

Cheltenham
Ps Rob Buckingham
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The Happy Life (7)

Blessed are the Peacemakers

Message Notes

Matthew 5:9, "*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*"

Text. Psalm 37:35-40

Ish shalom shows the best way to conduct human relationships (i.e. in a peaceful way wherever possible)

Peace MAKERS not Peace LOVERS

In a modern context we think of this Beatitude as meaning an end to war or violence. Peace lovers often want peace at any cost – or no cost at all. Peace lovers fall into two categories – the pacifists and the peaceful...

The Peaceful: are people who want peace at any cost even if it is to their detriment or the ultimate detriment of others...

How to know if you are this kind of person:

- You always avoid conflicts or even disagreements
 - You make it a habit to say yes when you want to say no
 - You constantly worry about hurting others' feelings
 - You function totally from "shoulds" (should do this or that)
 - You always do more than your share (to please people)
 - You confuse being "needed" with being "loved"
 - You attract people who need to be rescued or consoled
 - You feel exhausted from always trying to be "perfect"
 - You fear letting your friends, family or even strangers down
 - You constantly suppress your anger because you fear rejection
 - You usually hold back from saying what they really think and feel
 - You have many regrets
 - You seldom, if ever, express an opinion of your own
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The Pacifist: a person who believes that war and violence are unjustifiable in any circumstance

The Bible does not teach pacifism; in fact it gives three times when it's right to fight...

1. In order to preserve freedom.

Many times in the Old Testament, God told the Israelites to go and liberate a certain group of people. In Numbers 32, God expresses anger at two tribes in Israel because they wouldn't go to war. Moses says to these two tribes, *"What are you going to do? Just sit here while the rest of your brothers go to war? Aren't you going to participate?"* If you don't know what's worth dying for, you won't know what's worth living for!

2. In order to defend innocent people.

Proverbs 21:15 *"When justice is done it brings joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers."* Christians are not just interested in peace. We want peace, but we want peace with justice. Peace at any price is not peace at all. Peace at any price is appeasement. God says that He is not only a God of peace but He is a God of justice. Edmund Burke, the Irish political Philosopher said, *"All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing."*

3. In order to stop the spread of evil.

The Bible makes very clear that God has authorized the government to enforce the law and punish offenders. Romans 13:4 *"Government is there to serve God for your benefit. If you break the law however, you may well have fear. He does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of justice to bring punishment on the wrongdoers."*

Resources

Answers to Searching questions: What is the Bible's view on war?

<http://baysidechurch.com.au/archivemessage/answers-to-searching-questions-3-question-1/>

Bayside TV: Is it ever right to fight?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=daTYcxb-YSE&list=PLohfh2pyxupy85tOFACTH8aJEtnvBj6Im&index=5>

Blessed are the Peacemakers

Being a peacemaker has to do with three areas of our lives:

1. Peace with God

Philippians 4:7, *"the peace of God...transcends all understanding"*

Romans 5:1, *"Therefore, since we have been justified (vindicated) through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ..."*

Mother Teresa:

Jesus, I love you. Jesus, I love you.

Michelangelo: (great artist and sculptor – wrote in his will)

"I commit my soul to God, my body to the earth, my possessions to my nearest relatives. I die in the faith of Jesus Christ and in the firm hope of a better life."

William Shakespeare: (in his last will and testament 1 month before death)

"I commend my soul into the hands of God, my Creator, hoping and assuredly believing only through the merits of Jesus Christ my Saviour, to be made partaker of life everlasting."

Sir Michael Faraday: (greatest experimental scientist of all time)

As he laid dying journalists questioned him regarding his speculations of life after death. *"Speculations, I know nothing of speculations. I am resting on certainties. I know that my Redeemer lives and because he lives I shall live also."*

Martin Luther: 1546

"O my heavenly Father, my eternal and everlasting God. Thou hast revealed to me your son, our Lord Jesus Christ. I have preached him, I have confessed him, I love him and worship him as my dearest Saviour and Redeemer. Into thy hand I commit my spirit."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer: (Courageous German theologian hanged in Nazi Germany during the Second World War)

On his way to the gallows: *"This is the beginning of a new life, eternal life."*

Peace with God leads to a greater sense of inner peace...

2. Peace with Self

That sense of inner shalom – of contentment, satisfaction and happiness despite what may be happening around you

"Don't be too hard on yourself - there are plenty of people willing to do that for you!"

"Love your neighbour as yourself" – 8 times in the Bible (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 19:19; 22:39; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27; Romans 13:9; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8)

Galatians 5:14, *"The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."*

In James 2:8 *"Love your neighbor as yourself"* is called "The royal law" (the most important thing)

When we love ourselves, when we're comfortable in our own skin, we will be truly free to love others...

3. Peace with people

On the basis of being at peace with God and enjoying His peace in our lives, we are equipped to be peacemakers, **wherever possible**, in our world (between individuals, in friendships, with family, in our communities & the nations).

Romans 12:18, *"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone"*

Everyone experiences both good and bad relationships
Everyone relates more easily to some people than others
Some people love you while others don't you
With some people you enjoy friendships, but others are always argumentative

People who like you very much call you by your name.
People who have a neutral interest in you can't recall your name. People who disdain you know your name but call you other names.

Peacemakers try to live in harmony with others. They work to restore and preserve relationships but they are also realistic about their own imperfections as well as the imperfections of others.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."