

SOTM 7 - Blessed Are The Peacemakers

Mat 5:9 Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

The Greek word translated "peacemakers" in this verse is G1518 eirēnopoios – "to pacify, peaceable, peacemaker." It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament.

At first glance a person would assume that it means to always try to make peace between all groups of people at all times. Yet notice what Jesus said about Himself [Remember, He is the author and finisher of our faith. He is our prototype]:

Matthew 10:34-39 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. (35) For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. (36) And a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household. (37) He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. (38) And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. (39) He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. [These are the same three requirements for discipleship Jesus gave in Luke chapter 14 that we have studied earlier in this series.]

Did Jesus want his followers artificially making "peace" with their families by denying Him and turning back to the law of Moses to save them? Absolutely not. Being a peacemaker does not mean making "horizontal" peace with every person on earth. Was Jesus at "peace" with the Pharisees, the Sadducee's, or the scribes? Certainly not.

Regarding temporal injustices against Himself, Jesus never returned evil for evil. When reviled, Jesus did not revile back. He did, however, speak the truth in love no matter whether it made peace with them or not. Just one example, spoken publicly, in the temple to those who were of the highest order of religion of the day;

Matthew 23:13-15 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in *yourselves*, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. (14) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. (15) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

Jesus goes on and on, verse after verse ... in the temple ... in the hearing of the multitudes who had come for the "conference" [festival]. Do you think these sayings promoted "peace" with the religious leaders? Jesus was not trying to be "politically correct" with these men. He was not trying to promote a horizontal peace between Himself and the religious leaders of the day. He was not willing to water down the truth in order to make peace with them. He was trying to get them to repent and believe the gospel so they could obtain the vertical peace with God they truly needed.

God give us "peacemakers" like that in our generation! God give us men and women whose lips have been touched with a burning coal of fire from the altar of God who will speak the truth of God's word even if they crucify them for it. These are peacemakers who are in the image of Christ. These are the children of God made in His image.

God is calling us to bring mankind into the "vertical" position of peace with God.

Romans 5:1 **Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:**

Faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ is the only way to have peace with God. We are reconciled, brought into the position of peace with God, through faith in the gospel of Christ and obedience to the will of God.

2 Corinthians 5:19-21 **To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (20) Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. (21) For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.**

This is the gospel of peace that Jesus preached. The true "peacemakers" are those who preach the same gospel of peace that Jesus preached.

Acts 10:34-36 **Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: (35) But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. (36) The word which *God* sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)**

Regarding temporal, earthly things we are to live at peace with all men if it is possible. Notice the apostle Paul says,

Romans 12:18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

"If it be possible" means ... it is not always possible. It wasn't always possible with Jesus and it will not always be possible with you. But notice the context of the verse:

Romans 12:17-19 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. (18) If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. (19) Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

We are never to compromise truth in order to live in peace with men. On the other hand, we are to never love temporal things more than we love people ... saved or unsaved people. Notice the extremes Jesus taught us to take in order to remain in peace with ungodly people in order to be able to continue to extend God's mercy to them. Here is a preview of what Jesus taught later on in this same Sermon On The Mount.

Matthew 5:44-45 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; (45) That ye may be the children of your Father [blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God] **which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.**

What about living in peace with your Christian brother? What about when they do you wrong and the world says you have every right to take them to court?

1 Corinthians 6:5-7 I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? (6) But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. (7) Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather *suffer yourselves to be defrauded?*

Do you want to be a peacemaker like Christ was a peacemaker? Then why do you not suffer wrong? Why do you not choose to be defrauded? Why do you take them to court rather than extend mercy, love, and forgiveness? Do you love your stuff more than you

love people? I prophesy there will come a day when all such disputes between believers will be handled internally by the church rather than in the court systems of the world.

I will remind you once more of what Luke 6:38 is really about. It is not about a church offering ... at all. It is an iron clad guarantee from the lips of Jesus Himself that nobody will ever be permanently diminished for extending mercy to the sinner. God promises He will speak to the hearts of men to replace EVERYTHING they take from you.

Luke 6:38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

The reason Christians are not willing to suffer wrong and be defrauded is ... they do not believe what Jesus said in Luke 6:38.

There is a difference between "forgiveness" and "being at peace" with all men. Jesus is our prototype. Without doubt, He forgave all of the religious leaders of their abuse towards Him. After all, He died for them so they could be saved, just as He died for you that you could be saved. However, there was no way for Him to be "at peace" with them while on earth.

Luke 23:34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

Stephen was a true disciple of the Lord. He found no way to live at peace with the Pharisees, including Saul of Tarsus. He held fast to the truth trying to be a "peacemaker" between these men and God, not to make an artificial peace with them for his own benefit. As they stoned him to death, Stephen prayed:

Acts 7:59-60 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *God*, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. (60) And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Remember ... if it be possible, as much as lieth with you, live at peace with all men. We always forgive, no matter what. We walk in peace if possible, but we never compromise truth in exchange for living in peace with man. As peacemakers, we are trying to bring them into a condition of peace with God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

If Your Brother Sins Against You: Jesus gave us precise instructions regarding the process of trying to make peace with a brother, a fellow believer, a Christian who sins

against you. The passage is: Mat 18:15-20 and includes the Parable Of The Unforgiving Servant in Mat 18:21-35.

But even if you follow precisely the instructions given in those verses, sometimes the fellow believer will not repent and from his standpoint, the strife continues. As far as is possible with you ... live at peace with all men. It is not always possible.