation 20:4 we find that the righteous who have died during the tribulation will be resurrected and will reign

with Christ for 1,000 years. So they will be there. Then there is indication that the OT saints are resurrected and they will be there. Turn to Matthew 8 (read 11). Here are the Gentiles, the Church and the peacemakers, and they will sit down in the kingdom, the millennium with these OT saints.

Furthermore, in the end of the tribulation there is the sheep and goat judgment (Matt. 25). The goats, or the unrighteous are cast into hell, so they won't be there. But to the sheep, the righteous, the Lord said, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34). That is the millennium. So, the righteous living saints of the tribulation will go into the millennium in their natural bodies. Here they will bring forth millions upon millions of offspring. So all of these people will be there.

Now I ask you, who will be there to call the peacemakers the 'sons of God'? Well, all the saved of the OT before Israel became God's chosen people. Then all the saved OT Israelis will be there. Then all the saved who died during the tribulation will be there. And all the saved who had not died in the tribulation will be there. And I believe all these will call the peacemakers 'the sons of God.'

So, let me draw a picture for you of a time yet future, but which may not be very far away. The rapture has taken place. The peacemakers have been taken to heaven (1 Thess. 4:13-18). The tribulation has been completed (Rev. 19). The Church has come back down to earth with Christ (Rev. 19). The antichrist and the false prophet have been cast alive into hell (Rev. 19:19-21). An angel has taken hold of Satan and bound him with a great chain and thrown him into hell (Rev. 20:1-3). The sheep and the goats, that is the righteous and unrighteous living at the end of the tribulation have been judged (Matt. 25). You see, the saints of the Church have been handed judgment and they have judged them. Did you know that Paul said to the Corinthian Christians, "Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?" (1 Cor. 6:2). Do you believe that is true? And if so, when did you think that would happen? Well, I believe it is right here.

Then at the end of this judgment, the unrighteous have been cast into hell (Matt. 25:41-46). And at this same judgment God has said to the righteous, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34). You see, Daniel had said that from the time of the abomination of

desolation, which is the midpoint of the tribulation, there would be 1,290 days (Dan. 12:11). That is 30 days past the end of the tribulation. I believe in that time this judgment will take place.

And then Daniel said, "Blessed is he who waits and comes to the 1,335 days" (Daniel 12:12). Here I believe, the kingdom will be inaugurated. So, the kingdom has been inaugurated, and now we are in the millennium. Then a great work began in Jerusalem. The temple described in Ezekiel 40-47 has now been set up. And now the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords is reigning from Jerusalem.

Now go to Matthew 19 (read 27-30). Jesus promised His disciples that in the regeneration, that is the millennium, they would sit on twelve thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel. Their borders are described in Ezekiel 38. This is the kingdom that was promised to Israel over and over again. It is the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world (Matt. 25:34). This kingdom is described by more Scriptures, by far, than any that speak of heaven or the new heavens and the new earth. This kingdom is spoken of by the prophets time and again. This is the kingdom the Jews were expecting.

And so, now, Christ is King in Jerusalem. The Apostles are sitting on thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel. And in this age, believers of the Church age are co-ruling with Christ. And here are the sons of God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God. When? I believe it will be here in this age. By the way, that could be less than 10 years away!

And so, once more I ask, who will call them the sons of God? Well, let us say we are now 350 years into the millennium. The living believers of the tribulation have multiplied and there are millions upon millions of these people on earth. But there are two kinds of people. There are the resurrected saints from before Israel became a nation which includes such people as Adam and Noah and many others. Then there are all the saved Israelis. And all of these, I believe, will give this special title to the peacemakers by calling them 'the sons of God.

So let me leave you with some questions I cannot yet answer and may they cause you to ponder our subject. In the message on peacemakers I said, "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.'" So I ask, can a person be

a Christian and not a peacemaker? Or are all Christians peacemakers classed but they are classed from very, very weak to strong? Is there a class among believers who are truly peacemakers, and others who are not, and to those who are, this promise to be called the sons of God applies? Or does it apply to all believers? I leave it for you to ponder.

The second question I have is this: Will these peacemakers be called the sons of God into all eternity, or is it specifically for the millennium? MacArthur argues that the tense is a continuous future, and thus indicates that they will be called this into the eternity future, that is into the ages of the ages. He may be right. If so, the magnitude of this promise is phenomenal!

But, no matter what the answers are to these questions, I ask you, will you pay the price of being a peacemaker? Will you drop the role of peacekeeper and enter this most dangerous of all occupations, being a peacemaker? I can tell you this, if we are not peacemakers, no matter what the end of peacekeepers will be, some day we will all wish we had been peacemakers.

And now I ask, how do we become peacemakers? It all begins with humility; blessed are the poor in spirit. Then comes mourning over one's sinfulness which causes one to become meek which brings an insatiable hunger and thirst for righteousness. My wife listened to D. Martyn Lloyd Jones a while ago and he said, "If you do not hunger and thirst for righteousness, you are not a Christian." Furthermore, this great hunger and thirst for righteousness makes the believer merciful to others and causes him to become pure in heart. Oh, for purity of heart! And all of that is how to become a peacemaker. Those who become pure of heart will become peacemakers!

CONCL: Well, we conclude. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God. I want to recommend that the promise to these peacemakers is no small promise. It is a promise that may well have practical significance into the ages of the ages.

So I have concluded from the passive future tense verb, 'they shall be called the sons of God' that since believers are not called that now, they will be called the sons of God in the millennial reign of Christ. You see, Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." That is the present interim kingdom. But there is another kingdom coming, and it will be a kingdom here on earth, governed from

here on earth by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Here, I believe, the peacemakers will have the name, 'the sons of God.' Just like we read of the children of Abraham being called the children of Israel over and over again, so believers will be called 'children' or 'the sons of God' in another age.

From our text, this appears to be a special blessing to those who pay the price of being peacemakers in the time in which we live. And here is my question for you: Are you a peacemaker? Or will you become a peacemaker?