

Blessed Are the Peacemakers

1) Introduction.

There are three things we must know if we are to become who Christ wants us to be. Firstly we must know who Jesus is; secondly we must know who we are in Christ, and thirdly we must learn to live in God's heavenly kingdom on earth by understanding and being submissive to its heavenly lifestyle.

- God's heavenly kingdom on earth turns our understanding of what a kingdom looks like upside-down and inside out. For God gives us a description of what his heavenly kingdom on earth looks like in Hebrews 12:22-23. *"But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in the book of life."*
- In Christ Jesus we are citizens of a heavenly kingdom on earth that is a spiritual Mount Zion; a heavenly Jerusalem on earth. We live in a heavenly kingdom on earth that is a city of the living God; where thousands upon thousands of angels meet with us in joyful assembly. And part of this heavenly kingdom on earth is the church; for we a church of the firstborn sons whose names are written in God's book of life.

2) The Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 5:3-10 *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be*

called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

- The Sermon on the Mount is the greatest sermon ever preached and it was preached by the greatest preacher of all time; for it announced the beginning of Jesus' earthy ministry. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus is giving us the spiritual values or the lifestyle of the heavenly kingdom he has bought to earth. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus is not giving us a set of spiritual rules we must live by. He is proclaiming the spiritual lifestyle he is going to live by and urging us to imitate his lifestyle. Christianity is caught not taught! For people won't always do what we tell them to do; but they will imitate what we are doing.
- Question to all pastors and bishops. If the church imitated the life style you lived would they be imitating Jesus?
- In the world we envy people who are rich; we envy those who have more than we do! But God's heavenly kingdom on earth is different! For in God's heavenly kingdom on earth; those who are persecuted because of righteousness are to be envied because theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Those who are pure in heart are to be envied; for they will see God. Those who are peacemakers are to be envied; for they will be called sons of God. For the heavenly kingdom that Jesus bought to earth turns our understanding of what a kingdom looks like upside-down and inside out.
- It's not important who we say we are. It's not important who the world says we are. The only thing that matters is who God says we are. For it is written blessed are the peacemakers; for they will be called sons of God. The greatest gift that God can give us is to call us his son; for God never said to any angel you are my son or I am your father. So

peacemakers are greater than the angels; for they are sons of God for God is their father. If you are not a son of God; you have nothing and you are nothing. But when God calls you his son; you have everything and you are everything.

- Jesus is the Prince of Peace because when he died on the cross he took our sin upon himself; and by taking our sin upon himself he made peace between God and man. The ministry of every peacemaker is to breakdown every division in the church; by making peace with those believers who might have offended us. Every time we breakdown a division in the church by making peace with someone who has offended us; we are being transformed into the likeness of Jesus for he is the Prince of Peace.

3) Peace breakers.

There are three kinds of believers in the church; there are peace breakers, peace keepers, and peace makers. So every Christian is either a peace breaker; a peace keeper, or a peace maker. A peace breaker doesn't try to breakdown every division in the church; they build divisions because they believe their ministry is not to make peace but to break the peace! So how do we recognize peace breakers?

- a) Peace breakers have a negative and critical spirit. A peace maker will see a glass half full; a peace breaker will see the same glass have empty. Peace breakers will complain the worship is too loud or too quiet. Peace breakers will complain the sermons are too long or too short. It is impossible to please a peace breaker because regardless of what you do or what you say; they will always find fault.

- b) Peace breakers always see the worst in people. A peace maker always sees the best in someone; a peace breaker always sees the worst. A peace breaker will find something wrong with every person in the church including the pastor. We always find what we are looking for. So if we look for the worst we will find the worst; if we look for the best we will find the best. Jesus was a peace maker because he always looked for the best in people.
- c) Peace breakers are always happy when someone fails. Peace makers are happy when someone succeeds; peace breakers are happy when someone fails. They come to you and tell you, "I told you that person could not sing; I told you that person could not preach." Peace breakers build themselves up by dragging other people down because they rejoice in someone else's failure. A peace maker would have rejoiced when Peter had the courage to get out of the boat; a peace breaker would have rejoiced when he began to sink.
- d) Peace breakers divide the church by getting other people to share in their offence. Peace makers break down every dividing wall in the church by forgiving everyone who offends them; peace breakers will build dividing walls by getting people to take their side by taking their offence on themselves. When you take someone else's offence on yourself; you cease to be part of the answer by becoming part of the problem and all you do is make the problem worse.
- e) Peace breakers are gossipers because they speak about other people behind their backs. When you ask a peace breaker to pray for you because you have a problem; by the following Sunday everyone in the church will know what your problem is. Gossiping is spiritual witchcraft because you are cursing someone the words that come out

of your mouth. If our words have the power to curse or to bless; if you don't have something good to say about someone don't say anything.

4) Peace keepers.

Peacemakers tear down every dividing wall; peacekeepers build dividing walls. The United Nations are a perfect example of what a peacekeeper looks like in the church; they keep the peace by erecting dividing walls. But once a United Nations peacekeeper departs conflict breaks out once again. So how do we recognize peacekeepers in the church?

- a) Peacekeepers keep the peace by avoiding those people in the church who have offended them. They erect dividing walls because they refuse to sit near them in church; they erect dividing walls by never speaking to them.
- b) Peacekeepers keep the peace by claiming they have forgiven someone but they never seek reconciliation. But if you never seek reconciliation with the person who has offended you, you have not forgiven them therefore you are not a peacemaker.
- c) Peacekeepers avoid conflict so when someone offends them they often keep the peace by leaving the church rather than seeking reconciliation through forgiveness.

5) Peacemakers

Ephesians 2:14 *"For he himself is our peace, who destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility."* Jesus Christ is our peace because he came to earth as a peacemaker not a peacekeeper. When Jesus died on the cross he destroyed the barrier of sin that had separated man from God since the fall of Adam.

Peacemakers imitate Jesus by seeking reconciliation through unconditional forgiveness. Regardless of who is at fault a peacemaker seeks out the person they are in conflict with and tells them, "If I have offended you in any way please forgive me?" So how do we recognize peacemakers in the church?

- a) Peacemakers put other people before themselves.
- b) Peacemakers are learning how to die to their own self-interest.
- c) Peacemakers live under grace not under the law.
- d) Peacemakers are men and women of peace.
- e) A peacemaker strives to break down every barrier in the church.
- f) Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons of God.