

## Happiness through Peacemaking

Matthew 5:9

**In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus describes the spiritual attributes of those in the kingdom of God.** The beatitudes introduce this sermon by listing the inner qualities that people in the kingdom must possess in order to live righteously and experience true happiness.

**The world will never be the dwelling place of peace until peace finds a home in the heart of every man and woman.** The pursuit of peace has become a full-time passion for our war-torn world. Peace in the home and peace among nations will never come as long as we seek peace on our own terms, as long as we cling to the things within us that make strife inevitable. There will never be any real peace as long as we allow pride and selfishness to dominate our lives and relationships.

**We live in an age of anxiety.** With all our scientific and technological progress, we have less peace than the cave dwellers had. Our civilized world is forever looking nervously over its shoulder, fearful of finding a nuclear mushroom cloud on the horizon announcing that our planet is about to become a massive graveyard in space.

**When Robert Oppenheimer, who supervised the development of the first atomic bomb, appeared before a congressional committee, he was asked if there was any defense against the weapon.**

"Certainly," the great physicist replied.

"And that would be...?" asked the congressman.

Oppenheimer looked over the hushed, expectant audience and said simply, "Peace."

**But there is no peace.** President Kennedy created a Peace Corps. We have peace marches. Political candidates promise us peace.

**Meanwhile, the armies of the world grow larger and more powerful.** The thundering hoof beats of the four horsemen of the apocalypse can be heard racing toward the bloodbath of Armageddon.

**There will be no peace on earth until we have peace with God.** Peace is God's gift. Man cannot manufacture it. He cannot imagine it. He cannot duplicate it. Some folks stare into crystal balls trying to visualize peace. Others smoke dope trying to actualize it. But the bottom line is that there is no peace without God.

**The truth-of-the-matter is that we cannot be peacemakers if we ourselves have no peace.** Have you ever noticed how hard it is to give away something you yourself do not have? When we try to be peacemakers without having peace ourselves, we make things worse instead of better.

**Just as happiness begins with an attitude, so does peace.** Have you ever made a slip of the tongue and then tried desperately to correct it - only to dig yourself into an even deeper ditch? In an effort to preserve peace, you almost declare war because of the attitude of the one with whom you are speaking.

A wife asked her husband, "Honey, I don't think I look thirty-five. Do you?"

"Of course not," he replied. "But you used to!"

One of the great differences between men and women is this – women speak from their hearts and men speak from their heads.

**In international terms, peace is often nothing more than the time between wars when the armies of the world are reloading.** The dove of peace still finds the world covered with the flood waters of hatred and greed. In spite of the finest efforts of our most seasoned statesmen, there is still no peace. **Why Not?**

**Because peace is more than a piece of paper.** It is more than a building surrounded by the colorful flags of the United Nations. It is more than a passing desire of the human heart. **Peace is the by-product of a right relationship with God.** If we do not have God's approval, peace is impossible.

**The secret of peace is locked within the lyrics the angelic chorus we sing with such blind sentiment every Christmas.** The biblical text reads this way in Luke 2:14, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." The Greek word for "peace" is the word "eirene" (i-ray-nay), and in Hebrew it is "shalom." In the Hebrew "peace" is never only a negative state; it

never means only the absence of trouble; in Hebrew "peace" always means "every thing which makes for a man's highest good."

**Therefore, in the Word of God, being a "peacemaker" does not mean that we are simply seeking the absence of evil things; but that we seek the presence of all good things.** And this draws our attention once more to Philippians 4:7-8 where we have been told, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus... (therefore), whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." **Remember, without God's approval, peace is impossible!**

In Romans 5:1 Paul says, "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." **Notice the sequence.** First we are justified through faith - that's God's condition - and then we have peace with God.

**In the heart of every man lurks a sense of inner wrongness and a conscience that will not be silenced.** Try as we might to escape it, we can't. We can try to sweep it under the rug or take it to some Shangri-la of forgetfulness. **But we can never go far enough to escape ourselves.** We can't drink enough alcohol, snort enough cocaine or swallow enough pills to silence our consciences.

**Our society tries to dismiss the whole notion of conviction, of the need for forgiveness, of the conscience, or moral responsibility.** It rejects the wisdom of God's Word and embraces the humanistic solutions of rearrangement of attitudes, situation ethics and manipulation of emotions. Paul put it this way in 2 Timothy 3:1-5, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." **We are living in a day when we seek devices to make us feel good without being good, we seek to banish evil without quitting evil, we seek to get peace of mind without the confession of sin! Child of God, it will never happen!**

The inerrant Word of God says in Psalm 85:10 that "Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other." **Righteousness and peace go together.** We can't have one without the other. If we want to feel good, we have to be good.

**What about you today?** Are you searching for peace? Then stop fighting God. **Quit trying to justify your carnal conduct.** Call it what God calls it: SIN.

1 John 1: 8-9 says that "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." Peace is as close as the confession of sin that severs our fellowship with God!

**Aren't you tired of being unhappy?** Aren't you tired of a meaningless and empty life? Aren't you tired of tossing and turning on your bed at night as though the sheets were coals of fire? **Then Jesus is your answer!!** Ephesians 2:14 tells us, "For he himself is our peace."

Look once more at what Jesus said here in Matthew 5:9, "Blessed (Happy) are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God." Notice that the "peacemakers" shall be "called the children of God." Look at the word "called." **This has to do with reputation!** This has to do with what people think about who you are.

**Now you have to be careful right here, because Jesus is not really concerned about popularity.** You see, there is a real difference between popularity and reputation. People with money, looks, and prestige can be extremely popular and still have a rotten reputation.

**So, how does one go about establishing a reputation that is pleasing to God?** I want to share these thoughts with you on the matter.

**There must come a time in each of our lives when we take responsibility for who we are and what we have become.** We can no longer blame father, mother, boss, government or God. Happiness begins the moment we refuse to keep on playing the coward, continually in retreat from reality, and accept responsibility for ourselves.

**A bum sat on a curb at a downtown intersection, watching traffic come and go. A shiny limousine pulled up to the light. Seated in the back was a man in**

a silk suit, with glistening diamond rings on both hands and a walking cane tipped with gold. **As the limo pulled away, the bum said, "There but for me I go." At least he was taking responsibility for himself!**

**Responsibility means facing, not fleeing, the risks and challenges of life.** **Jesus is our example.** He faced the harsh task of living life with a peace that trials could not diminish. **In John 14:27 He said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you."** **He did not speak those words in some ivory tower of detachment.** **He spoke them the night before He was crucified.** The cross was His assignment from the beginning of the world, and He faced that assignment with unshakable peace.

**Christianity is a call to responsibility.** There is not a single utterance in Scripture about dodging or ducking the hard issues of life. **We are challenged to take up our cross daily; to face and fight the giants that roar into our lives unexpectedly; to put our hands to the plow and never look back; to fight the good fight of faith; to endure to the end.**

**In the wild, wild West, a peacemaker was a Colt .45 revolver.** **Happy was the man who had a quick draw!** Two hundred years later, the United States has a nuclear missile called the "Peacekeeper." **But what is a peacekeeper? How do we describe what one is like? The Bible gives these five characteristics of a peacemaker.**

A peacemaker does not seek "peace at any price." **Jesus, the Prince of Peace, invaded the temple with a whip of cords in His hand and fire in His eyes, turning over the tables of money-changers and sending goats, cows and preachers running in panic.** He did not learn that by reading "How to Win Friends and Influence People." He was a peacemaker - but He did not believe in "peace at any price."

**A peacemaker is not a compromiser.** A peace that is won by compromising godly principles is not peace at all. **It is cowardice. It is treason of the conscience.** It is anarchy toward the courts of heaven. **If we have won peace through compromising the standards of righteousness, we don't really have peace.** We have only the illusion of peace.

**A peacemaker is not an appeaser.** **Appeasement can postpone confrontation, but it can never bring lasting peace.** World War II was born because would-be peacemakers sought to appease rather than confront. **Neville**

**Chamberlain, the prime minister of Great Britain, flew to Germany seeking an accord with Adolph Hitler.** He and the other European leaders granted Hitler's every demand.

When Chamberlain got back to England, he stepped down from the plane and confidently proclaimed, "Peace in our time." **But his appeasement of Hitler only convinced the Nazi fuehrer that Europe was afraid of him.** Their appeasement, far from winning peace, actually guaranteed war.

**A peacemaker functions in an atmosphere of turmoil.** Many people pray for a life without conflict, without battle, without strife, without clash and collision. **But how can we be peacemakers if everything is perfect all the time?**

Once more allow me to remind you of the words of Jesus found in John 16:33, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." **We need to stop worrying about the clashes and collisions that come our way and start looking at them as opportunities to serve the Lord as peacemakers.** We need to stop praying for an easy life and start praying to be stronger persons in the Lord. **We need to start building bridges to people who have isolated themselves.** **We need to be a part of the solution, for the glory of the Lord, and not a part of the problem.** **We are the light of the world - but we only make a difference in dark places!**

**A peacemaker is one whose spirit has been broken by the Holy Spirit of God.** He has mourned over his wrongdoings. **He has taken on the meekness of Jesus.** **He has hungered and thirsted after righteousness.** He had allowed God to purify his heart. **He is ready to demonstrate that he is a child of God by being a peacemaker.**

**Peace will not come to us, our homes or our country by accident.** It will come when we have God's approval upon our lives because we are being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ in our daily living!

If you are not saved, why not?

Everyone please stand for prayer.

Father,

Your Word is true. Give me the courage to stop being a part of the problem and start being a part of the solution in the circumstances of my life. In Jesus' name. Amen.