

Shalom-Makers

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[0 : 00] Blessed. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. As we continue making our way through the collection of sayings we call the Beatitudes, we come to the one which is probably the best known of them all, to the seventh Beatitude.

Blessed are the peacemakers has inspired more music than any of the others. Blessed are the peacemaker is found on more greeting cards and wall posters than any of the others.

And rightly so. For in his seventh Beatitude, Jesus bestows upon ordinary broken human beings incredible dignity, which I hope the exposition will help us see and feel today.

Now, as I have noted throughout our series of studies, whenever we focus on just one of the Beatitudes, we need to do so in relationship to all of them.

We saw how important that was last Sunday when we focused on the sixth Beatitude. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Purity of heart involves poverty of spirit and mourning and hungering and thirsting for righteousness and gentleness and mercy.

[1 : 21] So, will you once again open your Bibles to the Gospel according to Matthew, chapter 5, verses 1 through 10.

Here is the context. Jesus comes on the scene with what the writers of the New Testament call the Gospel of God. God's good news for the world.

The word translated gospel or good news is the word euangelion, which comes into the English language as evangel. Thus, we have all these related words evangelize or evangelism, meaning to bring good news or evangelical, meaning people with good news.

Jesus comes on the scene with God's euangelion, with God's evangel. Now, the writers of the New Testament are making a huge claim about Jesus when they connect Jesus with this word euangelion.

For the Roman emperors were using it for their edicts, for their throne speeches, if you will. They thought of themselves as lords, as saviors, as redeemers of the world, and their authoritative messages to the empire were called euangelion.

[2 : 38] Now, one scholar says, The idea was that what comes from the emperor is of a saving message. It is not just a piece of news, but a change of the world for the better.

So, when the writers of the New Testament use this word euangelion relative to Jesus, they are saying to us something like this. What the emperors, who pretend to be gods, illegitimately claim really occurs here.

Here is the real Lord of the world. Jesus comes on the scene with God's evangel. It is time. The kingdom of God has come near.

And then Jesus begins to evangelize. He begins healing people. He begins freeing people from all kinds of evil. He forgives sins. He welcomes people into his family.

And then we come to Matthew chapter 5, verses 1 to 10. When he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him and he began to teach them, saying, Now, I'm going to do the blessed are part, and you do the for theirs or for they part.

[3 : 52] Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are those who mourn. Blessed are the meek.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Blessed are the merciful. Blessed are the pure in heart.

Blessed are the peacemakers. Blessed are the people who are persecuted because of righteousness. And blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely on account of me.

Rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Lord Jesus, once again, we express our gratitude to you that you enabled

Matthew, the tax collector, to remember your words and to write them down for us.

Will you now, in your mercy and grace, help us understand, and as we have been praying, more than understand, will you help us actually live into the reality of these words?

[5 : 09] We pray in your name and for your glory. Amen. Right on. In sync with God's evangelism are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

Dignity. Incredible dignity. In this seventh beatitude, Jesus is bestowing upon ordinary broken people incredible dignity.

Peacemakers, he says. Makers. Peacemakers. Jesus is not here blessing peace lovers. Although he certainly could.

Jesus is not here blessing peace seekers. Although, again, he certainly could. Jesus is not here blessing peace keepers.

Although, again, he certainly could and does. Jesus is congratulating peacemakers. Plain old, imperfect people.

[6 : 19] Makers of peace. Peace. For most people, the word peace usually refers either to inner tranquility, peace of mind, or to an outward state, absence of war.

The biblical concept of peace certainly encompasses that, but goes far deeper and wider. Behind the word that is used here in this seventh beatitude is the Hebrew word shalom.

It means soundness, well-being, wholeness. It is a word that sounds out its meaning. Shalom. Shalom is life as God intended it to be. A well-rounded, holistic existence. Shalom involves harmony with the earth.

Harmony with other human beings. Harmony with the self. And harmony with the living God. Shalom is ecological soundness. Relational soundness.

[7 : 24] Psychological soundness. Spiritual soundness. Shalom encompasses the whole. Every dimension of life. Economic and political.

As well as personal and religious. For the Bible. For the Bible. Silencing the guns. Does not mean peace has come. For the Bible.

Feeling good inside. Does not mean peace has come. Peace reigns. When the causes of strife are healed. As Pope John Paul II.

Once said. Wars can be prevented. Not by arms. But by getting beyond the symptoms of war. To the causes of hunger. Poverty. And inequality. The biblical concept of peace.

Involves so much more. Than inner tranquility. Or the absence of war. Shalom is a. Psycho. Somatic. Relational.

[8 : 23] Economic. Racial. Spiritual. Wholeness. Isaiah 11. The wolf will dwell with the lamb. The leper will lie down with the kid.

The lion will eat straw like an ox. That is shalom. Isaiah 35. The wilderness and desert will be glad. It will blossom profusely. The eyes of the blind will be open.

The ears of the deaf will be unstopped. The lame will leap like a deer. The tongue of the dumb will shout for joy. That is shalom. Isaiah 2. And they will hammer their swords into plowshares.

And their spears into pruning hooks. That is shalom. Ephesians 2. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens. But you are fellow citizens with the saints.

You are God's household. That is shalom. Having been built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets. Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone. In whom the whole building being fitted together.

[9 : 20] Is growing into a holy temple in the Lord. That is shalom. Revelation 21. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There shall no longer be any death.

There shall no longer be any mourning or crying or pain. That is shalom. That is peace. You see then why I say that in the seventh beatitude.

Jesus bestows on us incredible dignity. We wounded human beings are makers of shalom. Lovers of shalom.

Of course. Seekers of shalom. Of course. Keepers of shalom. Maybe. But makers. Human beings. Makers of shalom.

Only God can make shalom. Shalom is a divine reality. A holistic soundness. A holistic soundness. Brought into being by the holistic sound God.

[10 : 19] And yet. Jesus says in this beatitude. Of those he calls to himself. You are shalom makers. On this beatitude.

Karl Barth rightly renders blessed. As you lucky bums. When Jesus and his evangel. Get hold of an individual.

A community. Or a city. Or a nation. Something happens. Ordinary. Broken people. Become partners. In a divine work. Shalom. Makers.

What dignity. Now remember. The observation we made. At the beginning of the series. In the beatitudes. Jesus is not describing.

Eight different kind of kingdom people. One who is poor in spirit. Another who is meek. Another who mourns. Another who hungers and thirsts for righteousness. Rather.

[11:16] Jesus is describing. Eight different qualities. Of the same kingdom person. Which means. Every person. Captured by Jesus. And his gospel. Becomes poor in spirit.

Every good news eyes person. Hungers and thirst for righteousness. Every evangelized person. Becomes merciful. Every evangelical.

Is called to this shalom. Making vocation. Every kingdom eyes. Every born again. Every spirit filled. Whatever language you use. Every disciple of Jesus Christ.

Is a shalom maker. Not just lover. Seeker. Or keeper. But maker. Now. Why is this a mark.

Of those who have turned around. And embraced Jesus. And his good news of the kingdom. Well.

For two basic reasons. First. Jesus.

[12:13] The evangelizer. Is a man of peace. He is shalom. Himself. Isaiah nine. The text that we recite. On Christmas Eve.

Unto us. A child is born. To us. The son is given. And his name shall be called. Wonderful.

Counselor. Mighty God. Everlasting Father. And. Prince of Peace.

Zechariah nine. The text that we will recite. On Palm Sunday. Behold. Your king. Is coming to you.

He is just. And endowed with salvation. Humble. And mounted on a donkey. And he.

Will speak peace. To the nations. The one who announces. The gospel. Is the prince of peace.

Who speaks. Shalom. Into being. Enter into relationship. With him.

Get to know him. And we become. At the very least. Shalom lovers. And seekers. As Dietrich

Bonhoeffer. Put it. When the disciples. Met Jesus of Nazareth.

[13:09] They found peace. For he. Himself. Is. Their peace. Second. Peacemakers. Is the mark. Of those. Upon who the kingdom.

Has come. Because the kingdom. Is a kingdom. Of peace. Peace. The new world. Order. Breaking. Into the world. In Jesus. Is an order. Of shalom. In Jesus.

We see. This soundness. This wholeness. This full. Orbed. Well-being. For which. We were.

Originally. Created. In Jesus. Actions. We see. Shalom.

Making. In. The making. Restoration. Of harmony. With God. Restoration. Of harmony. With other human beings. Restoration. Of harmony. With the self. And restoration.

Of harmony. With the earth. When his new world order. Begins to break in our lives. We cannot. Help. Becoming. At very least. Shalom. Lovers. And seekers.

[14:02] And Jesus is saying. We become more. We become. Shalom. Makers. Makers. Well then.

What does this. Peace making. Look like. And what does it look like. In our city. Listen. I do not know everything. About this dignified vocation. But I do know.

These five things. First. I know. The posture. For peace. That is. I know. The proper stance. For receiving.

And experiencing. Peace. Peace. I know. That shalom. Is a gift. It is a gift. Of God. It is a gift. Which can finally. Only be.

Enjoyed. In relationship. With God. The peace of God. Is finally realized. When God. Is allowed. To be God.

[14:56] God. On every page. Of the Bible. The Bible. Puts its finger. On the root cause. Of the unrest. And anxiety. And strife.

That marks. Our world. And it is. That humanity. Has turned its back. On its maker. God is dead. Sadly. Leads. Inexorably.

To violence. And decay. Humanity. Refuses. To live. As creature. Before the creator. Human beings. Even religious. Human beings. Have usurped.

The place. And role. Of God. And are therefore. In a state. Of rebellion. Against God. And I don't need. To illustrate that. The theological. Declaration. Of Barman.

Written during. The rise. Of Nazism. Declares. As Jesus Christ. Is God's. Assurance. Of the forgiveness. Of all of our sins. So in the same way.

[15:50] And with the same. Seriousness. He is also. God's. Mighty claim. Upon our. Whole lives. Resistance. To God's. Mighty claim.

On our lives. Is the root. Of all. Peacelessness. And until that. Resistance. Dies. We do not. Fully. Experience.

Shalom. Shalom. Now. Is this not. What the angels. Were declaring. To us. On Christmas Eve. When they said. Glory to God. In the highest. And peace.

On earth. Glory to God. In the highest. Peace. On earth. Glory. To God. In the highest. Is the infrastructure. For peace. On earth. No glory.

To God. No peace. On earth. The shalom. Which Jesus. Brings. Into the world. Is experience. When we bow. The knee. Before the God.

[16:44] Who reigns. When we step. Off the throne. Of the life. And accept. Our place. As creatures. As children. As followers. In a speech. He gave.

At Stanford University. Baklak Havel. Who was then. President of the Czech Republic. Described the current. World situation. And concluded. This way. Humanity.

Probably. Will have to go. Through many. More Rwandas. And Chernobyl. Before it understands. How unbelievably. Short-sighted. A human being. Can be. Who has forgotten.

That he is not God. Glory to God. In the highest. Peace on earth. This means then. That shalom. Making. Involves. Evangelism. Bringing. The good news. To people. So that they can. Turn around. And receive. Jesus. As Lord.

[17:36] And master. And friend. After declaring. The good news. God was in Christ. Reconciling. To the world. To himself. The apostle Paul. Goes on to say. Therefore.

We are ambassadors. For Christ. As though. God were. Entreating. Through us. We beg you. On behalf of Christ. Be reconciled. To God. We beg you. Lay down.

Your resistance. To God. And come home. Only the love of God. Can break that resistance. Peacemaking. Therefore.

Involves. Telling our contemporaries. In every way we can. About this love. Telling our city. That it is safe. To come out. In hiding. The father. The father. Against whom.

We have rebelled. Will welcome us. In open arms. Shalom. Is a gift. Of God. Experienced. When we let God. Be God.

[18:29] That is the posture. From which we make peace. Second. I know the qualifications. Of shalom makers. I know the qualifications.

And they are found. In the first six beatitudes. In the first six beatitudes. The prince of peace. Is describing people. Who have the capacity.

To be engaged. In this grand. Divine enterprise. And what a surprise. Peacemakers. Are poor in spirit.

They recognize. And admit. Their spiritual bankruptcy. They recognize. And admit. The lack of peace. In their own heart. They recognize. And admit.

The violence. In their own soul. Peacemakers. Are those who mourn. Who grieve. Over their spiritual bankruptcy. Who grieve.

[19:24] Over the sinful condition. Of the world. And the sinful condition. Of their whole. Own heart. They weep. The tears. Of God himself. Over what the world. Has become. Peacemakers.

Peacemakers. Are also meek. Not weak. But meek. Gentle. They can resist. The temptation. To hurt. Those who hurt them. They can resist. The temptation. To take vengeance.

Into their own hands. They've entrusted. Their lives. To the king of kings. And are going to let him. Vindicate them. Peacemakers. Also hunger. And thirst. For righteousness. Their appetites.

Have changed. They crave. This full orb. Right relatedness. Of God. They recognize. That we live. In one world. And they seek. The good. Of the whole world. And not just. Their own empire.

They treat. Other human beings. With great dignity. And not just. As pawns. In a great. Chess game. Peacemakers. Are merciful. They do not need. To give.

[20:18] To those who hurt. Them what they deserve. They can give. To those who hurt. Them what they do not deserve. Pardon. And kindness. They're able. To put themselves. In the shoes. Of other people.

And other cultures. And other nations. And peacemakers. Are pure in heart. They abhor deceit. And manipulation. And hypocrisy.

They can spot it. In their own souls. And they want it out. They want all of life. To be seen. In the light. Of God's truth. And grace. They recognize. Their own lust. For power.

And their desire. To control. And they can discern. It from the will of God. And they simply. Seek the face of Jesus. According to the prince. Of peace. Peace. It's the beatitude people.

Who are agents. Shalom. In the city. It's the beatitude people. Who can make peace. In the city. Third. I know.

[21 : 13] What can happen. To shalom makers. They receive. The approval. And blessing. Of God. Sometimes. They receive. The approval. And blessing. Of people. And sometimes.

They receive. The scorn. And opposition. Of people. You see. If the first. Six beatitudes. Give us. The qualifications. For peacemakers.

The eighth. The attitude. Tells us. The consequence. Blessed are those. Who are persecuted. Sorry. But that's.

The way it is. Be about. The business. Of shalom making. And we just. Might. Inherent. Trouble. Jesus.

Warns. Those. Who follow him. In the path. Of peacemaking. That just. As people. Resisted him. So they will. Resist them. E.

[22 : 06] Stanley Jones. Used to say. People hate. To be stirred. To be disturbed. Even for the better. The status quo. Cannot handle. The poor in spirit.

And pure in heart. Especially. When the poor in spirit. And pure in heart. Let God. Be God. In the city. And want the kingdom. To come. The status quo.

Systems. Will. Pressure. The disciples. Of Jesus. Into compromise. Or silent. Acquiescence. And if that does not work. The system. Is going to have to. Pressure. The disciples.

Of Jesus. Out. As. Bishop. Don. Held. A camera. Of Brazil. Once said. When I. Feed. The poor. They call me. A saint.

When I asked. Why are the poor. Poor. They call me. A communist. Shalom. Makers. Meet opposition. And sometimes.

[23 : 00] They get hurt. That's next. Sunday's theme. Fourth. I know. That shalom. Making. Involves. Sacrifice.

Shalom. Making. Always. Involves. A cross. How can it be. Otherwise. For. How. Did the living. God. Make peace. With us. Colossians. One. For. It was. The father's.

Good pleasure. For all. The fullness. To dwell. In Christ. And through. Christ. To reconcile. All things. To himself. Having. Made. Peace. By the blood. Of his. Cross. Isaiah.

53. The chastening. For our. Shalom. Fell. On him. By his. Scourging. We. Are. Freed. The living. God. Makes. Shalom.

Through. Sacrificial. Love. And so. Too. We. Thus. Jesus. Goes on. To say. In the rest. Of the. Sermon. On the. Mount. I say.

[23 : 54] To you. Do not. Resist. The one. Who is. Evil. But whoever. Slaps you. On the right. Sheep. Turn to him. The other. Also. That. Is. Peacemaking. That. Is. The way. Of the cross. Jesus.

Says. Love. Your. Enemies. And pray. For those. Who persecute. You. That. Is. Peacemaking. That's. The way. Of the cross. Paul. Exhorts. The. Christians.

In Rome. Never. Pay. Back. Evil. For. Evil. But if. Your. Enemy. Is. Hungry. Feed him. If. Your. Enemy. Is. Thirsty. Give. Him. A. Drink. Do not be overcome by evil. But overcome evil with good.

That is peacemaking. That is the way of the cross. Again. Dietrich Bonhoeffer puts it so well. The disciples of Jesus. Make peace. By choosing to endure.

The sufferings. Themselves. Rather than. Inflicted. On others. You see. Somewhere. Along the way. In the Christian life.

[24 : 48] We have to come to terms. With the fact. That the cross. Is not only the source. Of our new life. In Christ. It is the pattern. Of our new life.

In Christ. The prince of peace. Who is our peace. Says to us. If you want to come after me. You have to deny yourself. And daily. Take up your cross.

Shalom. Is made. And experienced. Through the cross. Through the cross. The blood flows. That heals. All the wounds. And I know.

One more thing. About our vocation. It happens. One step. At a time. It happens. By you. And I. Making.

Little. Parts of shalom. In our little. Parts. Of the city. One little. Step at a time. That's. God's. Grand strategy. To bring. Shalom. To the world. To release.

[25 : 42] Into the city. All these people. Who are doing. These little. Acts. Of shalom. Making. Let there be. Peace on earth. And let it begin. With me. The song says. Paul.

It starts. Believers. In Rome. If possible. So far. As it depends. On you. Be at peace. With all people. Let me. Suggest. Some little.

Steps. We can. Take. Towards. Peace. Making. Today. We can. Begin. By. Affirming. Our. Identity. And. Vocation. We can. Say.

I. Am. A. Peace. Maker. We. Can. Say. We. Are. Children. Of. God. Sons. And. Daughters. Of. The. Author. Shalom. Sisters.

And. Brothers. Of. The. Prince. Of. Peace. By. Grace. We. Have. Been. Granted. The. Dignity. Of. Causality. I. Am. A. Partner. We.

[26 : 36] Can. Then. Acknowledge. Any. Resistance. To. God. That. Is. In. Our. Hearts. We. Can. Ask. God. To. Melt. This. Resistance. So. That. We. Will. Let. God. Be. God. We.

Can. Further. Acknowledge. Any. Anger. In. Our. Soul. Anger. Against. Another. Anger. Against. Our. Self. Anger. Against. The. Systems. Anger. Against. God.

And. We. Can. Ask. God. To. Overcome. The. Anger. In. The. Soul. We. Can. Further. Acknowledge. Any. Fear. In. Our. Hearts. It. Fear.

That. Holds. Us. Back. From. This. Grand. Vocation. Dear. God. Here. Is. Where. I. Afraid. Will. You. Please. Overcome. This. Fear. And.

Then. We. Can. Affirm. The. Gospel. Again. We. Can. Say. Amen. To. God's. Evangel. We. Can. Say. With. Jesus. It. Is. Time.

[27 : 30] It. Is. Time. For. The. Kingdom. Of. God. To. Come. Near. Reaffirming. The. Gospel. Revives. Perspective. And. Courage. And. Hope. The. Kingdom. Has. Come. The.

Kingdom. Is. Coming. Is. Coming. Coming. Coming. Coming. Relentlessly. Coming. Like. A. Seed. It. Is. Forcing. Its.

Way. Up. Through. All. Of. The. Soil. And. The. Rocks. Like. A. Fire. And. Kindled. On. The. Earth. Who. Can. Stop. It. No. One. Nothing.

No. One. Or. Nothing. Can. Finally. Stand. In. The. Way. Of. The. Coming. Shalom. Is. Coming. And. Easter. Morning. Is. The. Guarantee. Of. That.

Jesus. Resurrection. Says. Loud. And. Clear. That. Shalom. Is. Coming. For. The. Prince. Of. Peace. Has. Defeated. The. Greatest. Enemy. Of. Peace. Jesus. Has. Defeated.

[28 : 23] Death. Shalom. Is. Coming. Blessed. In. Sync. Are. The. Peace.

Makers. Makers. For. They. Shall. Be. Called. The. Children. Of. God. What. Incredible. Dignity. So. Will. you. Join. Me. In. Making. A. Fresh. Commitment. To. Our. Gospel. Vocation. To. Our.

Evangelical. Vocation. By. Praying. The. Prayer. Attributed. To. St. Francis. You. Can. Find. It. Either. Printed. For. You. In. The. Worship. Folder. Or. On. The.

Screen. Behind. Me. And. Let. Us. Pray. This. Together. Slowly. Lord.

[29 : 19] Make. Me. An. Instrument. Of. Your. Peace. Again. Please. Lord. Make. Me. An. Instrument. Of. Your. Peace. Where. There. Is.

Hatred. Let. Me. So. Love. Where. There. Is. Injury. Pardon. Where. There. Is. Doubt. Faith. Where. There.

Is. Despair. Hope. Where. There. Is. Darkness. Light. Where. There. Is. Sadness. Joy. Oh. Divine. Master. Grant. That. I. May. Not. So. Much. See. To. Be. Consoled. As. To. Consol. To. Be. Understood. As. To. Understand.

To. Be. Loved. As. To. Love. For. It. Is. In. Giving. That. We. Receive. It. Is. In. Pardon. That. We. Are. Pardon. That.

[30 : 13] We. Are. Born. To. Eternal. Life.