

**Matthew 5: 9; “To Be a Real Peacemaker”, Sermon # 13 in a series entitled –
“These Sayings of Mine”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
on March 7th, 2021, in the Morning Worship Service.**

One of the main reasons that the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world was so that there would be peace between God and man. The Lord Jesus is the Prince of Peace. And He would have every Christian to become like Him, and be a peacemaker. He would have us to be peacemakers in winning people to Him. And then, He would have us to be sons of peace between ourselves, He would also have us to try, by His grace, to bring brethren together who are estranged from one another, for whatever sinful reasons. To see these good things come about, 1st of all – To be a real peacemaker, you yourself must have peace with God. 2nd – To be a real peacemaker You must have a desire to communicate the gospel of peace to people around you. And then 3rd – To be a real peacemaker you must have a desire to see brethren dwell together in peace. Let’s think about these things in personal terms.

1st of all – To be a real peacemaker, you yourself must have peace with God.

I think it is good for all men to know and to consider, that according to the Scriptures, there is no real peace for wicked people. And when I say wicked people, I mean those who do not know the Lord; those who do not acknowledge God, or desire the knowledge of His ways. They only live for themselves really, in the final analysis. They do not live unto God, or according to His word. The wicked may have earthly peace for a time, but they will not have it forever. Listen to Isaiah 57: 19 – “I create the fruit of the lips: Peace, peace to him who is far off and to him who is near,’ says the Lord, and I will heal him.” “But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.” “There is no peace,’ says my God, ‘for the wicked.”

But on the contrary, Jesus says here – “Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons of God.” Now to be blessed of God with saving grace is a much greater blessing than your simply having common grace. Let me explain. It is true that the blessings of common grace are very valuable in every way, to our earthly life and it’s general peace, it’s welfare, and well-being. Common grace is God’s goodness and kindness which He shows to all mankind because they are His creatures. He causes His sun to shine on the evil and on the good. He makes His rain to fall on the just and the unjust. In certain most definite ways He restrains evil in society by His Holy Spirit striving with men, so that they will not be able to pursue every wicked thing, to the degree or to the extent, that their sinful heart wishes that they could. But saving grace is a much greater blessing to the person who has it, because they are blessed with all the blessings in the heavenly places in Christ.

When you believe in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is not just that God watches over you and cares for you in a general sense, seeing to it that you have food and clothes, or that He preserves you, and keeps you in this life for a few years until you die. In giving a person saving grace, He saves them from His eternal wrath. He reconciles you to Himself because He knows, that whether you know it or not, that you are at enmity with Him before you come to know His Son. This is not a truth that is generally known, and so we need to consider it. What does the word “enmity” mean? It means hostility. It means that you and God are enemies. But, you say, I do not think of God as my enemy. I am glad that there is a God, and I do try most of the time to be a good person. Certainly God must approve of me as I am.

Well, let’s think together about a few verses. First of all, turn over with me over to Romans chapter 8, verses 3-8. I want you to learn about the first principles of what it means to be a Christian, and to know the Lord. “For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He

condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” “For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.” “So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

First of all, we see here that Paul is telling us that we cannot be saved by God’s law, our trying to keep His righteous requirement which are found in the law, by our own wisdom and strength. Paul is speaking here about the law of the Ten Commandments, or the two greatest commandments which sum up the Ten Commandments; that is, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, and with all your strength. And you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Why can’t you be saved by trying to keep the law? The law cannot save you because it is weak through your flesh! It is not weak in itself. The law is from God, and it is holy, and righteous, and good. But rather, the law is weak through your flesh.

You may not understand this word “flesh”, because when you hear it, you may think that it is referring to your fleshly body. But that is not what this word – Sarkos means in the Greek. What this word means is – the corrupt nature of man. The weakness is in sinful people who have the flesh, the sinful nature that they have inherited from Adam, our first forefather. So, to be “in the flesh” means that you are trying by your own thoughts and your own wisdom and strength, to please God. You may even a person who reads the Bible. But I want you to notice, that all people who have not trusted in Christ, all people who have not been born again by the Spirit of God, they are living according to their flesh. And so they are not really setting their minds on things above. They are really setting their minds on the things of the flesh.

Once again, this means that they want to live their life either apart from God, or in the case of religious people, in relation to God, by their own fallen and worldly way of thinking and doing things. Even though they may be religious, they still cannot please God because they are still carnally minded even though they go to church. They are still only thinking of religion in terms of what they have done or supposedly are doing for God, by their own good works. Interestingly, Paul says that to be carnally minded is death. To be in this state of only looking at things from the standpoint of what you can do to please God according to your own fallen carnal nature, all of your desires to do what is right according to your evaluation of the keeping of God’s commandments, is not enough.

Why? Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. If you are in the flesh, walking according to the flesh, you cannot please God. This is why Paul himself was so deceived before He was converted to Christ. He thought that he was keeping the law blamelessly. He was even persecuting the church in his zeal for the law. But actually, he was the chief of sinners. What about you? Are you carnally minded, or spiritually minded? Do you trust implicitly in your own evaluation of your own righteousness, or do you see that Christ is the only Person who has fulfilled the law, and that you have fallen far short of God’s glory in keeping His commandments? That is the real question when it comes to knowing the blessedness of being a peacemaker.

For how can you be a peacemaker if you are enmity with God, hostile to God and fighting against Him? You are guilty sinner in His sight, but you do not think so, according to your own fleshly way of thinking. You are actually dead in your trespasses and sins. To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. There is our word – Peace. Do you have peace with God? If you don’t, I can tell you how to find it. Turn over with me to Romans chapter 4, verses 1-5. “What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?” “For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.” “For what does the Scripture say?” “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” “Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as

grace but as debt.” “But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.”

That is how God justifies the ungodly. They do not work at their salvation. They trust in what Christ has done by His perfect obedience to all the commandments of God, and they are justified., they are declared righteous. Now look at Romans 5: 1 – “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” There it is, you have peace with God by faith in Christ. Now look at verse 6 – “For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” “For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die.” “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.”

Watch this – “For if when 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 that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.” So the person trusting in Christ has come to know the love of God towards them, in that while they were still an enemy to God, God reconciled them, by their not believing in themselves, their works, their best intentions, but by their faith in Christ. When you realize this in your mind and your heart, you will come to know for a certainty that you have peace with God. And you will, following on the heels of this, come to know the peace of God. For you are now in the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of God is not eating or drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Spirit.

And understanding this sweet peace, of having your sins forgiven, and having a New Heart, and having the Holy Spirit with you, working grace into your heart, day by day, you will decide that it will not do to keep silent about these things. You will want to become a peacemaker yourself, because you are now a son or daughter of God. You realize that having this peace, that the fruit of the Spirit is sown in peace by those who make peace. You know that you cannot save anyone from their sins like Jesus does, but you can share that peace can be found through faith in Him. You realize that the fruit of righteousness is first pure and then peaceable, gentle, and full of good fruits. And you want to demonstrate that in your life. And so, I am saying to you, that becoming a peacemaker is the effect of your being saved and becoming spiritually minded.

2nd – To be a real peacemaker there must be a desire to communicate the gospel of peace to people around you.

I want to take you back now, to the days of Jesus’ earthly ministry to show you this. Turn with me over to Luke chapter 10, verses 1-12. “After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go.” “Then He said to them, “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” “Go your way behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves.” “Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road.” “But whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’” “And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you.”

“And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages.” “Do not go from house to house.” Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you.” “And heal the sick there, and say, to them, ‘the kingdom of God has come near to you.’” “But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, the very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you.” “Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near to you.” “But I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that city.”

So, these 70 men were others who were appointed by Jesus to help in the work of evangelism; of preaching the gospel of peace. Jesus says here that the harvest truly was great,

but the laborers were few. That is, that there evidently was a great number of people whom the Lord would save at that time, and to become followers of Him. And so the word needed to be spread more widely. This is something that we should pray for, for, ourselves. We need to pray that God will raise up those who will labor hard at preaching and teaching of the word; yes it is true. But also we need to pray that the Lord would even raise up, even those who also might do door to door work, as was done here. These were laborers sent out into the Lord's harvest. And the Lord would tell these men, those who He had appointed, what they should do when they came to the door.

Jesus knew that he was sending them as sheep among wolves, and so they were to travel light, and they were to keep to their work. They were on a mission. But when they came to a house, and knocked on the door, and they were bid to enter, they were first instructed to say – "Peace to this house". Why was this? Because they were to act as peacemakers. They were bearing the gospel of peace, the good news of Christ's kingdom and His glory. They would be able to tell whether there was a person sympathetic to hearing this good news, and whether they would receive the messengers of the gospel in peace. If a son of peace was there, someone who either already knew the Lord, or someone who wanted to hear more about the Lord Jesus and wanted to be saved, this tangible peace, this spiritual peace which the 70 brought with them would be given to them by the Holy Spirit.

This was really being a peacemaker, to be a bearer of the Lord's peace, to wish and promote the blessings of peace to the household that they preached the gospel to. Those who do door to door work, or want to do it, we should be like them as well, when we share the gospel of peace with other people around us. We should have this sincere desire to see others have the same peace with God that we have. We shouldn't start out, necessarily, by confronting people with their sins. In due time, as we gain a hearing, if God is working in their hearts, they will want to know. But we start with God's good will to men in general and to them in specific, those who the Lord has led us to.

These 70 men were to be men of good will, and to do all that they could to further the physical and spiritual well-being of the people into whose house they had come. They were to be friendly, receive the hospitality of the people of the house. They were to heal their sick, and tell them about the kingdom of God, which kingdom was coming near to them, through them the messengers. On the other hand, whenever they came to a city which would not receive them, they were to go out into the streets and say – We wipe the dust of your city off our feet, as a protest against you. And the people of that city were to know that the kingdom of God had come near to them. We should understand from this that the gospel of peace, the gospel speaking about the Lord Jesus and what He came to do and to bring to fallen sinful man, is not always going to find favor with men.

For the Lord Jesus also said in Matthew 10: 34-39 – "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth." "I did not come to bring peace but a sword." "For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.'" "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." "And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me." "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me." "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it." "He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me." So you see here, that those who are peacemakers are not always received in the way that they ought to be when they come to a door bringing the gospel.

Preaching Christ and the gospel will sometimes even bring division in families. Christ is saying here, that this is to be expected. The preaching of the gospel of real peace, peace with God, is often the means of dividing and separating the people of Christ from the people of the

world. (Gill) Luke 12: 51 says – “Do you suppose that I came to give peace on the earth?” “I tell you, not at all, but rather division.” “For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. So, we should understand that when we preach and share Christ, that we need to prepare ourselves, and not be surprised by the rejection of family members. The opposition is coming from the carnal mind, as we looked at before.

But, blessed are you if you are willing to bear this rejection by people around you, and people who you have studied to see how you might bring the gospel to them. Even if we are spoken against, even if we are persecuted, we must see the blessing which comes to them, and the blessing which comes to us. We will look more carefully at this in the next sermon, on the blessedness of persecution. But suffice it to say here, that we will do well, if we will cultivate the mindset of a peacemaker. What does that look like? Well turn over to 1st Thessalonians 5: 14-24 – “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.” “See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.” That is what we promote as a peacemaker.

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thank; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” “Do not quench the Spirit.” “Do not despise prophecies.” “Test all things; hold fast what is good.” “Abstain from every form of evil.” “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.” Now, what is described in these verses is the actions of a peacemaker.

Think of the needs of the people around you, think of the needs of total strangers, even. It is your sanctification to do so. You have peace with God. Share that peace and communicate that peace in your words and actions; whether it is in relation to preaching the gospel, or whether it is in relation to maintaining or establishing peace right here in our church. Don't render evil for evil. Always pursue what is good, both for yourself and for all men. And God Himself, the God of peace, will bless you. For He is the God who will be sanctifying you, building righteousness and holiness into the very fiber of your being, in the midst of your reaching out with the gospel of peace to people around you.

3rd – To be a peacemaker you must have a desire to see brethren dwell together in peace.

In 2nd Corinthians chapter 13, verse 11, Paul says to the church of Corinth, and to us here today – “Finally, brethren, farewell.” “Become complete.” “Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.” What wonderful words are these! We are complete already in Christ, in the sense of our Justification. I hope that you see this. Having believed in Christ, your justification cannot change. God has declared you righteous for Christ's sake. It is an act of God that cannot be added to, and nothing can be taken away from it. But in the sense of our sanctification, we are told here, that we need to become complete. That is, we in our own heart and mind, need to know the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, guarding our hearts and our minds. We need to see and experience and know the comfort that is in Christ. And then we also need to be of one mind with the brethren.

This does not mean that we will always agree with one another on every issue that comes up, but we will, if we are wise and holy, be agreed about the way that we will treat one another. We will live in peace with each other, and when we do that, then the God of love and peace will be with us. That is something that each of us will grow in. It will begin to happen when we see how much it glorifies God not to fight with each other, or hold unloving, unkind, selfish, or sinful attitudes towards each other. These things take place sometimes because of something that we want to see take place in our church, or something that we think needs to change in the other person.

We need to, as it says in Hebrews 12: 14 – “Pursue peace with all men, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.” In order to do this, we need to begin by seeking to have control over our own spirit, and learn to guard our heart from tolerating unloving, unkind, and sinful thoughts which lead to unkind and hurtful words and deeds. We need to know the reality of peace ruling in our own heart and. Philippians 4: 7 – “And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Can you be a peacemaker in relationship to the leaders of the church? Listen to 1st Thessalonians 5: 12 and 13 also – “And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake.” “Be at peace among yourselves.”

What can we do to promote peace in this local church of ours? Colossians 3: 12-15 says – “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another, even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.” “But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.” “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.” O how important these instructions are; how needful they are, if we are to be peacemakers in the body of Christ; if we want to see our church grow with a growth that is from God.

We need to remember that we as believers are all headed to eternal glory; a glory which we will share with each other, the glory of being in the presence of God continually and forever. Let us live in light of that time, now. 2nd Peter 3: 14 says – “Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless....” Certainly it will be good for each of us to pray about this; whether we have peace in ourselves, and whether we have peace with all the brethren. “Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and the giving of thanks be made for all me, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.” “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior...”