

Matthew 5:9

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 8/30/2009

How can we know we are saved? Blessed are the peacemakers

Prayer

Father, we praise You that it can be well with our souls because of Christ; that although there are toils and troubles and problems associated with this sinful world that You're gracious, that You have defeated sin and death through Your son Jesus; that although we mourn now we will be comforted. Lord I thank You that in the midst of trials that You console us and You comfort us with Your Word. And it is a comfort because Your Word reveals Your son Jesus, who gave Himself for us. I praise You for Your great love in sending Him for us. And Father, thank You that You continue to teach us and equip us to be like Christ, molding us into His image that we would be, and walk in a manner worthy of the great calling which You've called us. Lord thank You for Your Word, and I pray as we look into it today no one here would try to study or hear Your Word with sin in their lives, that they will not be as Your Word says a forgetful hearer, walk out and forget who they really are before You. I pray that all of us would have clean hearts and hands, and we would receive Your Word, be ready to do what it says, recognizing it comes from You, and it's good, and You are good. I ask You to bless Your Word in our lives and I pray that it would bring You glory and honor now in Jesus' name. Amen.

Sermon

Well some of you may have noticed that there are lately many peace signs popping up again these days. Some of you might remember that the peace sign was popular in the counter culture of the sixties and seventies, during the Vietnam War. Some of you will remember, I remember that because I was around during that time, and whatever your belief is concerning the symbol, whether it's just the letters "d" and "n" from the semaphore system signifying nuclear disarmament or whether it is going back all the way to Nero to mock Christians, pointing to how he would execute them upside down. Whatever your view is on the symbol, it's become popular again. And we see it extending beyond the regular culture of the country here, extending into the church. I see people who are believers who have peace signs. And you know, peace is a good thing. But we need to understand what true peace is.

Now there are many Christians who I believe are misled, who see the church's highest goal as attaining physical peace on this earth, a peace that they would try to attain apart from a true relationship with the living God. And the Word of God says clearly there is no peace for the wicked, there is no peace for those who have not been redeemed, for those who are in their sins. And it is because of sin that we will see that there is no peace, and thus the remedy to the peace problem is to have our sin taken care of and to walk righteously based on what God has said and done in Christ.

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Now I want to encourage you, we're looking at the Sermon on the Mount; we're looking specifically at the Beatitudes as we've come to Matthew 5. So would you turn in your Bibles to Matthew 5 and we're going to look at verse 9 today. We've come up to that point. And I believe it's one more element, one more element that God lays forth over these Jews to see and show them whether they are saved or not. And I believe we will have the question answered in one aspect today: "How can we know that we are saved?" Which also leads to the question, are you, and am I, peacemakers? Again, we think of peace in the way the culture declares peace, but today I believe we will see that God's peace is quite different from what the world's peace is. As Jesus would say "My peace I leave with you, not as the world gives"...

So would you turn in your Bibles to Matthew 5, and I'm going to briefly go through the context again as we're coming close to the end of the Beatitudes, we have one left before we move towards the rest of the Sermon on the Mount. We'll do one today and we have one after that which I believe are connected together as we will see peacemakers will be persecuted, there will be conflict for those who are walking in Christ's peace.

Now the Beatitudes, what we're looking at today, are part of a section of Matthew 5:3-10, a section which is called the Sermon on the Mount, which is chapters 5-7 in the book of Matthew. And as I've shared, this sermon on the Mount actually is kingdom righteousness presented by the King of kings, the Lord Jesus, which confronts phony righteousness which is really lawlessness. It is kingdom righteousness presented by the King, what someone who is righteous, in the kingdom, would look like, presented by the King of kings, the Lord Jesus, which confronts phony righteousness which is actually really as God would say through Christ, lawlessness. And it's very important to realize today again, as I've shared it each time, that the gospel is not presented in the Sermon on the Mount. You cannot be saved by trying to be a peacemaker. You cannot be saved by a hungering and thirsting for righteousness. As we will see today again, these are evidences of someone who does have a right relationship with the Lord God, one who is blessed.

Now we saw the context a couple weeks ago that Jesus Christ the King has come to His own people the Jews. God made a covenant with His people, God made a covenant and give them His Word, but His Word was never intended to save them in terms of the Law, it was intended to reveal sin. And within His Holy Word it pointed to the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. And these Jews should have known from the Word of God that all of us like sheep have gone astray, each one has gone their own way. They should have known that God would pour out His wrath on His suffering servant Jesus Christ, who would be born of a virgin, who would be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace, who would be pierced through for our transgressions. So then, Jesus has come to His own, those who claimed to have a relationship with Him. And at this day, if you were to come to the Capernaum area, to the Galilee area, and you were to talk to a Jew, they would say "I am one of God's people, I have a relationship with the Living God the Lord of Israel." They would say that to you. And God through Christ is merciful to point out to them where they really stand in relation to Him.

Now some of you today might claim, if I come to you and say "Are you a Christian?" You might say "Yes, I am a Christian." And God is a gracious God to lay forth His Word across your life, to show you where

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you really stand with Him, that you will not be self-deceived. And God desires you to understand the truth and know the truth, and be saved.

So today we're going to see I believe another element of what a changed heart looks like as the Lord Jesus lays this across the lives of these Jews. Now what we've seen so far in the Beatitudes, Jesus has called some fishermen unto Himself, they have dropped everything and come to Him. And then there is a group of people following Him also, and they are not following Him for the preaching and teaching, for His Word, they are following Him for the healings. And He comes away from them, and He goes upon the mountain. So let's turn and let's read the first ten verses of chapter 5, Matthew 5.

¹ And when He saw the multitudes, (that was all those people that were following Him around and wanted to get healed as we saw in chapter 4) **He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. ² And opening His mouth He began to teach them, saying, ³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. ⁵ "Blessed are the gentle,** (or your versions may say "the meek") **for they shall inherit the earth. ⁶ "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. ⁷ "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. ⁸ "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (And our verse) ⁹ "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. (And what we'll see the next few weeks, Lord willing) ¹⁰ "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. [Matthew 5:1-10]**

Now remember all of these statements start with the term blessed. And we've looked each week at what one who is truly blessed looks like from scripture. Our world believes blessing is based on circumstance, or what you have. If someone has something good happen to them, they would say "Oh, you are blessed!" Or something bad, "Oh, it's not going so well." But in scripture we see that the concept of blessing is intricately tied to a right relationship with the living God. And I want to share a couple verses here about blessing. We've looked at them before, but Psalm 34:8,

⁸ O taste and see that the LORD is good; (He's not a bad God, He's a good God) How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! [Psalm 34:8]

Romans 4:7, part of an earlier portion that Bob read today,

⁷ Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, And whose sins have been covered. ⁸ Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account [Romans 4:7]

You are blessed if God will not take into account your sins; If your sins have been paid by the cross of Christ; If you have placed your faith in Jesus Christ and cried out to Him to save you, you are blessed. Your sins are as far as the east is from the west. God loves you so much, you are blessed. Psalm 94:12,

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**Blessed is the man whom Thou dost chasten, O LORD, And dost teach out of Thy law;
[Psalm 94:12]**

Psalm 84:12,

O LORD of hosts, How blessed is the man who trusts in Thee! [Psalm 84:12]

Their faith is in the living God; that's true blessing, one who has a relationship with the living God. Psalm 112:1,

**Praise the LORD! How blessed is the man who fears the LORD, Who greatly delights in
His commandments. [Psalm 112:1]**

Psalm 119:2,

**How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, Who seek Him with all their
heart. [Psalm 119:2]**

And in Luke 11 we see the Lord Jesus saying clearly,

**But He said, "On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God, and
observe it." [Luke 11:28]**

True blessing comes in the context of a relationship with the living God. And when Jesus says "Blessed are those", it is in the context of Scripture in terms of what true blessing is. It is intricately tied to a right relationship with the living God through His Word, as we see. And again, these are the Beatitudes, they are not the Do-attitudes. He's not saying "Do this stuff," He's saying "If you are doing these things, if this is what you are then you are blessed." Then you are in a right relationship with the living God. It is an evidence that you have been forgiven, that you trust the Lord, that you fear Him, that you are in a right relationship with the living God through Christ.

Now, as we see Jesus begins to point to these Jews who believe they were blessed. They believed they were in a right relationship with the living God. They believed that they were blessed. And Jesus would confront this with these statements which clearly show what one who has a right relationship with the living God looks like. So who are the blessed? We saw in verse 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom." Blessed are the spiritually poor, they are bankrupt before God. There is nothing they can bring to the table before the Lord, they are in their sin, they are bankrupt. Blessed are the spiritually poor. "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." We see those who are in absolute spiritual destitution and poverty. They recognize there is nothing they can do to be saved. They've come before God empty and bankrupt, they are blessed. "Oh Lord, be merciful to me a sinner", as the man prayed, the tax-gatherer in Luke 18.

And we see that spiritual poverty leads to Godly sorrow; that those who are being saved, those who are truly being saved do grieve over their sin. And we believers should grieve over our sin. God's Word should cause us to be convicted, and we should grieve over it. We later on rejoice, rejoice in the Lord

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because you have been forgiven. But there should be a sense of mourning and grief over what we have done before the Lord.

And then we saw some more characteristics of those who are blessed, in a right relationship with the living God. Verse 5, "Blessed are the gentle (or the meek), for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy." We looked in the last month at these in depth, and these pronouncements of blessing point to a life which reflects a true relationship with the living God. "Blessed are the gentle," and internal submission to God which manifests in an outwards gentleness in the context of a sinful world. Are you gentle, or do you fly off the handle? Some people fly off the handle externally; some people fly off the handle internally. But blessed are the gentle, it is an evidence you are in a relationship with the One who is gentle and humble in heart.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." We looked at and saw that it is God's righteousness that is brought through Christ. Those who hunger and thirst, "I don't like what I'm doing, I want to do what is right, I hunger for the life of Christ to be manifest in me and in my circumstances, I want to be like Christ." You are blessed as an evidence of a right relationship with the Lord, you will be satisfied, God will bring that about. "He who began a good work in you will complete it."

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy." We see the merciful are those who extend the mercy of God, and God's greatest example of mercy which is help for the helpless, is when Christ extended salvation to you, He died for your sins, there is nothing you can do to be saved, you are absolutely helpless before God and God came and mercifully brought about salvation. And the merciful will be those like Christ. Certainly in a physical sense, but ultimately in the most important, they will exhibit and share the mercy of God concerning Christ.

And then last week we saw, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." We saw blessed are those, the word pure meant cleansed. Blessed are those who have cleansed hearts. The mind and the heart are synonymous. Blessed are you who's minds are cleansed. You're not thinking in the futile way you thought before you were saved. It is not all about self and "my life," your heart has been cleansed. Blessed are the cleansed in heart, for they shall see God. We saw that relates to the fruit of salvation when we are with the Lord Jesus forever.

Do you have a cleansed heart? Was your heart stained with sin? We saw many Proverbs last week, that there are those who think they are cleansed but they are still in their sin. It is only through the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ that we can have cleansed hearts. And I want to ask you, has your heart and mind been cleansed. It is an evidence that you are blessed, that you have a right relationship with the living God. Have your sins been forgiven?

The Jews were not pure in heart as we saw last week. They had the outside cleansed but the inside was full of wickedness. And for some of you, it describes you. You know you don't have a pure heart. You know your heart is defiled with sin, you know it is impure. But God is gracious to lay His Word across

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you, to show you if you claim to be His, that maybe you aren't. But He wants you to be because He sent His Son Jesus to die for your sins, to bring about the forgiveness of sins. And if you are poor in spirit and cry out before Him "Lord God, I can't save myself, I am in need of salvation, I am sinful, You are right to judge me. Lord Jesus, I believe in You, that you died for my sins and rose from the dead." You cry out to Christ, "Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved."

And last week we saw that believers, even though we are clean, John 13, Jesus tells His disciples "You are clean." Later on in John 15, "Because of the word I have spoken to you, you are clean" speaking of sin, they are clean, they are clean before Him. But yet they still needed their feet washed. They still got dirty with sin, and we believers get dirty with sin, our minds become impure, we walk in a world that can conform us if we are not transformed. And we need have our hearts continually cleansed, sprinkled clean, washed by Christ through the water of the Word, that we would be presented holy and blameless, a beautiful church, as a bride adorned for her husband. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."

And now we come to another pronouncement of blessing, our passage today which helps us see another element of what one who truly knows the Lord Jesus Christ would look like. Again, our passage, Matthew 5:9, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." Now as I shared before, there are many Christians and so-called Christians, believers and make-believers who believe that they are peacemakers, who are out on a campaign to bring about world peace. And many of the main-line denominations, they take this verse as a campaign to stamp out war. Is that what Jesus is saying here? With this in mind, we need to understand biblically speaking, what is a peacemaker. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

Another pronouncement of blessing from the King of kings and Lord of lords. Now this term peacemaker is a cognitive two words. The word "peace" which is throughout Scripture, over 400 times we see, *eirene*, and then the word *poios* which means "to do". A peace-doer. This word by itself is only used here. It speaks of those in a simplistic way, those who do or make peace. But yet, what does Jesus mean by this? There are all sorts of ideas in terms of what a peacemaker is. Hopefully we will see from the Word of God what a true peacemaker is, that we would understand whether we are blessed or not.

Now we need to understand the meaning of peace if we're going to understand what a peacemaker is. Let's take a look at the definition of peace. This Word *eirene* basically has its Old Testament counterpart, *shalom*, which speaks of well-being or welfare, situational peace. But our word *eirene* from the Greek speaks of a state of peace. It basically speaks of that which is opposite to conflict, opposite to conflict.

Now certainly we know that peace is the absence of fighting or war or conflict. If people are warring there is no peace. If there is not war, there is a peace on that level, that's obvious, we understand peace in that context. Yet, is this the only kind of peace the Word of God speaks of? There's more to it than the word.

Now apart from the cessation of war or armed conflict, we see in Scripture that it is also the absence of division, dissension, disorder and evil. Turn with me up a ways towards the ends of your Bibles to James.

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We're going to take a look at James 3. Now again, the Lord Jesus Christ in the book of James is confronting those who would believe they have a relationship also. And He is just made it clear that the tongue is a wicked thing, it's full of evil, and who can tame it? But earlier in the book He talks about, that we should have a tame tongue, that our religions is worthless if we can't bridle our tongues. And so it is the living God who takes hold of a life which enables us to be like Christ. But He contrasts that in James 3:14,

¹⁴ But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. (Don't be saying you're a believer if that's what your heart is like) **¹⁵ This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.** **¹⁶ For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist,** (selfish ambition is just self-seeking) **there is disorder and every evil thing.** (So you've got selfish ambition, disorder, every evil thing) **¹⁷ But the wisdom** (speaking of God's Word, His wisdom as we see in 2 Corinthians 2) **from above is first pure,** (it's clean, it's righteous, it's holy. Then what is it?) **then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.** **¹⁸ And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. [James 3:14-18]**

The fruit of a life of those who are functioning via God's wisdom because the Spirit of God is in them, and they can walk in a manner worthy, the fruit of that is righteousness sown in the context of peace by those who make peace. But the fruit of those who live by their own ideas and mental attitudes, selfish ambition, we have bitter jealousy, the fruit of that is disorder and every evil thing. So we've got a conflict, division, dissention, disorder or evil, the absence of those things, we have peace.

Concerning the Corinthian church, there were all kinds of disorder and conflict. They were abusing tongues and prophecy. And the Lord, through the apostle Paul says "God is not a God of confusion", 1 Corinthians 14:33, "but a God of peace." You have peace on one side, confusion on the other side, disorder, all sorts of evil things. So then, in a general sense, peace is that which speaks of a lack of division, conflict, dissention, disorder, evil, confusion between people. Now we need to be careful here, or we'll see later on that Jesus says "I didn't come to bring peace, but a sword", and he's speaking about the fact that when peacemakers are confronted by the world that does not accept Christ there is going to be conflict in that sense. Peace in the general sense then is a lack of conflict, dissention, and disorder.

Now these things are external. But we all understand there is an internal peace we can have also. We understand that everything can be at peace outside of us, but on the inside we can have all sorts of turmoil, conflict, all sorts of stuff going on. In Scripture we see that internal peace and anxiety are opposed to one another and cannot coexist. Philippians 4, we'll look at this in a couple weeks actually,

⁶ Be anxious for nothing, (don't worry about anything God says, He commands us) **but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.** **⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [Philippians 4:6-7]**

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We can have disorder, we can have anxiety, a lack of peace, but when we trust the Lord, praying, submitting, being thankful, there is His peace internally. So again we see peace associated with the lack of these things, and here specifically the sin of anxiety.

So then peace internal and external speaks of a lack of conflict, division, dissention, disorder and confusion, and you know that already right? Pretty obvious. So that's a general sense, but now let's take a look at what the Bible says the world's idea of peace is. How does the world define peace, how do those who do not know Christ, whether they claim to or not, how do those who think by their own selfish ambitions, they are driven by their own wills, how do they think concerning peace? Jesus made it clear that the world does have a peace to offer. The world does have peace to offer. But it is not God's peace. John 14:27, as Jesus is preparing His disciples for His departure and He would then give them the Holy Spirit, the promise of the Spirit. Jesus says in John 14:27, the Lord says,

Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. [John 14:27]

The world does have a peace to give, but it is not the peace of God. And we have seen throughout Scripture that this world peace often propagated by false teachers, or worldly prophets, or false teachers, who claim to follow the Lord, this world's peace is actually a part from the main issues which will bring peace. The world's peace never addresses sin and unrighteousness. The world's peace is apart from addressing the problem which brings about conflict and a lack of peace. Take for instance the false prophets in Jeremiah and Ezekiel. They would say "Peace, peace." Jeremiah 6,

¹³ "For from the least of them even to the greatest of them, Everyone is greedy for gain, (speaking of Jerusalem) And from the prophet even to the priest Everyone deals falsely. ¹⁴ "And they have healed the brokenness of My people superficially, Saying, 'Peace, peace,' But there is no peace. [Jeremiah 6:13-14]

Jeremiah 9:8-9,

⁸ "Their tongue is a deadly arrow; It speaks deceit; With his mouth one speaks peace to his neighbor, But inwardly he sets an ambush for him. ⁹ "Shall I not punish them for these things?" declares the LORD. "On a nation such as this Shall I not avenge Myself? [Jeremiah 9:8-9]

Farther down, Jeremiah 23, a real discourse on the false purveyors of peace at that time which we have today. By the way, they're usually religious people that are purveying peace apart from a forgiveness of sins. Jeremiah 23:16,

¹⁶ Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. (We should take heed to that concerning false teaching) They are leading you into futility; They speak a vision of their own imagination, Not from the mouth of the LORD. ¹⁷ "They keep saying to those who despise Me, 'The LORD has said, "You will have peace "; And as for everyone who walks in the stubbornness of his

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own heart, They say, 'Calamity will not come upon you.' ¹⁸ "But who has stood in the council of the LORD, That he should see and hear His word? Who has given heed to His word and listened? ¹⁹ "Behold, the storm of the LORD has gone forth in wrath, Even a whirling tempest; It will swirl down on the head of the wicked. ²⁰ "The anger of the LORD will not turn back Until He has performed and carried out the purposes of His heart; In the last days you will clearly understand it. ²¹ "I did not send these prophets, But they ran. I did not speak to them, But they prophesied. ²² "But if they had stood in My council, Then they would have announced My words to My people, And would have turned them back from their evil way And from the evil of their deeds. [Jeremiah 23:16-22]

They were saying "Peace, peace, God is not upset." But God was very upset because of their sin and He would discipline them and He was ready to pour out His wrath because of sin and wickedness. The world addresses peace apart from what will truly bring peace, which is the forgiveness of sins. The world's peace is a bogus, temporary peace, often propagated by the phony. Nothing has changed, we see this in 1 Thessalonians 5,

¹ Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. (Paul tells the Thessalonians) ² For you yourselves know full well (and they had only been with Paul for three weeks but they knew this, they understood doctrine and truth. If you've been a Christian for more than three weeks you should read 1 Thessalonians. He says) *that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.* ³ While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" (The world says peace. Everything is cool if we could just stop these conflicts, we're going to have peace) *then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.* ⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief; ⁵ for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; [1 Thessalonians 5:1-5]

The world's peace is a bogus peace because it does not address the reason for conflict which is sin and unrighteousness. Satan offers the world's peace, a peace which comes a part from a submission to the Lord of the universe which is the only way you will ever have true peace. A peace which comes a part from the forgiveness of sins is what Satan and the world offers to you. And I want to ask you, are you able to identify false peace when you hear it? When the purveyors of peace say "Peace" yet do not turn people from their sins to Christ? Do you recognize when it's the world's peace? Maybe you've been caught up in that, you need to say "Lord, I'm sorry, I've seen this totally wrong and I'm sorry." Praise the Lord if that's the case.

Well, what about God's revelation concerning true peace? What is true peace? I think we're going to see here in a moment that true peace cannot be separated from the God of peace, Jesus Christ revealed in Scripture. God is characterized by peace, we see the term "peace" throughout, we see the term "God of peace." The apostle Paul calls the Lord "The God of peace" twice in the book of Romans. Romans 15:33,

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“Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.” Romans 16:20, “And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet...” . Woah! How could He be a God of peace crushing Satan? He’s taking care of evil which will bring about peace. “And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.”

God is characterized by peace in Scripture. We saw the wonderful truth earlier in Philippians 4:8-9, and we see as it moves forward to the next portion. Philippians 4:8,

⁸ Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things. (A cleansed mind, let it dwell on these things, those are the things of Christ) ⁹ The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, (the apostle Paul bringing the Word of God, he says here) practice these things; (do it) and the God of peace shall be with you. [Philippians 4:8-9]

He’s the God of peace who is with those who are walking with Him. 1 Thessalonians 5:23,

²³ Now may the God of peace Himself (personally) sanctify you entirely; (set you a part from sin unto Himself) and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass. [1 Thessalonians 5:23-24]

The God of peace raised Jesus from the dead. He equips us, Hebrews 13:20,

²⁰ Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, (may this God of peace) ²¹ equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. [Hebrews 13:20-21]

It is the God of peace that works out in our lives to make us like Christ, that we would be like Him, peacemakers as we’ll see. The God of peace. And we saw earlier, God is not a God of confusion but peace, 1 Corinthians 14:23. And when true believers are like-minded, having the mind of Christ from the Word of God, we will live in peace, and the God of peace will be with us, 2 Corinthians 13, as Paul closes out his forth letter, two that we have, 1 and 2 Corinthians. 2 Corinthians 13:11,

¹³ Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, (think the same way) live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. [2 Corinthians 13:11]

If the Word of God is functioning in your life because you’re a true believer, God is with you and He is the God of peace, internal, and as we will see, external. God of peace. And folks, Scripture is clear that the fruit of the Spirit, one of fruits of God’s Spirit is peace, Galatians 5:22, the fruit of the Spirit of God in

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the life of a believer. One of them is peace, Galatians 5:22, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace...". If you are resting in Christ, abiding in Him, a fruit of that is peace. Folks, God is a God of peace. And we see in Scripture that Jesus Christ, who is God incarnate, is the Prince of Peace, He will "reign in peace", Isaiah 9:6-7. He is also the Lord of peace who grants peace. 2 Thessalonians 3:16,

¹⁶ Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all! [2 Thessalonians 3:16]

Wow, God's desire is for you to have peace in every circumstance. It's not taking away the circumstances, but it's a peace that comes from the living God. What a wonderful statement. "Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all!" Folks, God is a God of peace. And as we'll see in a moment, Christ Himself is our peace, Ephesians 2:14. God is characterized by a lack of conflict because there is no unrighteousness in Him. He is a God of peace and He is the source of peace. And when we don't have peace it's an indicator that God's not functioning in our lives right?

Now we need to recognize as I've shared throughout so far that true peace cannot be separated from righteousness. You cannot be at peace with God apart from being righteous. You cannot be at peace with someone else apart from righteousness, as we will see. You cannot be a peace-maker apart from the righteousness of Christ in your life. Remember what we saw in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, false prophets saying "Peace, peace", but not turning people from their sin. Isaiah says it clearly in Isaiah 57:21, "There is not peace, says my God, for the wicked." The wicked are those in whom God sees in their sin. If your sins have not been forgiven, God sees you in your sins, you are wicked because He is holy. He sees you that way, and He calls you as such, but He wants to make you the righteous, He wants to save you. There is not peace for the wicked God says. And if you are in your sins, you have no true peace, you have not experienced peace ever, your soul is in turmoil, you have not experienced peace with the living God. There is no peace for the wicked.

And it is our sin, later on, a few verses later in Isaiah 59. We see the reason why there's no peace.

¹ Behold, the LORD's hand is not so short That it cannot save; (it's not so short that it cannot save you) Neither is His ear so dull That it cannot hear. ² But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear. [Isaiah 59:1-2]

There's no peace for the wicked. We saw in James 3, I read it earlier, that righteousness and peace are associated together, and sin and a lack of peace together. God's kingdom characterized by peace. Romans 14:17,

For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, (don't get all caught up in that stuff, as Paul's addressing the weaker and stronger brethren) but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. [Romans 14:17]

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The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. That's wonderful isn't it? And folks, man in his sinful state is at enmity with God, there is no peace. Ephesians 2, let's turn forward to Ephesians 2. "General Electric Power Company", Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians. Ephesians 2:1,

¹ And you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. ³ Among them we too all formerly lived (we all were this way) in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. (Not following the Lord, but our own minds, but it says) ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even while we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), [Ephesians 2:1-5]

Then later on, up in verse 14, he (Paul) says, verse 13 actually,

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off (that's speaking of Gentiles) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups (that's Jew and Gentile) into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, ¹⁵ by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. ¹⁷ And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; ¹⁸ for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. [Ephesians 2:13-18]

Colossians 1:19, and while you're turning there I'll finish up in Ephesians 2:17, "And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near." Peace to those who were far, the Gentiles, they were pagans, peace to those who were near, the Jews who thought they were saved, he preached peace to both of them. Colossians 1:19,

¹⁹ For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, (that's the fullness of deity in the bodily form of Jesus Christ) ²⁰ and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. ²¹ And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, (that's where you're at if you don't know Christ, there's not peace) ²² yet He has now reconciled (a relationship reconciled) you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach-- ²³ if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you

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have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister. [Colossians 1:19-23]

Before Christ, we were engaged in evil deeds, at enmity. Romans 2:9,

⁹ There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, (if you sin there's tribulation and distress) **of the Jew first and also of the Greek,** (doesn't matter what your race is) **¹⁰ but glory and honor and peace to every man who does good,** (and we see in the context of Romans we can only do good through faith in Christ, it's the only way we can do it) **to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹¹ For there is no partiality with God. [Romans 2:9-11]**

Romans 8:6,

⁶ For the mind set on the flesh (that's me, myself, I, all my desires) **is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, ⁷ because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so; ⁸ and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. [Romans 8:6-8]**

If you don't know Christ, you're at enmity with God, there is no peace between you and God. God's wrath is upon you, and He will pour out His wrath, He will punish you for your sins. But He graciously sent Christ instead, who took the punishment for you, and you by faith in Christ can be reconciled and can be at peace with the living God. Romans 5:1,

¹ Therefore having been justified by faith, (that's being declared righteous) **we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. [Romans 5:1]**

Man apart from the forgiveness of sins is not at peace with God. And we'll see only true peace can be attained through faith in Christ. The prophet Isaiah shares, Isaiah 52:7, **How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news,** (that's speaking of of the gospel), **who announces peace.** A peace announcer; and that peace comes through a reconciled relationship with God when sins are forgiven, The one who announces peace. Peter clarifies in his sermon in Acts 10:36, that salvation comes through Christ, **The word which He had sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ, (He is Lord of all).** When you recognize He is Lord, you submit to Him, you confess your sin, you are at peace. If you're not submitting, you're not at peace, I can tell you that right now. We all know that right? And Christ is our peace who gave Himself for us, and when we trust in Christ we are declared by God to be righteous. And we are at peace with God.

Some of you today are still in your sins, you stand before a Holy God; you will stand before Him, who requires absolute perfection. And He will judge you because you fall short because "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." Can you attain the glory of God by the way you act? We can't. We fall short. We've all sinned. Regardless of how you feel, whether you feel there's peace with God, the false prophets came along and said "Israel, peace, peace, peace, it's all peaceful with God." Regardless of

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what you feel, if you're still in your sin there's no peace. But God sent His Son Jesus to die for you. And we saw, Colossians 1:19,

¹⁹ For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him, ²⁰ and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross... [Colossians 1:19-20a]

Do you have peace with God? Do you have peace with God based on what He says? The only way to answer yes is if you've placed your faith in Jesus Christ as Lord for the forgiveness of sins. And I have the great privilege to announce to you, I have the wonderful privilege to preach peace to you, to announce peace, peace with God through the forgiveness of sins. How many times have you shared with someone "Peace with God through the forgiveness of sins"? Listen to what Zacharias says concerning John the Baptist who would prepare the way for the Lord Jesus. Luke 1:76

⁷⁶ "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; For you will go on before the Lord to prepare His ways; ⁷⁷ To give to His people the knowledge of salvation By the forgiveness of their sins , (that's it) ⁷⁸ Because of the tender mercy of our God, With which the Sunrise from on high shall visit us, ⁷⁹ To shine upon those who sit in darkness (that's sin) and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace." [Luke 1:76-79]

Back to our passage, "Blessed are the peacemakers." There's no way to be a peacemaker apart from having peace with God. "Blessed are the peacemakers." And I believe our statement here is saying that the blessed, the saved, are going to be peacemakers. They're going to be those who make peace in a Biblical sense, in the sense that Christ brought peace. True peace only comes from the Living God, there is no peace for the wicked. And peacemakers will be, as we will see, peace-proclaimers in Christ. And I believe if you are truly saved there is going to be a manifestation of His peace in your life, as we will see. If you are truly saved, there is going to be a manifestation of His peace in your life, internally and externally. We saw in in chapter 4 earlier, that the God of peace can be with us now because of the forgiveness of sins. Psalm 119:165, **Those who love thy Law (that's God's Word) have great peace, and nothing causes them to stumble.** Wonderful statement. Isaiah 26:3-4, **The steadfast of mind Thou wilt keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in Thee.** (Another translation) **Thou will keep him in perfect peace who's mind is stayed upon Thee.** And if you're in your sin you can't think about God rightly because you see Him in a distorted fashion, through your sin. He continues, Isaiah 26:4, **Trust in the Lord forever, for in God the Lord we have an everlasting Rock.** Colossians 3, we are to let the peace of Christ rule our hearts. We're called to peace.

Yet how does this idea of a peacemaker manifest? How is it we are actually peace-doers or peacemakers? I believe there will be an outward manifestation of a true relationship with those in the body of Christ and those outside the body of Christ. If you are truly a son of God, as we will see, if you are truly in a relationship with God, then we will be peacemakers, and we are peacemakers. But what does a peacemaker look like? How is it that Jesus brought peace? It was through the blood of His cross

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through the forgiveness of sins. "How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace, and brings good news of happiness, who announces salvation", that's a peacemaker.

Just as Paul preached peace through Jesus Christ, so too we preach peace. Ephesians 6, in terms of the full armor of God, we are to shod our feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace. We are to be carrying the gospel of peace around with us as we go. And brothers and sisters, if we you are saved you are a minister of reconciliation, you are a peacemaker. Let's turn to 2 Corinthians 5, wonderful statement. 2 Corinthians 5:17,

¹⁷ Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. (Wonderful, wonderful, you are forgiven, you are a new creation in Christ) **¹⁸ Now all these things are from God,** (God did it and not us) **who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation,** (we were not at peace with God but God through Christ reconciled us, brought us into a right relationship, therefore those who have been justified by faith have peace with God, right? And He gave us the ministry, we have the ministry of reconciliation, we are peacemakers) **¹⁹ namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.** **²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.** (Blessed are the peacemakers, be reconciled to God. And here's the word of reconciliation that He gave us) **²¹ He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. [2 Corinthians 5:17-21]**

The word of reconciliation is not a better life. The word of reconciliation is that God made Him who knew no sin to become sin on our behalf, our sin was poured out on Christ and He died for our sins. And we are ministers, servants of reconciliation. Blessed are the peacemakers.

Now folks we need to recognize that a true peacemaker, just as with Christ, when peace is rejected by the world there will be conflict. Matthew 10, this is the context here. Jesus says as He sends out the disciples, Matthew 10:34,

³⁴ "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; ("If you think I (Christ) came to make this earth peaceful you missed it completely because it is about the forgiveness of sins", as we see in Scripture) **I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.** **³⁵ "For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;** **³⁶ and a man's enemies will be the members of his household.** **³⁷ "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.** **³⁸ "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.** **³⁹ "He who has found his**

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life shall lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake shall find it. [Matthew 10:34-39]

When the gospel is rejected there will be conflict, there will be conflict. One pastor says,

This is not a peace at any cost. We are talking about the proclamation of the truth that brings peace and that will often bring great conflict. It will divide family and friends. But we must proclaim the message of peace and reconciliation of Christ no matter what kind of strife, controversy or conflict that the message of peace stirs up. After all, Jesus says He came to bring a sword. [Gill Rugh]

And that's the context. Let me ask you again, would you call Jesus a peacemaker? Yes, right? He brought peace. Are you ready to share the good news as God leads you? Are you a minister of reconciliation? Are you a peacemaker? Blessed are the peacemakers. You see, the peacemakers are blessed because they are exhibiting the character of Christ, His love in bringing about the gospel, to bring salvation and forgiveness of sins which brings peace. And if you could care less about dying souls around you, then I would examine yourself because the life of Christ is not manifest in your life. Blessed are the peacemakers.

Now another area I believe we see in Scripture I believe as we close here concerning peacemakers is our relationships within those around us. And there are some practical issues here that we see in Scripture. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7 that if an unbelieving spouse leaves, let them leave, we were called to peace. And 1 Thessalonians 5, the exhortation to the shepherds and flock is to live at peace with one another. How do we live at peace? How are we at peace? It is when we are behaving righteously we have peace. Paul makes it clear to the Ephesians in Ephesians 4 that we are to be diligent to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. We are to be pursuing peace, a practical righteousness that brings about peace in relationships. If we are walking righteously in both sides of a relationship, there's going to be peace. If this person and this person are pursuing Christ righteousness in how they relate together there will be peace. We are to pursue peace with those who have clean hearts. 2 Timothy 2:22,

²² Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. [2 Timothy 2:22]

A clean heart. Hang out with those who have clean hearts and pursue those things he's saying. Listen to what Paul says in Romans 12,

¹⁷ Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. [Romans 12:17-18]

Don't pour out evil for evil, do the right thing. As far as it is with yourself, be at peace with all men. How am I to be at peace with all men? By behaving righteously. How am I to be at peace in the situations of conflict in a marriage? To behave righteously. How am I to be at peace at work? To behave righteously. To be Godly. Now remember there's no peace for the wicked, but peace is pursued in the context of Godliness. A couple more verses I want to share. Hebrews 12:14,

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¹⁴ Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. (Be righteous and holy, pursue peace) [*Hebrews 12:14*]

1 Peter 3:10,

¹⁰ For, "Let him who means to love life and see good days Refrain his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking guile. (Speak right) ¹¹ "And let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. ¹² "For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, And His ears attend to their prayer, But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." [1 Peter 3:10-12]

How do I seek peace and pursue it? I turn away from evil and I do what is right in the context of relationships. Do you pursue peace? Or do you pursue conflict? Diligently strive to be like Christ, a peacemaker in all your relationships, primarily the gospel of peace, but then peace within relationships.

What are peacemakers like? They are those who have peace with God. They have been declared righteous, they are those pursuing peace by trusting and obeying the Lord, manifesting His righteousness in relationships and declaring His peace. Now in Jesus' day the Jews were not peacemakers, they were in terrible conflict. There was all kinds of strife because of sin. They were not those who brought about the good news quoted in Isaiah which they knew. They were more focused on their own lives, "Give us peace from these Romans who are coming over us." Rather than peace which comes from righteousness. And Jesus being a merciful God laid forth one more attribute of what someone who is saved looks like. Blessed are the peacemakers.

Now in closing, why are they blessed? It says "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." Again, I need to qualify this, He's not saying "Be a peacemaker to be a son of God", He's saying "If you are one, you will be called a son of God." Indeed we see in Galatians 3:26 that it is only through faith in Christ that we are called sons of God. Galatians 3:26, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." When we trust in the Lord Jesus Christ we are adopted into the family, we are called sons and daughters of God. Ephesians 1:5, (we were adopted as sons) "He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will." When we trusted the Lord Jesus Christ we were adopted into the family of God, we are sons and daughters of the living God. We who were far off were brought near by the blood of Christ. We who were not in a relationship with the living God have been placed into a relationship which we are sons of the living God.

Now Scripture reveals that believers are also children of God. There's two words, ours here is "sons", *huios*, and "children", *teknon*. The term "child of God" speaks of a tender, affectionate relationship between a parent and a child. But "sons of God" expresses dignity and honor. I was my parents child and son. Now I am no longer a child, but I am still their son. Blessed are the peacemakers, they shall be called sons of God.

Romans 8 gives us a great picture, let's turn there as we close. Romans 8, great picture of a son. And if you're familiar with the movie Ben-Hur, this is the picture from Scripture, it comes from a Roman adult

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son adoption, where we are sons, we've been adopted, but there will be a day when God declares to everyone that we are His sons, when He gives us our inheritance, when it is manifest to everyone. We are in Him right now, we are His sons, but there will be a day when it will be manifest. Romans 8:11,

¹¹ But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you. ¹² So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh-- (you don't need to live that way anymore) ¹³ for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; (that's the way you're living) but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are (what?) sons of God. (If the Spirit of God through the Word of God is leading you in your life you are a son of God) ¹⁵ For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. ¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. (They glory that's going to be revealed to us, listen) ¹⁹ For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. [Romans 8:11-19]

God's people right now, right now you can't spot them, "Oh, is that a Christian or not?" Someday, God's true children will be revealed. "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God."

I began talking about the peace sign, the bogus symbol that champions false peace and a wicked world; a false peace that is accomplished apart from the forgiveness of sins. Today we've seen the sign of peace in the truly blessed, a true sign. Blessed are the peacemakers; those who proclaim peace and live it out in the context of righteousness. Do you proclaim His peace? Do you live it out in your relationships? "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God."

For those of you who do not know Christ, you're not a peacemaker and you know it because you don't have peace, there's no peace for the wicked. God's gracious, He sent His Son to die for you. If you trust in Christ He'll forgive you, you'll be cleansed. Every sin, every evil thought, every wicked thing you have ever done will be wiped clean and God will see you in Christ who is totally righteous and you can rejoice and praise Him and give Him glory because you're forgiven of your sins. There's not peace for the wicked, Christ came to bring peace, to bring peace between you and God.

What about us believers? Maybe some of us are disobedient peacemakers. We're really focused on ourselves and our will at times rather than proclaiming peace in the relationships that God has lead us into, proclaiming peace through the forgiveness of sins in Christ. Maybe we're quarrelsome in relationships. We need to confess that sin. The reason we're quarrelsome is because of our own sins,

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selfish ambition. The reason we don't have peace in our relationships concerning ourselves is because we're not walking righteously. We need to confess that. Blessed are the peacemakers.

Are you at peace? Is your mind stayed upon Him? "Those who love the law have great peace" (Psalm 119:165). "The steadfast of mind Thou wilt keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in Thee" (Isaiah 26:3). We can't get peace with God apart from His righteousness. We cannot be at peace with others apart from His righteousness manifest in our lives. "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God."

Prayer

Father, thank You for Your Word. Thank You so much, it's one more picture of what a true child looks like, one element. And Lord, there are some here today who are not at peace with You. Not because they think they are but because You say they aren't, because their sin is in the way. I pray they would confess their sin, that they would be rescued from death, transferred into life. Father, may none of us today walk out of here with those in our midst who don't know you and not be peacemakers. May we not just walk away, forgetting what we've heard. May we exhibit by faith and obedience the life of your Son in sharing His peace as You bring it about Lord God. I pray we don't create conflict by the way we share peace, I pray we allow You to do it, and if there is conflict that's because they reject You. And Lord I pray we would be peacemakers in our relationships in the next conflict we enter into, I pray we would draw upon Thee and seek to respond rightly, that we would be at peace. In whatever it is, if it's with our children, or spouses, at work, whatever it is. And Lord I thank You so much that You sent Your Son to die for us, that You reconciled us through Him, and have given us a ministry of reconciliation and the word of reconciliation about Christ. Thank You for Your Word. We praise You now in Jesus' name. Amen.

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