

“You Are Blessed, If You Work towards Peace”  
(Matthew 5:9)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

Jesus has been telling us  
About the many changes  
That take place in our lives  
Once His Spirit takes up residence in our hearts –  
He creates the same virtues or moral qualities  
That are present in Jesus’ own perfect life.

Jesus says,  
If we have them, we are blessed  
Because they show that we belong to Him  
And so are the heirs of His kingdom and its blessings –  
We’re particularly blessed  
If we can clearly see them in our lives,  
So that we know we are.

We can know we are His heirs –  
*If* we are poor in spirit –  
If we are not full of ourselves,  
But full of Him,  
His humility –  
If we find ourselves  
Taking the lowest place  
To serve others,  
Even as He did.

This will be true of all who follow Him:

Paul gives us something of his own testimony in this area,

As he writes to the Ephesians elders,

“You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my *own* needs and to the men who were with me. In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:34-35).

We can know we are His

If our sins so trouble us

That we’re turning from all of them,

To live as He calls us to live;

If the sins of those around us –

And what they will have to face for them –

So grieve us that we’re reaching out to them

With the good news of the Gospel.

We’re blessed,

If we have the same disposition Jesus had –

A kind, gentle and meek spirit

That makes us welcoming –

Not only to those outside of Christ,

But to those who belong to Him;

If our desire to be like Jesus

And to do what He would have us to do

Is strong –

If we hunger for it,

If we thirst for it,

To the point where it controls our lives:

To the point where we're not cold or lukewarm,

But hot;

If our hearts are moved with compassion;

If we show mercy to others –

If we forgive the wrongs they've done to us,

Not require them to return the things they've taken from us,

If we're willing to help those in need –

Even though it costs us

Time, effort, money,

And possibly even further injury;

If we're earnestly fighting against our sins –

If, by the power of His Spirit,

We're getting rid of the things in our lives

That we know our Lord hates –

And seeking to put on those virtues

That He loves –

His own perfect character.

Again, we're blessed,

Because these things show

Not only that we belong to Him –

That we have been saved by His grace –

But that we are His heirs:

We will inherit His Kingdom;

We have now –

And will have more fully in heaven –

The comfort of knowing

All our sins are forgiven –

We will inherit the New Heavens and the New Earth –

That the Lord will bring in

When He is done with the present world;

A world that is full of love, joy, and peace,

With nothing to spoil it –

Our desire to be like Jesus

Will one day be satisfied –

We will be as He is,

When we see Him –

Either at death,

Or when He comes again –

We have received His mercy –

He has forgiven us,

He has clothed us with His righteousness –

He will receive us into heaven –

And we will see God –

As Jesus now sees Him –

As He reveals Himself in all His glory,

With such beauty and majesty

That we won't be able to take our eyes off Him

For all eternity.

## B. Preview.

This morning, let's look at the next virtue

The Lord works in our hearts by His Spirit

That shows we belong to Him

And are the heirs of His kingdom:

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Matt. 5:9).

## II. Sermon.

### A. What does it mean to be a peacemaker?

First of all, it means

To be someone who loves peace –

Who see its value;

Who knows it's what God wants;

Who wants to see everyone living together in harmony

Rather than at odds with each other.

It means, second of all,

To be someone who seeks to live at peace –

Who doesn't stir up controversy,

Where it doesn't need to be;

Who doesn't retaliate,

When wronged by others:

Paul writes, “Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men” (Rom. 12:17-18).

This doesn't mean we throw justice out the window,

But that we don't take it into our own hands,

But allow God to deal with the offender in His own way:

And He will,

Either by leading that person to salvation in His Son –

In which case, Jesus will have died for that crime –

Or by exacting justice in this life and in the life to come –

Paul continues, “Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath *of God*, for it is written, ‘VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,’ says the Lord. BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (vv. 19-21).

It means third,

To be someone who seeks to maintain

The peace and unity

God creates among His people by His Spirit.

Paul writes to the believers at Ephesus,

“Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (4:1-3).

It means all these things;

But it means more:

It means to be someone

Who works towards peace

Where there is none:

Who seeks to heal division,

And bring reconciliation.

This is what God is –

A Peacemaker –

And this is what He's done for us

Through His Son –

He's made peace through the blood of His cross.

We were His enemies –

Not only because

We rebelled against Him in Adam,

But because we continued to do so

Every day of our lives,

From the time we came into this world

Until He saved us.

But even when we were at war with Him –

Even though the breach was purely our fault –

God worked to bring peace:

He sent His Son to reconcile us to Himself –

Paul writes in Romans 5:6-11, “For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath *of God* through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

The Father is a Peacemaker.

He gave us His Son

That we might be reconciled to Him.

Jesus also came into this world as a Peacemaker

By being the means of that reconciliation.

That purpose was revealed to the shepherds

At His birth by the angels.

At first, they were afraid,

“But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. This *will be* a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased’” (Luke 2:10-14).

And now that He has made peace –

Through the blood of His cross –

Jesus continues to maintain that peace

Through His mediation –

By praying for us.

Jesus is our peace with God –

He is our Peacemaker.

B. And now as those who have been reconciled

To God through the sacrifice of His Son,

Jesus tells us we will reflect that same character –

We will be peacemakers.

He says, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Matt. 5:9).

Peace,

The desire for peace,

And to be those that bring peace,



Is really one of the fruits of love –

The kind of love the Spirit

Brings into our hearts to make us like Jesus.

Paul writes, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,  
goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no  
law” (Gal. 5:22-23).

Everything Jesus is and did –

Which is again a perfect reflection

Of the nature of His Father –

Can be summarized by love.

It shouldn’t surprise us then

That the Spirit works this same virtue in us

As He makes us more like Jesus.

When we see this love in our lives,

Jesus says we can know

That we have received this particular blessing –

That we are the sons and daughters of God.

We know that when we trust in Jesus –

When our sins are forgiven,

And His perfect obedience

Is deposited into our account –

When it clothes us –

So to speak –

That we are justified –

God looks at us in His justice

As perfectly good,  
As worthy to enter heaven,  
Only by the grace of Jesus –  
At that moment,  
He adopts us into His family,  
And we become His children,  
Jesus' brothers and sisters,  
And the fellow-heirs of His kingdom.

But Jesus has something a bit different in mind here:

We *are* the children of God *by that adoption*,

But we also become His children *by nature* –

Not *metaphysically/in our being* –

We don't become little gods –

As some false teachers claim –

But *morally* –

We become partakers/sharers

Of God's moral nature –

His Spirit lives in our souls

As an active principle of love,

Causing us to love as He loves –

Causing us, among other things,

To love peace and become peacemakers.

When we find in our hearts

A desire for peace;

When we seek

To live at peace with others;

When we strive to maintain the peace

The Lord creates among us by His Spirit;

When we work to reconcile

Those who are at odds;

And particularly,

When we become God's ambassadors

By bringing His message of peace to the lost

So that they can be reconciled to God;

We show ourselves *to be His children*.

But let's not forget

That like all the other virtues,

This is something we still need to put on –

To continue to grow in –

The Spirit gives us the desire,

But we must yield to Him,

And work at becoming

More like Jesus in this area.

The Lord's Table can help us:

It reminds us

That Jesus was willing

To lay down His life

So that *He might reconcile us to God.*

It calls us in thankfulness

To follow His example –

To lay down our lives

That we might lead others

To be reconciled to Him.

And it provides

The additional power we need by His Spirit

So that in love, we might work towards peace.

So let's prepare ourselves now to come.

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