

Blessed Are the Peacemakers

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- [0 : 0 0] Amen. You may be seated, kids. You are now dismissed to your kids' classes. And I would encourage you to open up your Bibles to Matthew chapter 5.
- It's on page 962 of your Pew Bible. As you know, during this election cycle, we have been working through the Beatitudes, the greatest sermon ever preached, where Jesus is kind of walking through this eight-point character profile of a kingdom citizen.
- It's to be true of every follower of Jesus. Let me read it. Matthew 5, I'm going to just read through verse 10. Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him, just like we're coming to him now.
- And he opened his mouth, and he taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
- Blessed are 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.
- [1 : 2 7] Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted, for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- May God bless the hearing of his word. If you're a Christian in the room, every one of us in the sanctuary has at some point grieved God by sinfully straining a relationship.
- You don't need to say, Amen. Amen. Amen. We have sinned against others, and we have been sinned against.
- Our sin is a chaos maker. It makes chaos in relationships.
- It wreaks havoc in marriages. It does damage in parenting. And it is like a mold in a church.
- [2 : 4 6] A black mold. That can have a toxic effect. Some of us this morning are seeking to navigate chaos wrought by sin in a relationship.
- Maybe we brought it. Maybe someone else brought it. Maybe we brought it. Maybe both sides contributed to it. What is a Christian to do?
- We're to make peace. Do you know that you have a patriotic duty as a kingdom citizen to make peace?
- Especially with other Christians. So let me start off this sermon by asking this question.
- Are you bringing sinful chaos to your relationships? Or are you bringing kingdom peace? I want to make sure you know up front of some resources.
- [3 : 5 4] Because I am so aware that this sermon cannot cover the waterfront of peacemaking. So I've got some resources for you. I'll remind you at the end of the sermon. We've got 20 of these books available.

10 outside of each door. Grab one if you're a family. This is peacemaking by Ken Sandy. It is an excellent resource for all Christians to know how to be making peace when conflict arises.

Especially in your families. I use this in all of my premarital counseling. I do. There is an article that is a kind of a condensation of this.

A condensed version. It's the four G's. We've got a bunch of these outside those doors. And so if you want kind of like the abridged version or the full thing, grab them as you leave.

Blessed are the peacemakers. This will help you put into practice what I'm about to preach on. We've come to the seventh of the eight Beatitudes.

[4 : 55] This profile of a kingdom citizen. It's to mark each and every one of us. And these eight character traits are sequential and they're progressive.

They build off each other. And so last week I preached on blessed are the pure in heart. Those people who've had their hearts made alive by the Spirit and are being renewed by the Spirit.

Those people who've had their hearts cleansed by the blood of Jesus and are being cleansed by the blood of Jesus. Those people who've had their hearts reordered for the glory of God and are being reordered daily.

Those are the pure in heart. And now the pure in heart seek peace in their relationships with other people.

Let me just give you an operating definition of what I mean by kingdom peace. Kingdom peace is the experience of God's goodness in a relationship.

[5 : 55] Kingdom peace is the experience of the fullness of God's goodness in a relationship. And I know that many in the room are experiencing today incomplete and impartial peace in relationships.

And just the topic is hurtful and painful. But let's hear what Jesus has to say. Let me help you understand what it means to be a peacemaker.

The scope of God's gospel peacemaking is huge. Jesus died on the cross to make peace between God and us. And this gospel that we believe in brings peace to ourselves and how we see ourselves.

And it also brings peace in our relationship to others. And one day it's going to bring peace to our relationship to creation. That's the scope and scale of God's peacemaking work.

It's wonderful. And this morning we're going to focus on peacemaking with each other. Five points. Kingdom peace is about fullness.

[7 : 07] Not just absence. Kingdom peace is a kingdom mandate. Not a kingdom maybe. Kingdom peace is dynamic.

Not static. Kingdom peace is costly. Not cheap. Kingdom peace is hopeful. Not hopeless. Kingdom citizens bring kingdom peace to others they're in relationship with.

It's your patriotic duty as a kingdom citizen. So let's look at this first. Kingdom peace is about fullness not absence. Typically when I'm guessing is that when you think about peace you think about the absence of something not good.

Like hey you know what our relationship is doing great. You know we're there's no tension. There's no unresolved issues. There's no awkwardness.

There's no conflict. There's nothing in the way. We can think about peace in terms of what is not there. Right?

[8 : 21] So like with Israel and Hamas and Iran right now. Moving towards some kind of peace is being presented as a cease fire. Is this idea of a cease fire the extent to the peace that God wants us to experience in our relationship with each other?

Is he just looking for cease fires? No he's not. Here's what peacemaking does. Biblically speaking. Peacemaking not only deals with the issues that are keeping you from experiencing fullness of God's goodness.

It actually brings fullness of God's goodness in the relationship. It's just not solving the problems. It's bringing goodness to the relationship. So we resolve sinful conflicts in order to experience the goodness of God's, the fullness of God's goodness in relationship to one another.

So peacemaking moves a relationship from fear to joy. From mistrust to growing levels of trust.

That's what peacemaking does. It's good. It's good. You see, peacemaking is about fullness. Not just cease fires.

[9 : 49] Could you imagine if God limited his work of salvation, of peacemaking, with you to just a cease fire? The extent of his work of salvation with you was just removing the penalty of sin.

Could you imagine that? We would all say, well, that's good. But God goes well beyond that. Not only does he impute the righteousness of Christ to us, he gives himself to us.

That's why God made peace with us. To give himself to us. What a glorious work of reconciliation.

That the end game of peace is a giving of yourself. God gives himself. A relationship with God was the goal of his peacemaking.

Could you imagine a salvation without a relationship with God? That would be so shallow. The empty.

[10 : 57] What God gives us himself. Kingdom peace is about fullness of relationship. Not just a cease fire. We see it in our relationship with God. And he's making peace with us.

And so now, in terms of our relationship with one another, we need to think about peace as fullness. If you're in the chaos of a sinfully strained relationship, conflict with another Christian, whether it's your making or someone else's making, in order to experience the fullness of God's good, you've got to resolve the conflict.

So that you can move into the good. But if you're unwilling to resolve the conflict, you will only experience limited tastes of goodness in that relationship.

When you're in a conflict, in a strained relationship, there tends not to be laughter and joy. Bearing with one another in love.

Weeping with those who weep. A transparency with your struggles without fear. That gets sucked out of the relationship because of conflict. But when we pursue peace with one another, biblically, in a godly fashion, it brings laughter with it.

[12 : 12] It brings joy in the relationship. Burden bearing, trust, honesty. There's goodness. Brothers and sisters, let's not settle for cease fires.

Brothers, let's press into the goodness, the fullness of God's goodness in his relationship with one another. Just imagine what it's going to be like in glory.

On the other side of the judgment seat of Jesus, you are going to be experiencing fullness of peace with your brothers and sisters in Christ. Everything will be removed.

No conflict whatsoever. Kingdom peace is about fullness, not just absence. Second point, kingdom peace is a kingdom mandate, not a kingdom maybe.

The kingdom peace, this fullness, is not optional for us. It's a must.

[13 : 16] Because God in Christ has made peace with us. We now make peace with others. And so what I want to do under this point is just kind of like help you to see the mandates for peace in your Bible, in your New Testament.

The first one I want you to notice is if you're in Matthew 5, just look at Matthew 5, 21. Jesus is addressing anger. And he's going after the heart of anger.

And for those people struggling with anger, he says in verse 23, So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you because you lost your anger with him, you lost your temper, leave your gift there before the altar and go.

First be reconciled. Peace to your brother. And then come and offer your gift. Brothers and sisters, is this optional for us?

Is Jesus presenting this as a maybe? No. He's presenting it as mandate. If you flip in your Bibles to Matthew 18, many of you, when you hear Matthew 18, the two words church discipline come to your mind.

[14 : 37] But the process Jesus lays out here is actually a peacemaking process. It's to keep and maintain and preserve peace within a church, between brothers and sisters in Christ.

Let me just read it. This is verse 15 through 17. If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.

Peace! But if he does not listen to you, take one or two others along with you that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. And if he listens to you, there's peace.

But if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. So, Matthew 5 is Jesus instructing us what to do when we know we have sinned against another.

You go immediately. And here, in Matthew 18, Jesus is instructing us of what to do when someone has sinned against us. And what's behind both is peacemaking.

[15 : 51] Getting sin and the consequences, the chaos of it, out of the way so that we can experience the fullness of God's goodness in relationships with one another.

It's a mandate. In Romans 12, 18, Paul has just been talking about the body of Christ in Romans 12.

And in verse 18, he says, if possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Mandate. This is not optional.

We are to do what we can do in order to be peace with all people. In other words, if you got cards in your hand to play in order to make peace with someone, you need to play those.

All of them, as you're able to. And you do that unto Jesus to honor him in peacemaking. The issue isn't what is the minimal steps I can take to making peace.

[16 : 56] What is the maximum I can do to be at peace with all people? Hebrews 12, verse 14.

I'm going to read 14 and 15 because 15 has a warning. Strive for peace with everyone and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God, that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled. I just want you to see an important connection in verse 14.

Strive for peace with everyone and for the holiness. Grammatically, the striving in that passage is both for the peace and holiness. In other words, peace and holiness aren't disconnected.

Striving for peace is a striving for holiness. It's a holy peace. It's a blood-bought peace. It's a unity that Jesus has purchased between us with his blood, and we strive to keep it.

[18 : 11] If you've been thinking about peace as optional, you need to rethink that. In terms of the weight of your Bible.

It's not optional. It's not a maybe. It's a mandate. And is there a moment here, sometime today, this afternoon, even right now, where you're just like, okay, I've been treating this relationship and the pursuit of peace as a maybe, not a mandate.

You confess that to your Lord. Say, forgive me, Lord, for minimizing this in your sight. Is kingdom peace a maybe?

No. Is kingdom peace a mandate? Yes. And before we move on to the next point, can I just ask this question? Why?

Why? Why take all this effort to pursue peace with people? Well, God reconciled us to himself, and he reconciled us to each other.

[19 : 22] That's the whole point of Ephesians chapter 2. The peace that we have is a blood-bought peace. But there's more to that.

God has existed as a triune God. And he knows peace firsthand. And he wants us to experience peace too.

He wants us to experience the fullness of his goodness in relationship with one another. And so, I hope you're starting to get this sense that the pursuit of peace with our brothers and sisters is a pursuit of goodness.

Fullness. Kingdom peace is a kingdom mandate, not a kingdom maybe. Number three. Kingdom peace is dynamic, not static.

Let me define my terms. When I say static, I'm not talking about what happens when you pull your clothes out of your dryer and your sock is stuck to your sweatshirt.

[20 : 35] Not that kind of static. For the people who've been around the block, it's not the static that would be on your TV channel when the channel goes off the air. Not that kind of static.

Here's the kind of static I'm talking about. It's more of a technical use of the word. It's an equilibrium. It's something that's unchanging. Did you know right now what the temperature of the earth core is?

9,400 degrees Fahrenheit. And if you were to take the temperature of the earth core from, to take daily samples from January to December, and you were to line graph it, you would have a static line.

A straight, unchanging line. 9,400 degrees Fahrenheit, January 1, December 31st. But, if you were to line graph the air temperature of Kenosha from January to December, that line graph would be a dynamic line.

You would be going up and down depending on the season, right? So, static is remaining the same. Dynamic is changing. Ebbs and flows.

[21 : 55] It moves up and down. Now, if you were to graph your experience of the fullness of God's goodness in, let's say, 20 of your relationships over the past year, and you were to graph it on a line from January through December of 2024, therefore, I doubt that they would be static lines.

I think they're going to be dynamic lines. Because we're complicated people. We sin and we're sinned against. We misunderstand each other. We get in foul moods.

Kingdom peace is dynamic, not static, because we're dynamic. God's grace is unchanging.

That's static. But our relationships aren't. Sin brings chaos to relationships. Kingdom peace brings restorative goodness.

It brings order. Not in a controlling sense. In a goodness sense. Do you know why there are so many mandates in our Bible concerning peace?

- [23 : 20] Because the Bible is so realistic. For Jesus to say, hey, if you become aware that you have offended a brother while you're going to church, go to them before going to the church.

Do you know why he says that? Because he knows we're going to lose our tempers with one another. The reason why Jesus has Matthew 18 and this sequence of peacemaking in our Bibles is because he knows we're going to sin against each other.

For there to be passages in our Bibles that are calling us, urging us, pressing us into, as far as it depends on you, be at peace with all. Strive for peace with one another.

Those are there because God knows we're going to sin against each other. This is his goodness to us. We're going to experience ups and downs in relationships.

That's what happens when you're living in close proximity with other sinful human beings. You end up sinning against each other. The temptation is to sin back. Jesus is saying, no.

- [24 : 36] Make peace. So let me set some expectations. Expectation number one. Don't be surprised by conflict between Christians. Don't be surprised when chaos brews.

Your Bible assumes it and instructs to it. Expectation number two, though, is we need to respond by faith to that, not by sweeping it under the rug.

We are to respond as God's word instructs us to. And when we're encountering, experiencing peace or conflict with another person, another Christian in particular, there's a couple things I just want to make you aware of.

In Matthew chapter 5, when this guy is going to present his gift at the altar, it's like us going to church, and he becomes aware that he's sinned against a brother.

Jesus is admonishing him. There's this like, you go and you go quick. Deal with sin quickly. Don't let sin get kind of a root of bitterness.

- [25 : 46] In Ephesians chapter 4, verses 26 and 27, you don't need to go there. But what Paul is saying, be angry and do not sin. Don't let the sun go down on your anger.

There's a timeliness to dealing with conflict. And in verse 27, we're told, don't give a foothold to the devil. One of the things that just weighed on me all week this week is this.

The prospect that we just see our conflict with one another just as something we need to work out. When the reality is, it becomes a foothold for the devil.

Do you know what kind of chaos making the devil can do? Kind of supercharges our peacemaking, does it not? Don't be surprised by conflict.

But let's respond to conflict according to what God's word says. Now you might be wondering, well, Salvati, how do I prepare myself for that?

- [26 : 54] How do I get ready for conflict and to respond according to God's word? Well, I'm glad you asked me that. Jesus has already told us.

Here's how you prepare. Blessed are the poor in spirit. Those who have declared spiritual bankruptcy.

Blessed are those who mourn. Blessed are those people who are grieving over their own sin. Boy, you are getting positioned in order to be a peacemaker. Blessed are the meek, the humble.

They see themselves accurately as God sees them. They're getting positioned to peacemake. Blessed are those who are hunger and thirst after righteousness.

This inner righteousness, not this external pharisaical righteousness. An inner righteousness that pleases God above all else. Boy, you're positioning yourself for some peacemaking.

[27 : 50] Blessed are the merciful. When you realize you are in desperate need of mercy, that actually positions you to be a good peacemaker.

Blessed are the pure in heart. Those whose hearts are being renewed daily, are being cleansed daily, are being reordered daily, you're positioned to be a peacemaker.

Jesus already tells us. This is the beauty of the sequence, the progression of the beatitudes. Are you positioning yourself? But what about becoming aware of someone else's conflict?

What do you do? What happens when you're minding your own business, either you accidentally are brought into this conflict between a brother and a sister or two people, or someone else is gossiping about it.

Someone else is spreading rumors about it. Or slandering someone about it. What do you do? Here's what you do.

[29 : 08] You check your heart quickly. It's what you do. You pray something like this. Prince of beasts, bring your peace. And you've got to withhold judgment.

If you come into the knowledge of a situation accidentally or by some other person's sin of speech, you've got to be slow there.

Because there's always two sides of a conflict. Always two sides. You've got to slow it down.

And then you've got to say something along these lines to the one gossiping, or the one spreading the rumors, or the one that's slandering.

That's chaos making, brothers and sisters. That's not good for a church. That undermines the health of a church. And so if someone's gossiping, someone's spreading a rumor, someone's slandering, you need to be able to say at that moment, stop that.

[30 : 13] That is not pleasing to the Lord. That's not building his church up. I don't want to hear it. If you've got an issue with that person, you need to go to that person.

Brothers and sisters, we can't talk about people in the guise of godliness when we're gossiping about them.

So you're praying for peace. You're withholding judgment. You're confronting sin in the moment. And maybe at this point you're like saying, okay, okay, I'm really concerned about this, this information I've brought into.

What do I do? Call elder support. Bling, bling, bling. Yeah, Mike, elder. How can I help you? Oh, really? Well, how'd you find out about that?

Sorry to hear that. Yeah. The elders know. We're praying for that. Thank you for concern. Has either one of that party asked you to be part of the solution?

[31 : 24] They haven't. Okay. Okay, pray for them. Thank you for letting me know. Yeah. Keep praying for them. Thank you. Bye.

Elder support. The elders of our church love our church and are eager to guard the unity of our church and protect the peace of our church.

And if you find yourself in a situation where you don't know what to do, you don't know what to step to take, feel free to call one of us. We'd love to help you. Brothers and sisters, here's the case I'm trying to make here.

A healthy church does not ignore conflict. It addresses it.

Because we see conflict as an opportunity for God's glory, for God's goodness, for there to be health and peace. Peace. John Piper wrote this article called, Don't Waste Your Cancer.

[32 : 30] Don't Waste Your Conflict, Church. Pursue Peace. Obey Jesus. Kingdom peace is dynamic, not static.

We're always working on it. Kingdom peace is costly, not cheap. There's a good gospel word here. It's this. This is point four.

Kingdom peace is costly, not cheap. The peace we experience with God. Full forgiveness of our sin. Full acceptance based upon the righteousness of Christ.

That's not cheap. That came at cost. The blood of Jesus. Is it worth it?

Oh yeah, it's worth it. Would God say it's worth it? He'd say yes, it's worth it. To bring many sons to glory? Yes, it's worth it. To bring a host of sinners into relationship with me?

[33 : 34] Oh, it's so worth it. That they would delight and know and worship me? Yes, it's so worth it. Brothers and sisters, it's going to cost us something to be peacemaking in our church.

That the experience of the fullness of God's goodness in relationships will come with a price tag. It will cost time.

It will cost energy. Do you know how much energy it takes to carefully listen to someone to make sure you're understanding the nuances of what they're saying? It will cost convenience.

Wouldn't it be great if you have a brother or sister in Christ and you're like, okay, you know, it's been a while since we've had a conflict. How about we schedule one for this afternoon? We can work it out real quick.

Point, conflict doesn't come conveniently. And peacemaking is never convenient. It's going to cost convenience.

[34 : 44] But is it worth it? It's going to cost comfort. You're going to have to risk some things when you have been sinned against. And you go to that one who sinned against you and say, did you know that was really hurtful?

That wounded me deeply. In fact, I think you sinned against me based upon what it says here in the Bible. You know? Or you're the being one confronted.

It's risky. Because you want to defend yourself. It's risky being honest and saying, you know what, you are totally right. I was wrong.

I was sinful. Oh, it's such a good risk, though. It may cost your reputation. You may say something to someone and they're like, you are such a weakling.

And they go blab about you. Someone ask me. Pastor Mike, is it worth it?

[35 : 48] Someone ask. Is it worth it? Is the inconvenience, the time used, all of these things that costs us for peace, is it worth it?

On one level, it doesn't matter. Because it's mandated. But oh yeah, it is worth it.

Because when peacemaking is normalized in a church, when it's the thing that we, by faith, step into more and more, in a marriage, in a family, do you know what happens?

There's less and less walking on eggshells. There's less and less grudges. There's less and less avoiding. Less and less gossip.

Less and less rumors. Less and less slander. Less and less division. Less and less footholds for the devil. And more and more trust. More and more joy.

[36 : 52] More and more mutual concern and burden bearing. More and more of what the Bible talks about as the one another's. It's this peacemaking. You know what it is?

It's a way in which we love one another. So when Jesus says, just as I have loved you, you love one another. Just as Jesus loved us and made peace with us, we are to love one another and make peace with one another.

That's the church I want to be a part of. Kingdom peace is costly. And it's worth it. If you were to encounter black mold in your basement, what would you do?

Turn off the lights? Go back upstairs? Let it become more toxic? Would you paint it over? And say, all is well.

Peace, peace. But there is no peace. No, if you found toxic mold, you'd turn on the lights, you'd open up the windows, you'd get your plastic gloves on, you'd get your bleach, and you would start scrubbing, and you would find the source, and you would fix this problem at the source, and you would say, that was worth it.

[38 : 14] Because now, my family lives in a healthy habitat. Brothers, when we ignore sin, it's toxic. But when we step by faith towards the chaos of sin making, oh, we start creating a healthy habitat.

A healthy body. Kingdom peace is costly. And is it worth it? Give me a yes and amen. Yes and amen. Finally, kingdom peace is hopeful, not hopeless.

I can be quick on this one. I'm going to be quick on this one, but it is really important. How many of you, right now, are in some kind of peacemaking process?

Maybe it's just stalled out. You're experiencing imperfect peace with someone, incomplete. You're not experiencing the fullness of God's goodness. Maybe even there's been a breach in your relationship.

[39 : 18] Let's say it's with another Christian. There's been a breach. They will not talk to you. And the days and months and years are adding up.

When we're in situations like that, our minds go like this. Oh, this is, I am, this is hopeless. Will this ever change?

Will we ever experience the sweetness of fellowship again? I've got a number of people in my life, and I pray for them. I want fullness of God's peace.

Peace. Peace. Peace. Are you without hope? There is surprising hope.

It's the judgment seat of Jesus Christ. Here's how it works. When Jesus comes back, he's going to judge everyone.

[40 : 20] And according to 2 Corinthians 5.10, all of us in the room who are followers of Jesus will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account for every aspect of our life, even our peacemaking or lack thereof.

And on that day, King Jesus sorts it all out. He makes all wrongs right. He knows the ratios of wrong to right in the relationships and strains, and he's going to make it all clear and all right.

So on the other side of his throne, fullness of peace. Embracing fullness of joy.

Complete, full, perfect peace with the ones that you're strained with now. It's coming. It's coming. You're not hopeless.

Not if this other person is another Christian. You're not hopeless. But the thing is, you can't let the hope be used to excuse not striving for peace now.

[41 : 40] It is a great hope that is ballast for our souls as we press into difficult situations. So if you're a heavy-hearted brother and sister in the room, experiencing the strain of a lack of peace in a relationship, there is hope.

It's coming. There's always hope. Kingdom peace is about fullness, not just absence.

Kingdom peace is a kingdom mandate, not a kingdom maybe. Kingdom peace is dynamic, not static. Kingdom peace is costly, not cheap. Kingdom peace is hopeful, not hopeless.

The promise in this beatitude is this. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. When we're making peace now on earth, do you know what it evidences?

That we're part of God's family. Like God-like child. As our God is a peacemaker, we too are His peacemaking sons and daughters.

[42 : 56] It just proves what's already true, that we're peacemakers. If you're a non-Christian in the room, the peace that you need most is the peace with God that comes only through Jesus Christ.

And if you fear God's wrath, you need to call out to Jesus and say, Jesus, would you give me the peace that you purchased on the cross?

That's your next step. But if you're a child of God, if you're in the kingdom, what is your next step with someone in your life that is lacking peace?

Let's pray together. God in heaven, we're so grateful that you, God, would initiate peace with us.

Even before we breathe, draw breath, you had started a peacemaking process. God, thank you that in your love for us, you made peace with us so that you can give yourself to us.

[44 : 15] God, would you help us to be peacemakers with others, especially within this room, especially with other blood-bought brothers and sisters.

God, we need you for this. Would you help us to do this well for the glory of your name? Amen.