

Peace Makers (Matthew 5:9)

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“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”

In a world that is characterized by selfish ambition, conflict, and rivalry it is exceedingly difficult to find anyone who aspires to become a peacemaker!¹ I got thinking about the radical transformation that occurs when a person becomes a new creation in Christ. To be born of God (John 1:13) means one is no longer a slave to sin but that of righteousness (Romans 6). With the Spirit living inside of them believers are equipped and expected to “walk in the way of love,” just as Christ loved and sacrificed His life for us (Ephesians 5:1-2). While it is easy to love those, who love us back (Luke 6:32), most Christians find it exceptionally difficult to become the peacemakers Christ mentioned in the Sermon on the Mount. When Jesus says “blessed are the peacemakers” He is not referring to someone who passively imitates the ways of this world to gain their friendship but instead a child of God who confronts and works tirelessly² to find ways to end hostilities and bring the quarrelsome together!³ “Never being satisfied with going to heaven alone,”⁴ peacemakers will personally sacrifice⁵ much to make an appeal to humanity to be reconciled with their God (2 Corinthians 5:20). By their love and personal sacrifice, peacemakers demonstrate reconciliation in such a way that even the spiritually deaf and blind of this world can hear and see that God’s love exists!⁶ Do you fit this definition of a peacemaker? If you feel you fall short of this definition,⁷ do not be dismayed for the rest of this sermon is going to explain how a child of God can become a peacemaker!

Peace of God

One learns best how to be a peacemaker from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Peace is of “constant concern in both testaments in the Bible (e.g., Prov 15:1; Isa 52:7; Luke 24:36; Rom 10:15; 12:18; 1 Cor 7:15; Eph 2:11–22; Heb 12:14; 1 Peter 3:11),” with the Father being called

¹ R. T. France, *Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 1, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 116.

² Robert H. Mounce, *Matthew*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 41.

³ Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 101.

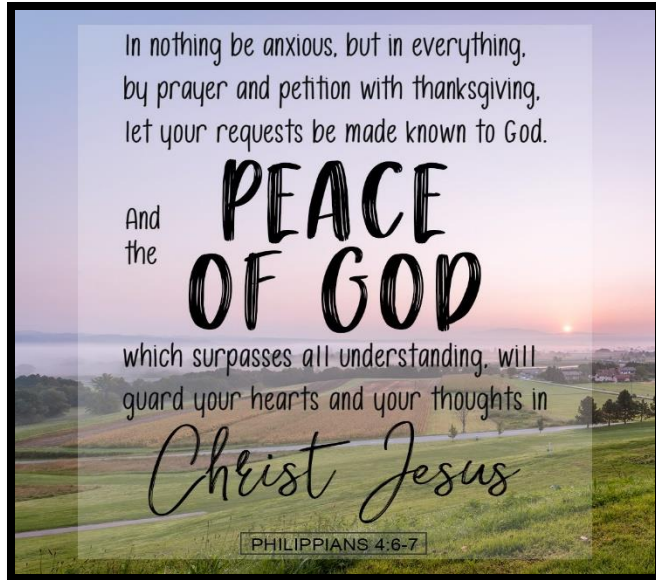
⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, “*The Peacemaker*,” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 7 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1861), 598.

⁵ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980–1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

⁶ C. H. Spurgeon, “*The Peacemaker*,” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 7 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1861), 597.

⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, “*The Peacemaker*,” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 7 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1861), 596.

the “God of Peace” (Romans 16:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 13:20)⁸ and Jesus the “Prince of Peace.”⁹ “The whole history of redemption, climaxing in the death and resurrection of Jesus, is God’s strategy to bring about a just and lasting peace between rebel man and Himself, and then between man and man.”¹⁰ While Jesus is the judge of the living and the



dead, He is also peaceful as demonstrated in His slowness to return so that everyone will have ample opportunity to be saved (2 Peter 3:9; 1 Peter 4:5). Since an offering of peace has been secured by the blood of the cross (Colossians 1:20),¹¹ we as His image and Spirit bearers, have been equipped to emulate the Father who is “is peaceful, longsuffering, tender, full of lovingkindness, pity, and compassion.”¹² “Even though we often feel unworthy to “make an appeal” for reconciliation,¹³ it is the meek, the poor in spirit, merciful, pure in heart and those who thirst for righteousness that become the hands

and feet of their Savior to spread the glorious invitation “be reconciled unto God.”¹⁴ “If God is a peacemaker, then His children, who have His nature (2 Peter 1:4), will be peacemakers too.”¹⁵ The peace of God guards our hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6-7) so that we can fulfill our call to implore the lost to be reconciled unto God.

New Creation/Sons of God

One by one the beatitudes give us a glimpse of how radical our transformation into a new creation ought to be! Having been freed from the entanglement and slavery of sin (Romans 6),

⁸ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980–1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

⁹ D. A. Carson, “Matthew,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 135.

¹⁰ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980–1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

¹¹ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980–1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

¹² C. H. Spurgeon, “The Peacemaker,” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 7 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1861), 597.

¹³ D. A. Carson, “Matthew,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 135.

¹⁴ D. A. Carson, “Matthew,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 135.

¹⁵ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980–1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

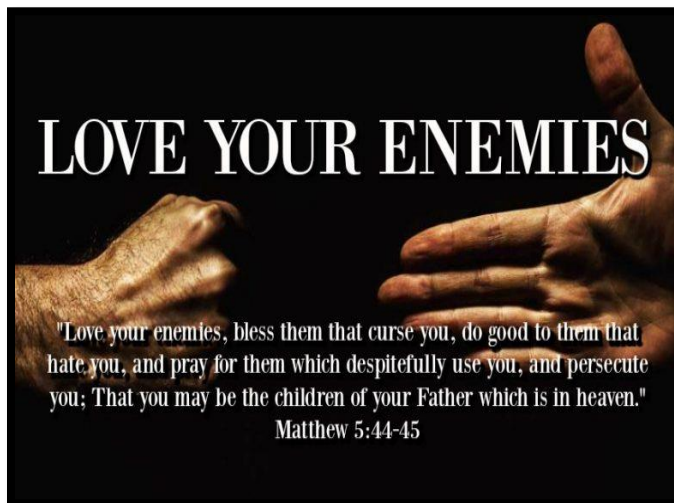
Christians are to “put off the old self which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires” and “put on the new self, that has been created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 2:22-24)!



To be born of the Spirit and water is a radical transformation of going from spiritual death to that of life (John 3:5-8)! The moment one becomes a believer what was once foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:18), through the illumination of the Spirit, is now seen as divine truth that upon obedience lays the foundation for holy living! John Piper rightly says the Beatitudes are “like long spikes holding down the lid of the coffin of false teaching”¹⁶ that states once born again one can continue to live as if one has not received a new heart, lukewarm and in love with the ways of this world. Since the children of God have received His

Spirit¹⁷ and participate in His nature of peace (Galatians 5:22),¹⁸ as Christ’s ambassadors they are empowered and expected to live and help others become peaceful in their relations first with their Master and then to one another!¹⁹ The rest of this sermon is going to outline four ways God’s children can become the blessed peacemakers God intends them to be!

Love Your Enemies



What would it have been like to dream about the coming of a Messiah who was in your opinion going to destroy Rome only to hear Him say “but to you who are listening I say: love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who mistreat you” (Luke 6:27-28)?²⁰ Jesus’ teaching was radical for instead of saying it was “ok” to take an eye for an eye the world identifies people as Christians by their loving kindness and desire to promote peace between humanity and God and between one another! True peacemakers pray that

¹⁶ John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

¹⁷ Craig A. Evans, [The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: Matthew–Luke](#), ed. Craig A. Evans and Craig A. Bubeck, First Edition. (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2003), 106–107.

¹⁸ John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

¹⁹ John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

²⁰ John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

they will be living sacrifices (Romans 12:1) so that their good deeds and love might point to God the Father (Matthew 5:16). Though letting their light shine often leads to being persecuted,²¹ they chose not to take an eye for an eye but instead forbear the blows of their enemies and never stop praying for their conversion and sanctification.²² True peacemakers would rather be smitten by their enemies and let God take care of their honor²³ than to be angry at or to smite another!²⁴ They are slow to anger and judgement in hope that through their personal sacrifices evil might be overcome with good!²⁵ Even though attainment of peace is not always possible!,²⁶ like Jesus peacemakers never stop pointing to “loving God and one another” as the fulfillment of all of God’s laws and the purpose of their very lives!

Quick to Forgive

To be a peacemaker one must be quick to forgive! Building bridges and tearing down animosity²⁷ is only possible when both parties are more interested in a healthy relationship with one



another than in being vindicated or right! True peacemakers do not “gossip” to curry favor for their position²⁸ but instead keep no records of wrongs (1 Corinthians 13:5). They do not “nurse” grudges nor do they entertain vengeance but instead look for ways to tear down barriers between themselves and their enemies.²⁹ The meek and lowly in heart would rather bear injury, slurs and injustices³⁰ to self than cause harm to another.³¹ God’s peacemakers would never dream of leaving the church or walking on the side of the street

²¹ C. H. Spurgeon, [“The Peacemaker,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 7 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1861), 593.

²² John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

²³ C. H. Spurgeon, [“The Peacemaker,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 7 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1861), 595.

²⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, [“The Peacemaker,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 7 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1861), 594.

²⁵ John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

²⁶ John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

²⁷ John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

²⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, [“The Peacemaker,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 7 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1861), 594.

²⁹ John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

³⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, [“The Peacemaker,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 7 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1861), 595.

³¹ C. H. Spurgeon, [“The Peacemaker,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 7 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1861), 597.

when in the presence of an enemy³² but instead consider it an honor to always offer their hands of friendship and reconciliation to their enemies. And when it comes to forgiveness, looking at the stripes by which their sins caused Christ, they are always ready to say and mean the words “I forgive you, and please forgive me.”³³ Rightly they forgive their offenders not out of naiveté but with the assurance that they will be judged in the same manner by their God (Matthew 7:1-2)!³⁴ And even when it is not possible to have reciprocal forgiveness with another they never stop praying that their enemies might be blessed by God³⁵ and one day they might be reconciled with one another.

Reconciler

Blessed are those who not only seek to restore their own relationships with their enemies but also help others to seek and find reconciliation! “Instead of delighting in division, bitterness, strife, or some petty “divide-and-conquer” mentality, disciples of Jesus delight to make peace wherever



possible.”³⁶ They are to teach opposing parties to see the planks in their own eyes so that the bridge of offense might be seen as mutual and therefore forgivable by both parties (Matthew 7:1-5). To further aid the building of this bridge of peace the child of God explains that in putting the interests of another above oneself (Philippians 2:3) one is showing the same kind of unconditional love that Christ did while on the cross.³⁷ There are limits though to one’s effort at reconciliation! God’s peacemaker would never compromise righteousness even if it meant doing so would

lead to enemies being reconciled.³⁸ The steps and the way one makes peace with another must always align with God’s word. For instance, one does not fabricate a stronger but common enemy to bridge the gap of peace nor does one ignore the sins of another to maintain the bonds of peace (1 Corinthians 6:3). Purity in the eyes of God cannot be compromised (James 3:17)³⁹ for while peace between mortals might

³² John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

³³ C. H. Spurgeon, [“The Peacemaker,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 7 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1861), 597.

³⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, [“The Peacemaker,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 7 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1861), 597.

³⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, [“The Peacemaker,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 7 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1861), 596.

³⁶ D. A. Carson, [“Matthew,”](#) in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 135.

³⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, [“The Peacemaker,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 7 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1861), 596.

³⁸ John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

³⁹ John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

be obtained by breaking His commands this will surely create enmity with our Creator. So, as peacemakers we are only to do whatever is pure in the eyes of God to maintain the bonds of peace (Romans 12:18)!⁴⁰

Pure in Heart

The final piece of advice in becoming blessed as a peacemaker is to always “live” the gospel message. Nothing destroys the credibility of God’s peacemakers any faster than merely reading but not obeying His word (James 1:22)! What makes our light truly shine is not passive observance⁴¹ or lip



service to He who bought us at a price (1 Corinthians 6:20) but out of love complete surrender and submission to His will in our lives! Since mediocrity leads to hypocrisy, successful efforts to keep the bonds of peace are only attainable when one first reconciles with one’s Redeemer and then if possible, with one’s own enemies. Blessed are the pure in heart for not only will they receive glimpses of God⁴² but will also shine so brightly that others will see their love as proof they have transformed from spiritual death to life! When one considers others better than oneself, forbears and forgives

one’s enemies, the roots of one’s life are firmly planted in fertile soil that will reap a peaceful harvest.⁴³ The pure in heart gladly accept God’s command to plant seeds of reconciliation in other people’s hearts with the understanding that only God can make them grown and produce the fruit of peace!

Conclusion

Just because living in a world that is characterized by selfish ambition, conflict, and rivalry it is exceedingly difficult to find anyone who aspires to become a peacemaker; this does not mean that they do not exist! When the Jewish people heard the Messiah came not to destroy her enemies but to sacrifice His life for them, they were troubled but with the gift of hindsight we know the truth that Christ’s atonement paved the way for reconciliation with God! Those who have gone from spiritual death to life have the Spirit of God living inside of them and therefore

⁴⁰ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980–1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

⁴¹ Robert H. Mounce, *Matthew*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 41.

⁴² C. H. Spurgeon, “*The Peacemaker*,” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 7 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1861), 593.

⁴³ C. H. Spurgeon, “*The Peacemaker*,” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 7 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1861), 598.



are capable of not only seeing others better than themselves but also to forbear, forgive and love unconditionally. While reconciliation is possible, out of a desire to not go to heaven alone peacemakers will personally sacrifice much to proclaim the message that God wishes none should perish. The good news is that as long as they have breath, they can make a decision to believe in the atoning sacrifice of His Son and be granted adoption and eternal life! Since being doers of the word is the key to eliminating hypocrisy, peacemakers will only do what is right in God's eyes to help reconcile warring factions.

While they know that God alone transforms and reconciles hearts, what spurs them on is Christ's words, "blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God!"