

Peacemakers

Խաղաղութիւն Ընողները

John 14:25-31

Do you know that in the last 3500 years, there have been just 230 years of peace throughout the civilized world? It is the 20th Century that will undoubtedly be remembered as the military century. Of all war fatalities over the past half millennium, fully three-quarters occurred during the twentieth century—including roughly 26 million in World War I and 53 million in World War II. ¹

These are realities we live in, yes, in this broken world. Jesus knows that we live in a broken world where peace has disappeared. In this world, sin has alienated humans from God and from each other. Sin has destroyed relationships: Adam and Eve’s relationship with God, followed by Cain and Abel’s relationship with each other. Sin has bankrupted us of our relationships; sin has stolen the peace between God and humans, and as a result, between human and human as well.

No wonder Jesus brings this important reality in the beatitudes:

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

What do we mean when we talk about peace?

Please notice, it is not just about peace-lovers, peace-admires, or pro-peace individuals, **NO. Jesus is emphasizing blessed are the peacemakers.**

Everyone talks about peace, and they mean it well, mostly external peace, the absence of war and enmity. The peacemaking we’re talking about is not about stopping violence; **it is about changing hearts.** We cannot have genuine external peace without solving the root of the problem. Unfortunately, the world does not deal with human sin. Who can cure that disease? One has to start with God who is the source of peace.

Jesus said at the end of his ministry:

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.
(John 14:27 ESV)

In order to understand what peace he is talking about, **we need to accept Christ as Savior, Redeemer and Peacemaker.** He is the **Prince of Peace** (Isaiah 9:6). On His birth we sing the phrase “**on earth peace among men**” (Luke 2:14). **He is peace**, PERIOD, and he can give us peace. That is the source of finding peace with God, with ourselves.

Paul said: “For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility.” (Ephesians 2:14 ESV)

The word Jesus used about peace is *shalom*, *salam* in Arabic or Aramaic. Shalom is not just peace. When we greet someone “*peace be with you*”, we desire wholeness and overall well-being of the person. You wish well to person’s welfare, peace, health, good relationships and so on. One Jewish scholar says this about *shalom*: “It’s a comprehensive concept that signifies peace, joy, freedom, reconciliation, community, harmony, righteousness, truth, communication, humanity.”²

“In Hebrew peace is never only a negative state; it never means only the absence of trouble.... It means everything which makes for a person’s highest good.”³

How wonderful it is to greet everyone with a peace greeting. How wonderful it will be that when we see each other and we wish them well-being in totality.

1. The Peacemaker has to have INNER PEACE with God

Before being a peacemaker, one has to have that inner peace that only God can give us. Only Christ can do this:

“Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 5:1) (Amen)

This is the foundation. Without having that inner peace, our souls are restless. I don't think one can be a peacemaker without enjoying God's peace in their heart.

So as a result of God's work in us, we can be called peacemakers.

2. Peacemakers are active

"If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all." (Romans 12:18ESV)

If possible, as much as you can, try your best to live in peace with others.

My heart breaks when I don't live in peace with others. I have people who don't want to talk with me. I am sad about this. I do pray that God will open the door for making peace.

I will pray. I will try. I will strive:

"Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord." (Hebrews 12:14 ESV)

Strive for peace; endeavor for peace...God has His part and we have our part in bringing His peace in our relationships. I believe not everyone will be ready to accept the peace of God. Not everyone is ready to have peace. (Just a reminder that the last beatitude will lead us to persecution.)

3. Peacemakers are NOT compromisers of their beliefs

-Peacemakers are not the people who would compromise their foundational beliefs for the sake of peace. A great example is Vartan Mamigonian. A more recent example of this is the Armenian (Christians) pastors of Iran who were executed for their beliefs in the last few decades.

-Peacemakers and not appeasers (*peace at any price*).

4. Peacemakers build the body

Paul says more in Romans about pursuing peace. **"So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding."** (Romans 14:19ESV)

Our peacemaking should build the body of Christ. Our peacemaking should help us live Christ-centered, righteous lives with EACH Other. Peacemakers are essential for community life. Something that we are losing in the US where people live alone, even Christians.

5. Peacemaking is not exclusive for “holy” people.

Who can do this? Can anyone be a peacemaker?

A. Please do not take this beatitude alone. Jesus did not tell us to peacemakers in the first beatitude.

- Peacemakers are poor in spirit because they know they desperately need God.
- Peacemakers are mourners: They mourn over their sin. Asking forgiveness for their sins brings peace with God and with each other.
- Peacemakers are meek: They do not retaliate but they live God- controlled lives which brings peace.
- Peacemakers hunger and thirst for righteousness. They right-relationships with God and others.
- Peacemakers are merciful: They have the ability be inside someone else’s skin.
- Peacemakers are pure in heart. They are transformed hearts that brings pure motives.⁴

B. Peacemaking is God’s work not ours. Jesus comes into our lives, and that can help us be peacemakers. We will be instruments of peacemaking.

Illustration:

I was reading about a Sister called Rosemary Lynch, a Franciscan nun who spent all her in peacemaking. She chose not to call herself a “peacemaker.” Instead, she said she was “**in the service of peace.**” She says, “**None of us can make peace. Peace is God’s gift. But we can serve God’s peace.**”

6. Peacemakers will be called sons of God

“Son of” is a Hebrew (and Arabic) expression meaning “partaking of the nature of.” It reminds me of the expression “**like father, like son.**” Barnabas was called “Son of Encouragement” (Acts 4:36) because it was his nature to encourage others. “Sons of God” implies those who partake of the nature of God.

This is an identity issue. **We look at Jesus, and we want to be like him.** We learn from God the Father, and we become, like Him, a father for our children.

Illustration: My son Azad loves creating new things, video, story, music and so on. He loves to see that his father approves of his productions. “Dad, see what I am doing...” (He does not say it out loud).

God wants to hear from us: “Father, watch me as I go out and participate in peacemaking. I cannot bring peace. You are the source of peace. Let me serve it to others.”

Application:

Are you overwhelmed?

The good news is peacemaking is God work not yours.

Yet, we are called to be peacemakers: instrument of making peace.

World peace is not where we start. Start making peace from your kitchen, in your living room, over the phone, at your workplace, in your social circles, in your extended family...and more. (Read 2 Timothy 2:22-26)⁵

I would love to finish by meditating on the words of Jesus:

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

Amen

1. <https://www.quora.com/When-was-the-last-time-there-was-no-war-anywhere-on-Earth>
2. Pinchas Lapide, The Sermon on the Mount: Utopia or Program for Action? pp.34-35

3. William Barkley, The Daily Study Bible (Matthew) p 108

4. Adopted from [Being Makers of Shalom, Shawn Reese](#)

5. So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will. (2 Timothy 2:22-26 ESV)

Darrell Johnson notes, Jesus bestows incredible dignity on ordinary people with this Beatitude. Ordinary people, like you and me, can be makers of Shalom? Really? Ordinary people can love shalom. Ordinary people can keep shalom. But, makers of shalom? Ordinary people can make shalom? According to the Bible, only the Living God can make shalom. God is the great peacemaker, the great reconciler. Only the living God can produce peace. For, only by the living God will the wolf lay down with the lamb, as in Isaiah 11. Only by the living God will the lame leap like the deer and the mute shout for joy (Isa 35). Only by the living God will nations beat their swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks (Is 2:4). Only by the gift of the living God through Jesus are we reconciled to him, for we were once far away but he has brought us near (Eph 2:17). Only by the living God will we dwell with him someday when he will wipe every tear from their eyes and there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain because the old order of things will have passed away. (Rev 22:4). Peace making is God's work. Peace making is God's action, and Jesus gives ordinary people, like you and me, incredible dignity with this Beatitude! He says we can actually be part of the process of peacemaking. When Jesus moves into our lives, we begin doing what only the living God can do – we begin making peace. And, of course, that is why Jesus calls the peace-makers children of God, because when we are makers of shalom, we look like our good Father. We look like him.