

“Wonderful News for the Peacemakers”

A BETTER LIFE Sermon Series | Week Seven | Newbreak Church

October 17th, 2021

In this week’s study, Jesus teaches us about being a peacemaker. Here we learn from Jesus’ example in how He teaches us to build bridges of peace in times of hostility.

Start Here

- What is the best Halloween costume you have ever dressed up as?
- What picture comes to mind when you think of “peace”? Describe it as vividly as you can!

Going Deeper Into the Message

Point 1 – God celebrates those proactively make peace.

[Matthew 5:8 \(Wright’s Translation\) Wonderful news for the peacemakers! You’ll be called God’s children.](#)

Peacemaking is part of God's family business. It's what God's children do.

But what does it mean to be a peacemaker? Maybe it's helpful to start with what it's *not*.

Being a peacemaker is not:

- the absence of conflict (conflict is inevitable in a broken world)
- the avoidance of conflict (this would be *peacekeeping*, not peacemaking)
- appeasing all parties (many times not everyone will be happy about your stance).

So what is peacemaking?

Being a “peacemaker” (*eirēnopoios*) is more than the opposite of war or hostility. In fact, it is quite ironic that Matthew records Jesus using this word choice here since secular

Greek writers often used this word to describe leaders who applied forceful establishment to create peace.

Historians have pointed out how war is “one of the constants of history, and has not diminished with civilization and democracy. In the last 3,421 years of recorded history only 268 have seen no war.” *Only 268 years have seen no war.*

By stark contrast, Jesus envisions His disciples being peacemakers by living counter-intuitively, as the rest of the Sermon on the Mount (and the Gospels) unpack in more depth. To summarize, peacemaking is about standing in "no man's land" (so to speak) and playing a pivotal role in the reconciliation of two parties. But this can only happen if the so-called "peacemaker" has first found peace with God for himself, or herself. Peace with God is the catalyst to bringing peace to others. What do people need most? Peace with God. What do they also need? Peace with one another.

Being a peacemaker is about participating in binding broken things that belong together.

Humans were not designed to be such disparaged and divided creatures. Jesus secured our peace, but there is still work to be done to bring it into effect.

[How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes **peace**, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.” \(Isaiah 52:7, ESV\)](#)

How does our life proclaim the peace of Christ? It's easy to talk about how we need world peace when we don't have peace within our own communities, and even in our own homes. We are more likely to attend a rally about peace, but won't take action to bring peace with a friend we are in conflict with. In essence, it's okay for peacemaking to start small. Big dreams and aspirations are great, but they are futile if we don't take those first steps in bringing peace in the environments we are already in, before aiming to see peace in the surrounding world.

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- How does having peace with God influence our desire and actions for peace with others?
- As was discussed, a peacemaker is “about standing in ‘no man's land’ (so to speak) and playing a pivotal role in the reconciliation of two parties.” How does this picture give insight into our task to help aid in the act of reconciliation?

- Is there someone you need to make peace with? How can you be a peacemaker in that situation?

Point 2 – Peacemakers build bridges.

[Read Luke 19:1-10](#)

St. Francis of Assisi understood this call to the active pursuit of peace and summarized it with this poetic prayer:

"Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace. Where there is hate, may I bring love; Where offense, may I bring pardon; May I bring union in place of discord."

What is interesting to note in this story of Jesus with Zacchaeus is that Jesus did not wait for Zacchaeus to be a good person, or change his behavior, before Jesus chose to spend time with him. Jesus called Zacchaeus when he was knee-deep in his sin. That's when Zacchaeus, when all of us, need Jesus. Jesus acknowledging Zacchaeus and calling him, when Jesus knew Zacchaeus was in the midst of his sin, is what caused Zacchaeus to want to repent.

Jesus could have looked up, shook his finger at Zacchaeus, told him he was an awful sinner and thief and walked away. I'm sure that Zacchaeus had heard that lecture many times. Being condemned had never caused a change of heart. It didn't work with Zacchaeus, and it doesn't work with us.

If we want to be more like Christ, we need to choose to make peace with others when we are knee-deep in whatever is causing strife and conflict. We need to fix the relationship first and then we can work on communicating where we would like to see change. We need to show people that they are valued and seen. A natural response to this is a desire to hear the other side.

["All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation" \(2 Corinthians 5:18, NIV\).](#) As peacemakers, this is our ministry, to be reconciled to God, and to others.

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- What would it look like to reimagine St. Francis' prayer in our world today? How would you apply it to your context?
- What is the primary reason you choose not to make peace with someone in your life? At the end of the day, is that reason worth it? Why, or why not?
- How does God want to change your heart in the area of being a peacemaker? What does that look like?

—FINAL CHALLENGE QUESTIONS—

How are you going to think differently in light of what you have read, heard, and discussed this week?

What is one thing you are going to change in your life in light of the sermon?

BONUS: For those of you with kids or around kids: What is one truth from this message that you can share with your kids?