

## The 7<sup>th</sup> Beatitude

**Blessed are the Peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God**

**Matthew 5:9**

### **One: Introduction**

1. Bruce sent me his outline. I believe Sig has made copies, but I decided that what I ought to do is not to try to give Bruce's talk but give some background that will get us better prepared to hear Bruce when he returns' and can follow his outline. So I have printed an outline for these brief remarks.

### **Two: General remarks**

- 1 Before we can determine what being a peacemaker is we need to be clear as to what we mean by peace. We use the word peace to refer to a variety of relationships, i.e. to refer to the relationship between nations, to refer to the quality of relationships in a group or town, to the relationship between individuals and to refer to a man's inner life.
- 2 Generally we tend to think of peace primarily as the absence of conflict, or the overcoming of conflict. But, we can think of peace positively as including harmonious relationships and all of the benefits of friendship and cooperation, such as exists between Canada and our Nation, and in all of the aforementioned relations.
- 3 In the Bible "Peace" is a major theme" and is always seen in the most positive sense. Peace (Shalom, Eirene) refers not only to the reconciled relationship between God and sinners and between sinners and even the state of the soul within a converted sinner, it also refers to the fullness of God's blessings, even down to the fruitfulness of the crops and herds. The ultimate giver of peace is always God, for He is the giver of all gifts, whether physical or spiritual.

### **Three: Peacemakers**

1. Turning to the term peacemakers we notice that it is plural. It refers, as Bruce has been saying of all the beatitudes, to all those who are born again in Christ , to the saints, to believers, to those who live in the Kingdom of God, who have become sons of God through conversion and faith in God in Christ, to us.
2. Second we note that it is active. It is not peace lovers, not laid back types, not those who go along at any price to get along, but to those who actively serve God's gift of peace. If God is the giver then we must see a Peacemaker as being instrumental to what God is doing in and through us, not as something we are creating.
3. To be sons of God and thus peacemakers, or Peacemakers and thus sons of God, like our Father, We must first, be those who have received peace from God. In order to be those who serve as agents of peace through which God works we must ourselves be in the peace of God, for we cannot serve or share what we ourselves have not received from God.

### **Four :The Peace from God that we receive**

Part of becoming peace-makers by God's grace, therefore, is to receive and to treasure the peace we have received and are receiving from God. Therefore, I want to take the time for us to explore and freshly taste and see, to bring to mind and rejoice in the peace of God in which we live. It is important to deeply treasure this peace if we are to find God at work in us enabling us, imperfectly no doubt, to be His peacemakers, so let's look at Ephesians 1: 1-14 and let God, in His Word, through the Apostle Paul, tell us just what this peace is, that we have received and are receiving and will receive from God by His grace.

Read the text. Ephesians 1: 1-14 (ESV)

*Verse 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*

1. Grace and Peace. Grace is the cause and peace is the result. The Peace of which we are referring is a gift due to the undeserved grace of God, given to fallen sinners, to us.
2. And it is from the Father and through the Son ( later we hear that it is by the Spirit as well) This peace is ours only in and through Jesus Christ and our receiving it by the empowering of the Holy Spirit at work in us.
3. This peace is found in none other than the Triune God revealed in Christ Jesus. “My peace I give unto you, not as the world gives do I give to you.” John 14:27) said Jesus. It is a quality of our relationship with God in Christ and the Spirit.

Now the Apostle begins to unpack what is contained in this Peace which is ours in Christ

Verse 3. Blessed be the God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ

1. “Every spiritual blessing” This verse is a bold statement. God in His providential reign gives people physical blessings, but no one ever has every physical blessing, for they are partial and temporary. The Spiritual blessings given us in Christ are 1. heavenly in that they are ours as we are united to Him as He reigns on high; 2.They are given us by the Father, by the Holy Spirit directing us to Christ and through Christ to the Father; 3. We each have the fullness of this peace, of these blessings. “Every Spiritual blessing”, not just some, to some but all to all. And 4. they are eternal as is our relationship in Christ.

The apostle then begins to unpack these aspects of the peace from God in terms of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit

- A. The blessings of peace assigned particularly to the Father ( though of course in Christ and by the Spirit)

Read Ephesians 1:4-6 (ESV)

*4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him. In love, <sup>5</sup> He predestined us to adoption as sons to Himself by Jesus Christ, according to the kind intention of His will, <sup>6</sup>to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the beloved*

He( the Father) chose us in Christ before the foundation of the World.

1. Now that is almost too much to take in. It means that Creation is secondary to us, to those whom He would and will redeem in Christ. The vast range of the planets and stars, galaxies and milky-ways are all there only because God had us in Christ in mind. He who sees all things, who sees the end from the beginning had us in Christ as the goal of it all. God is telling us that the universe is the stage but the redemption of us in Christ is the play where the action is and His loving point of it all . “He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world.”, Let that soak in for a while.”

(Pascal, said for us not to be intimidated by the size of the universe, to be sure the universe is immense and we are small and physically weak, but we know the universe and the universe does not know us.)

*He predestined us*

1. The initiative is entirely His. He is the Savior; He is the Creator. He is Initiator and He is the Perfector. He chose us and determined thereby our final destiny. He did this prior to our creation and prior to our response and He did it in love.

2. Now some Christians have had a problem at this point. Does this not turn us into robots? Does it not rob us of our decision-making and our responsibility for our decisions, they ask. The answer is no. God never takes from us our decision-making nor our responsibility for our decisions. We choose to sin and we choose to repent and believe. What God does in predestination and regeneration is to change our hearts setting us free from the bondage to sin, from a heart turned against God, by which we determine how we choose, to having a heart for God whereby we desire to turn to Him and so choose to love Him, to follow him and to delight in His Word. As Jesus said: "A bad tree produces bad fruit, but first make the tree good and you will have good fruit". "I will give them a heart of flesh instead of a heart of stone", "I will write all my laws on their hearts". Make the heart good and you will get good decisions.

3. Now God does not thereby, in this life, deliver us from a war in our members.

Actually he initiates and deepens one. It is a war between indwelling sin, the remaining vestiges of the old man in us and ourselves as recreated in Christ. Therefore, we, as the new men in Christ, find we are in a struggle in which we are called by God to continually repent and call upon the Lord for forgiveness and the empowering of the Holy Spirit to assist us to put off the old man and put on the New Man, in whom we are created in Christ. We are the New Man in Christ, but we find sin still indwelling in our members. But, and this we need to take to heart, He will perfect us at our death or at the great consummation of all things at the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of the Lord Jesus, whichever comes first.

4. He predestined us so that we should be holy and blameless before Him, Holy and blameless in Christ first by Justification and in the end Holy and blameless in Christ in our own persons, by transformation in Glory, that is our destiny by grace.

5. *He predestined us to adoption as sons to Himself through Christ Jesus, according to the kind intention of His will.*

*"adoption as sons to Himself"* In Christ, we are brought into God's people and family as sons. Such is His great love and kindness toward us.

We are predestined as individuals but as individuals joined to Himself and His family, not as isolated unattached individuals. And, note, we are not simply waiters at the family table, servants only, but we are members of the family seated at the table. As Sons of God, And, what is Christ's by eternal nature, is ours in Him by adoption and grace. And think on this!, adoptions are never by accident. You and I, we are the Father's sons, in Christ, by divine intention, because God loved us and chose us for Himself to be His sons even before the world was made.

Verse 6, To the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. All praise belongs to the Father due to the sheer grace of our Father's purpose for us and gift to us. We are firmly, profoundly and eternally claimed by His love and sovereign purpose and plan, drawn to Christ and joined to the family of Christ in Him.

- B. Next The gifts of our peace given us in Christ that are particularly assigned to the Son, (of course they are in accord with the purpose and plan of the Father and made ours by the Spirit)

Read Ephesians 1:7-10 (ESV)

<sup>7</sup> In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace <sup>8</sup> which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and prudence, <sup>9</sup> He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him <sup>10</sup> with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on earth.

1. In Him we have the Redemption through His blood Redemption: He paid the price we could not pay, the price to set us free, free from the condemnation we deserved, free from the bondage of sin, free from our denial of the truth in Christ, free from being dead to God, isolated from Him and the promises of God, and free for , free for Christ , for Him in His Word,

for walking in His presence and paths, for having brothers and sisters in Christ, etc. “Christ came not to be served but to serve and to give His life(His blood) a ransom price for many”)

2. In Him we have The forgiveness of our trespasses (Forgiveness is ever an underserved gift, it enables the damaged relationship to go on, it is the forgiver who bears the cost and in Christ it is the cost of the Cross. It is forgiveness that enables the ones forgiven, us, to repent, respond and live in gratitude. Oh the full forgiveness of Christ, this wondrous thought, His forgiveness of all my sins the whole and not in part.
3. All of this, According to the riches of His grace which He lavished upon us (lavished upon us,). Poured out on us, an unending flow, We, lost in ignorance and sin, were bathed in love and grace, “While we were yet sinners Christ gave Himself for us”..and thereby lavished His grace upon us.
4. In all wisdom and prudence He made known to us the mystery of his will...to sum up all things in Christ In Christ we have God’s truth. God’s Word, the rock on to build our lives for time and eternity. It is one thing to be so blessed in Christ, it is another to know that we are so blessed. And so He tells us that it is His final and central will to bring all things, including us, together and to perfection in Christ.

Thus it is, my brothers in Christ, that we being rooted and grounded in Christ, resting on the utter sufficiency of His work for us , His work done and to be done and aware of His love and grace we are at peace with God, “grace and peace be unto you from God our Father and t he Lord Jesus Christ.

- C. The gifts of the fullness of peace in which the Holy Spirit takes the lead ( as commissioned and sent by the Father and the Son)

Read Ephesians 1:11-14 (ESV)

<sup>11</sup> In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,<sup>12</sup>

that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.<sup>13</sup> In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,<sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,<sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

1. As, through the saints and the gathered Church, the Gospel spreads out to the world and moves down through history so that at all of the Elect might hear and believe, as promised in the old Testament and by the Son during His earthly, visible ministry, the Holy Spirit is poured out to regenerate those whom God has chosen and to seal the believers.
2. The Spirit does not primarily direct attention to Himself, but rather primarily points us to the Son and the Father. “No one can call Jesus Lord except by the Spirit.” And chiefly the Spirit directs us to the Lord in the Word. It is through the Spirit’s calling us to the Word of Christ that the Father and the Son come and hold communion with us. “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.” The Spirit does this work in such moments of heightened awareness of God while reading the Scripture, in worship at the sacraments and in song, in a kindled love for the brethren, and in moments of prayer and meditation. However the Spirit does sometimes manifest Himself in His work in such events as in remarkable healings, in the exercise of spiritual gifts, in remarkable coincidences in life, in a powerful heart-changing awareness of God’s call that redirects one’s life, etc.



3. The presence of the Spirit in our life together as Christians and in our individual lives is a seal and sign to us of our glorious inheritance that is to come, sure and certain. He is the down payment, anticipation and seal of things surely to come, a quality of relationship and events beyond our imagining, kept by God for us, whom He loves.

Thus it is my brothers that our past, present and future is all in the hands of God and is firmly ours in Christ. Here is the fullness of our shalom in Christ, the peace of God that utterly surpasses our understanding or comprehension. It is this peace of God with us and in us that makes us Sons of God and peacemakers or peace agents, conduits of grace by the power of the living God who loves us. And, it is all to the praise of His glory.

#### **Five: Serving God as Peace-makers, “Peace Making”**

1. Evangelism and sharing.

Being aware of the fullness of the peace of God, of all the blessings that are therein, we are in far better shape to give a reason to others for the hope that is within us, as the Apostle Peter tells us we are to be prepared to do. We may not be specially gifted as evangelists, but sharing what Christ means to us, particularly when we are asked, is a blessing and a privilege. In so sharing and in evangelizing, we are serving as peacemakers inviting others into the peace of God given by the Father and the Son through the Spirit. And in so doing we find that we ourselves, being used by God in what matters most, are being blessed. Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons of God.

2. At Peace within

There is an inner peace that comes with being at peace with God. One is in good and eternal hands. All the bases are covered. To be sure we are aware of the inner struggle that led St. Paul to write chapter 7 of Romans and cry out who will deliver me from the body of death. But he

went on to say, Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. This struggle does not condemn and it will one day, by the grace of our Lord, end.

Those who are thus at peace are free to be as Luther put it, free to live outside themselves, in God and in the neighbor, and so living are able to care for others. Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God.

3. A call to the brethren.

Christian congregations and institutions need peacemakers in the Lord. (Me at Trinity). Sensitivity and patience flow from those who are aware of being themselves in the peace of God.

4. Secular peacemaking

While the 7<sup>th</sup> beatitude is not first about peacemaking in the secular world, there is an overflow and concern for earthly peace. We are asked in Scripture to pray for those in authority and for peace. This would, it seems to me, apply to any setting or any relationship that needs someone to come alongside and seek to help peace break-out. Those who are in the peace of God will have the wisdom, patience and sensitivity to be of some help. Secular peace is always temporary but important nonetheless. It is however not nearly as important as Peace with God.

**Finally Six: Who calls us Sons of God ("will be called sons of God")**

Primarily God does, which is life-giving, PTL, though sometimes so do others, which is nice!

